

# Clarion

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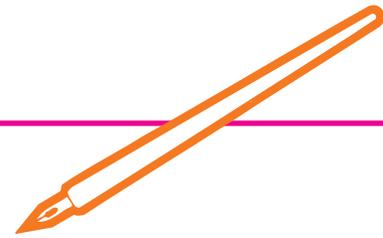
*Do You Swear to  
Tell the Truth?*



**Numbers**

**10:1-10**

By R. Aasman



## Do You Swear to Tell the Truth?

During my university days, a lawyer phoned me and requested my presence in court as a witness to a car crash. I was thoroughly displeased about this because it would involve missing some important classes. This did not put me in the best frame of mind on the day of the trial. I was determined to keep my testimony short and sweet and pin the blame solidly on the person whom I was convinced was the offending party. Then I could go back to university. But something happened on the way to the witness stand. The court setting was not all that impressive – it looked like a converted community hall. What was impressive, however, was taking the witness stand in a court of law, putting my hand on the Bible and swearing an oath that I would tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God. Suddenly my displeasure at missing classes vanished and my personal prejudices melted away. Only one thing really mattered: that the truth be spoken and justice administered. As a result I answered the questions as carefully and honestly as I possibly could. Here I received a first-hand experience of the significance of an oath.

Basically an oath in a court of law which invokes the name of God is a calling on God to serve as witness that the oath-taker is speaking the truth. The Heidelberg Catechism says in Answer 102: “A lawful oath is a calling upon God, who alone knows the heart, to bear witness to the truth, and to punish me if I swear falsely.” Thus an oath which appeals to the name of God should impress on an oath-taker that he is to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. To commit perjury which is lying under oath would result in grave consequences before God. The Heidelberg Catechism says in Answer 101 that oath-taking is based on God’s Word and that its purpose is “to maintain and promote fidelity and truth, to God’s glory and for our neighbour’s good.” What a blessing an oath is when it maintains and promotes the truth! Truth in a court of law is essential to the administration of justice. When a witness lies that can lead to the guilty being cleared and the innocent being punished. A lie in a court of law can let a thief or a murderer go free. A lie in a court of law can also cost an innocent person his livelihood, his reputation, his freedom and his family. Therefore an oath which calls upon God as witness is meant to secure justice and truth which will lead to God’s glory and the neighbour’s good.

The oath which is traditionally put to witnesses in Canadian courts has the witness place his hand on the Bible and asks of him: “Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you God?” However the law currently allows almost any form of oath that a judge feels will lead a witness to tell the truth. In fact there is a push within the judicial system to replace the traditional religious

oath with a simple promise to tell the truth. In other words, a person swears on the basis of his personal integrity and reputation. One of the main arguments for this change is that the courts should reflect the multicultural character of Canada.

The *National Post* of March 1, 1999 reported on recent developments in connection with courtroom oaths. In April 1998, Brosi Nutting, chief judge of the Saskatchewan Provincial Court wrote the federal Justice Department, recommending the abolition of the traditional oath on the Bible in favour of a simple promise to tell the truth. During an interview, Nutting explained why he is in favour of such a change. Some years earlier he had a young aboriginal man in his court who made clear that a traditional oath would not bind his conscience. Nutting improvised by letting the young man burn sweet grass in an ashtray and coming up with this oath: “Having taken the sweet grass ritual, will you swear to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth?” The issue surrounding the nature of an oath in Canada’s courtrooms is not a small one. Since 1995 a federal-provincial working group on multicultural and race

relations in the justice system has been recommending a change in the oath along the lines suggested by Brosi Nutting. The federal-provincial group has released a paper to different groups such as court administrators, religious organizations and aboriginals. Apparently there was a split in opinion among the respondents. Obviously there are many in our country who still believe that an oath which invokes the name of God is valid and is essential in maintaining and promoting the truth.

As Christians who witness a steady erosion of respect for God and his Word in our society, we might feel somewhat resigned to changes in the traditional courtroom oath. We might even think that such a change will not make much difference in our courts. On the one hand we are seeing cases of perjury which suggest that people are not taking an oath in God’s name seriously. On the other hand it might seem pointless to keep God’s name in the courtroom oath when so many people no longer worship God in accordance with his Word. Another consideration is that in some cases a person may have as much or even more compulsion to tell the truth when burning sweet grass in the courtroom or swearing in the name of “mother earth” or promising “to my own self I will be true.” However we should not easily surrender to this line of reasoning. We would be depriving God of the glory due to Him as the only one who can search the hearts of men. Furthermore, in a nation where a high percentage of people claim to believe in God and where an oath in God’s name is a long standing tradition in our courts, we may expect that witnesses who take an oath calling upon God as witness will be compelled to think seriously about their

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heart.

testimony. While there are horrible examples of perjury in Canada and the United States, there are also examples of people who under oath felt compelled to tell the truth even when it was to their personal disadvantage to do so. An oath which calls on the name of God still functions in such a way that truth is maintained and promoted to God's glory and for our neighbour's good.

The suggestion that people should be trusted on the basis of their own word leaves many people sceptical. When leaders of the land are being caught in lies and deception on a regular basis, we wonder about the integrity of people whose motivations are often egocentric. In a court of law where the truth is critical it is important to have in place something that will maintain and promote the truth. An oath which calls upon God as witness still serves to impress on a witness to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. During the next few months when many criminal justice reforms are being considered, decisions about the nature of the courtroom oath may also be made. We should be well aware of what is at stake. Not only can we pray for God to intervene, but we can also contact our Member of Parliament or the federal Justice Department about our concerns. May the glory of God and the well being of our neighbour be maintained in the courts of our nation. 

### What's inside?

We live in the midst of a cultural warfare. Whether the subject be abortion, homosexual marriage and adoption, state-supported blasphemous and/or pornographic art, or the anti-moral basis in the public schools and courts, Canada's heritage of having law and society based upon the Ten Commandments is under assault. For example:

- Satanic rocker Marilyn Manson is allowed to use publicly owned centres, pavilions and coliseums for his anti-Christian concerts while Ontario grandmother Linda Gibbons spends five years in jail for insisting on praying on the public sidewalk in front of Toronto's Morgentaler abortuary.
- The Ontario Human Rights Commission bullies with fines small businesses who refuse to promote homosexual causes.
- At last September's memorial service for the victims of the Swissair disaster off the coast of Nova Scotia, the Christian minister was told not to mention the name of Jesus nor to read from the New Testament while a native was invited to refer to the Great Spirit, a rabbi to read from the Hebrew Scriptures, and a Muslim to read from the Koran.

Our culture is becoming increasingly antagonistic towards Christianity. We need the courage of those who stood up to anti-Christian and anti-Church rulers of the past – of those who wanted to be good citizens of the land, but first good servants of God. In reaction to the attack against Christian faith and morals, new Christian lobby groups are springing up. Rev. R. Aasman tells us about one of them and recommends it to the reader.

We are also pleased to begin publishing a very fine and extensive series of articles written by Mr. Peter Holtvluwer on the topic of Evangelicalism. Mr. Holtvluwer is finishing up at the Theological College and will be one of the students presenting himself to the churches this June for a call to the ministry.

You will also find some reports, press releases and letters as you turn these pages. Happy reading!

GVp



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By E. Kampen

## The Lord and Giver of All Life

*When thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created,  
and Thou renewest the face of the ground (Psalm 104:30).*

As the springtime of the year approaches, we look with eager anticipation to the sprouting of the tulip bulbs, the budding of the trees and, for most Canadians, the greening of the grass. The dormant earth comes to life again. Since we see this happening on a yearly basis, and we have seen it happening since our youth, we are prone to take these things for granted. This is the cycle of nature, isn't it? What could be more normal, more expected?

As God's children, however, blessed with His Word to guide us, we are to view springtime with the eyes of faith. We need to be reminded of this because our faith perspective is constantly challenged. On the one hand, there is a materialistic, mechanical understanding of nature that speaks impersonally about what is happening. On the other hand, there is a resurgent pagan spirituality that personalizes nature and speaks of "Mother Earth." As Christians, however, we look at the world in which we live as our Father's world where spring is the work of the Holy Spirit.

Spring should make us think of the Spirit. We frequently speak of the work of the Holy Spirit in our salvation. The words of our Lord Jesus to Nicodemus come to mind: "... unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Or we think of the words of Paul in 1 Corinthi-

ans 12:3 that "no one can say 'Jesus is Lord,' except by the Holy Spirit." As Christians, we do not really have to be reminded of that. We need reminding, however, that the Holy Spirit is "the Lord and Giver of life . . ." (Nicene Creed) in the full sense of the word. That means He is Lord and Giver also of all physical life.



We hear this expressed in the words of Psalm 104. The Psalmist has been praising God for His marvelous work of creation and providence. It is the LORD who "causes the grass to grow for the cattle and plants for man to cultivate" (v.

14). It is He who "made the moon to mark the seasons" (v. 19). In verses 29 and 30 the author sums it all up by confessing that it is God who can take away the life's breath of a creature, and then they die. Then he confesses in verse 30, "When thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created, and Thou renewest the face of the ground."

Notice the work of the Spirit in the creation of life, not only in terms of animal life but also in the ability of the soil to bring forth food. We can of course follow the scientific explanation offered: about the earth orbiting the sun, and the angle of the earth catching the warming rays of the sun in the spring along with the lengthening of days causing life to sprout again. The Psalmist takes us beyond the secondary causes and shows the ultimate cause: the Spirit of God, the Lord and Giver of all life! In this, the Psalmist echoes what we learn already on the opening pages of Scripture. There we read, "... and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2).

As the days grow longer and warmer, as the earth begins to show signs of new life, as the flowers greet you with their bright colours, as the grass stands in need of mowing and the trees begin to bud, see these things as evidence of the Holy Spirit. As springtime follows winter, it is a reminder of that promise the LORD made to Noah that the seasons will continue, that promise sealed by the sign of the rainbow. You will not find this perspective in any science textbook. You find it only in God's Book. As those made alive by the Spirit out of grace in Christ, be sensitive to the work of the Spirit all around you. Perhaps, as family, take the time and sing Psalm 104, giving praise to the Lord and Giver of all life!

*Rev. E. Kampen is minister of the Willoughby Heights Canadian Reformed Church, Langley, BC.*



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# Evangelicalism – From Puritanism to Methodism and Beyond (Part 1)

By P. H. Holtvluwer

## Introduction

*What follows is the first of six articles on the subject of Evangelicalism. These articles are slightly revised versions of three “lectures” originally presented to interested members of the Smithville Canadian Reformed Church in the setting of Ongoing Education Classes in early September, 1998. During my pastoral internship in Smithville in the summer of 1998, one of my tasks was to prepare material for such classes to aid in “further equipping the saints” for the task of building up the body of Christ. I chose the topic of Evangelicalism because it is incumbent upon members of the church to be familiar with the movements and influences around us which do affect us, whether we realize it or not. In order to preserve our Reformed faith and move forward in it, we need to know what forces are at work in the world around us, particularly in the Christian movements which may appear to be close to us. Thus an examination of the Evangelical movement is fitting for us as we strive to “test the spirits” of the age we live in.*

*The first two articles concern mostly the history of Evangelicalism. Once we have a feel for what the movement is and where it came from, then we will be in a better position to examine its central beliefs and evaluate them, which we hope to do in the following two articles. The last two articles will bring us up to date with current trends in Evangelicalism as well as offer some suggestions as to how to approach Evangelicals.*

## Definitions

Before I begin to outline the history of Evangelicalism let me first provide some definitions so that we have some idea of what Evangelicalism is. I want to distinguish *Evangelicalism* from *evangelism* which are two related terms but yet different in meaning. Both words have the same root word, *evangel*, which simply means, “good news,” or “gospel.”<sup>1</sup> Thus both Evangelicalism

and evangelism have everything to do with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Evangelism is simply the spreading of the gospel, telling others about the forgiveness of sins found only in Jesus Christ. Evangelism is something the church is called to do as Christ has commanded in Matthew 28:19-20, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”<sup>2</sup> Evangelism is what the church does on the mission field and also what it does here at home with various Home Mission projects. Evangelism is not a dirty word, as some people think, but it is simply spreading the good news of Jesus Christ and as such is one of the beautiful tasks given to the church.

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*“As a movement, Evangelicalism crosses ecclesiastical lines and is not restricted to any particular church tradition.”*

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Evangelicalism, on the other hand, is not as straight-forward to define as evangelism. Evangelicalism is a movement within Christianity that has attracted a following since the days of the Reformation. At the heart of this movement is indeed a love for the good news of the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ, that is, the “evangel.” Evangelicalism is not a particular church group like for example the Reformed, Lutherans, Anglican, Presbyterian or Baptist, but Evangelicals can be found within the ranks of these churches as well as outside of them. As a movement, Evangelicalism crosses ecclesiastical lines and is not restricted to any particular church tradition.

Evangelicalism, at least from its beginnings, is a movement within Protestantism. In fact, the name was first used in sixteenth-century Europe to refer to all those who held to the doctrine of “justification by faith alone,” like Luther, Calvin, Zwingli and others. In those early days of the Reformation basically anyone who wasn’t a Roman Catholic was labelled an “Evangelical.” It was used in the same way as we use the term “Protestant” today. In fact, in modern Germany the term “Evangelical” is still used in this sense so that the Evangelical Lutheran Church refers more to the fact that it is a church in distinction from the Roman Catholic Church rather than it serves to link it with the broader Evangelical Movement in Great Britain and North America.

In modern times and for our purposes, Evangelicalism refers to a movement within church history which encompasses within it various groups at various times who have both shared concerns and actual links. That is, these groups look back to the Protestant Reformation for its emphasis upon the unique authority of Scripture and salvation through faith alone in Christ. They add to these convictions concern for warm piety in the context of a disciplined life and for the evangelism of all people. And these groups hold these convictions as so important that members of it join with Christians – often of other churches – in order to further these concerns, even if these others hold different views of important but less crucial matters.<sup>3</sup> Over the course of these articles we will have occasion to examine the various elements of this definition. For now we will have a look at how Evangelicalism has developed in the course of history since the Reformation.

## English Puritanism

The story of what we now know as Evangelicalism begins in earnest in early eighteenth century England with what



John Wesley

became known as the Evangelical Revival. Beginning in the 1730s, men like John Wesley, his brother Charles, and George Whitefield as preachers stirred up the hearts of the English people to a renewed vigour for the Christian faith. In the Anglican Church, which was and remains the state church in England, something of a dead orthodoxy had taken hold of the church. The zeal for the Lord, the assurance of faith, the desire to live a life of holiness, the relevance of the Christian faith for every day living, all these had dropped away from mainstream Christianity in the Anglican Church. Although these characteristics had been part of the great Reformation of Luther and Calvin's day, yet in the two-hundred years since they had lived to lead the Reformation the vitality and the heart of the Reformed faith had evaporated into a cold orthodoxy. Emphasis was placed on tradition and doctrine but by and large people had forgotten about using the doctrine in daily life and being living members of the church. The situation in Britain was so bad that one man in the town of Bristol, appalled at the lack of knowledge on the part of the local miners, exclaimed to them, "Why . . . I believe you know nothing of the Commandments." To this "they all replied [that] they knew of such a family living in their parts, but they did not know them personally."<sup>4</sup>

But before we can understand the nature of this eighteenth century Evangelical Revival in Great Britain, or its cousin of the same time period across the ocean in America called the Great Awakening, we must first become familiar with the roots of these revivals. It

is in the roots of Evangelicalism that we can see the basic lines of the current Evangelical movement and so it helps us to understand where Evangelicals are coming from even today.

The first key root of Evangelicalism is to be found within England herself, namely in her Puritan heritage. In England the Reformation took place in a unique way. The break with Rome did not come, as on the Continent, from efforts on the part of concerned clergy or theologians, but rather it came from the head of state, King Henry VIII. In the early 1530s King Henry had a sharp disagreement with the Pope over whether or not he could divorce his wife Catherine. When the pope refused to grant permission then King Henry went ahead and severed ties with Rome and declared himself to be the head of the church thereby creating in effect the Anglican Church.

The break with Rome signalled the beginning of change for the state church in England, although much of the Roman system remained in the church, such as the hierarchy (episcopacy), ritual prayers, and veneration of the saints. Over the next twenty-five years England flip-flopped between leaning toward Protestantism and going back to Roman Catholicism, depending upon the beliefs of the reigning monarch.<sup>5</sup> In this situation of change and turmoil a group of concerned Christians within the church refused to conform to the existing state church but instead worked tirelessly for reform within the Anglican Church. Their desire to "purify" the state church led to their being named the Puritans. The Puritans were always on the fringe of the church and never came to the point where their reforms were widely adopted. More often they were persecuted and marginalized for their convictions, a situation which led to many of them immigrating either to the Continent or to North America. But even as a minority within the state church their influence was felt by the leaders of the Evangelical Revival of the 1730s and beyond. Puritan convictions were something that later Evangelicals could clearly relate to. The Puritans had four major convictions:<sup>6</sup>

1. *That personal salvation was entirely from God*

This was in harmony with Luther and Calvin's statement of the doctrine of justification by faith alone. The Anglican Church, like the Roman Church, still believed in justification by faith and

good works, stressing also the necessity of confession.

2. *That the Bible was the indispensable guide to life*

The supreme authority of the Bible was something also cherished by the Continental Reformers and even by Anglicans. The Puritan struggle, however, was with how one used the Bible. The Anglicans believed that one should not do what the Bible prohibited, but if the Bible did not prohibit something then it was permissible to do it. The Puritans, on the other hand, believed that one should do only what the Bible expressly commanded. Thus, for example, they believed in a very simple and plain worship service, as compared to the Anglicans who had built up an elaborate tradition of worship.

3. *That the make-up of the church should reflect the express teaching of Scripture*

This belief refers to how the church was organized, that is, its government and general church polity. The Anglicans carried on the hierarchy of bishops from the Roman church and to this the Puritans vigorously protested since it was not commanded in Scripture. Puritans disagreed among themselves but they saw either a presbyterian model or an independent, congregational model as being scriptural.

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***"It is in the roots of Evangelicalism that we can see the basic lines of the current Evangelical movement."***

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4. *That society is one unified whole*

The result of this view was that the Puritans sought to make all of England Puritan. They could not tolerate any other religion nor could they rest until the nation was all unified in belief. This accounts also for the Puritan effort in America, beginning in Plymouth Rock, to set up a community that would entirely be Christian, and then specifically Puritan. They intended their community to be the famous "city on a hill" for all the world to see and to be drawn towards.

These ideas of the Puritans were made known by the writings and preaching of men like William Perkins,



Count Nikolas Ludwlg von Zinzendorf

John Preston, John Owen, and Richard Baxter, and were still in circulation by the time of the Evangelical Revival. Moreover, the Puritans were also very influential for the Westminster Confession and Catechisms of 1643-47, which even to this day have influence in Evangelical and Reformed circles. Thus it was that Puritanism formed one main root for the eighteenth century Evangelical Revival in England.

### German Pietism

From sixteenth century England and the beginning of Puritanism we go to seventeenth century Germany and the rise of a movement called Pietism, which is the second major root of the English Revival. By the late seventeenth century the German Lutheran Church had also come to suffer from formalism and even insincerity on the part of church leaders. The close combination of state and church in Germany often meant that political agendas were played out in the church at the expense of building up the church of Christ. Besides that, many of the church leaders got caught up in the rationalism of the Enlightenment period so that they were more interested in arguing philosophically about biblical truths than working with those truths and teaching them to the congregations. All this led to a decay in the morality and dedication of the church membership, just as we have seen was the case in early eighteenth century England.

In this situation of formalism and decay there arose one man who would become the father of Pietism, Philipp

Jakob Spener. He initiated a moral reform in the practical life of the churches. In a foundational tract titled *Pious Wishes (Pia Desideria)* Spener outlined the main ideas of what would become Pietism:<sup>7</sup>

#### 1. More Bible study

"The Bible," said Spener, "must be the chief means for reforming something."

#### 2. Restoration of the priesthood of all believers

This was a call to return to Luther's own stress on this aspect of the Christian life, wherein as priests all people are called to live a life of sacrifice to Jesus Christ. Thus he called for greater activity in the general work of believers in the Christian ministry.

#### 3. Christianity with deeds

Christianity is more than simply knowledge. It is also a life of Christian activity, with practical acts of love and charity. We would call them "good works."

#### 4. Tolerance in religious disputes

Religious disputes only served to divide so Spener called for prayer for each other and moderation in disputes so that love for each other would prevail, and not dissension and enmity.

**"Christianity is more than simply knowledge – it is also a life of Christian activity."**

#### 5. Better training for the clergy

Here Spener called for a better academic training, but also a training in piety and devotion.

#### 6. A new style of preaching

He called for sermons that were clear and understandable, which were neither technical nor controversial but instead devotional.

In short, Spener and his successor August Hermann Francke stressed the experiential character of Christian living, and that it is not intellectual in the first place but rather is a matter of the heart, where Christian *living* is the fundamental concern. Pietists adhere strongly to Scripture and display a tendency toward perfectionism. They live a serious life of Christian discipline and

oppose whatever is mere formalism within the church. Pietism also lays stress on personal conversion so that everyone must experience a moment of conversion.

Within Germany a certain area became widely known for its strong attachment to and zeal for Pietism, namely Moravia. In the early eighteenth century the Lutheran Church was led in this area by Count Nikolas von Zinzendorf, and his interest in and organization of Pietism within the province of Moravia gave his followers the title Moravians. The Moravians were greatly concerned for personal spirituality and equally zealous for missionary enterprise. They championed the gospel all over the world and became famous for their efforts among North American Indians. Eventually the Moravians broke away from the Lutheran Church and formed the Moravian Church, but in their early years they adhered closely to pietistic principles. It was these principles of the early Moravians which struck a chord in the Englishman John Wesley which in turn sparked the English Evangelical Revival of the 1730s and beyond.

<sup>1</sup>"Evangel" comes from the Greek *euangelion*, "good news"; the word "gospel" is from Old English *godspel*, i.e. *god* = good, *spell* = news. "Gospel," in H.W. Fowler and F.G. Fowler, eds., *The Concise Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) p. 510.

<sup>2</sup>All quotations from Scripture are from the *New International Version*, unless otherwise noted.

<sup>3</sup>John G. Stackhouse Jr., *Canadian Evangelicalism in the Twentieth Century: An Introduction to its Character* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) p. 7.

<sup>4</sup>J. Walsh, "'Methodism' and the Origins of English Speaking Evangelicalism" in *Evangelicalism*, Eds. Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, & George A. Rawlyk (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1994) p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>For background on this time period see K.S. Latourette, *A History of Christianity: Reformation to the Present*, (USA: Prince Press, 1975. Reprint 1997) p. 802. ff.

<sup>6</sup>Mark A. Noll, "Puritanism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, Ed. Walter A. Elwell (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1984). p. 898.

<sup>7</sup>What follows is derived from Mark A. Noll, "Puritanism," in *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, p. 856f.

Mr. P. H. Holtvluwer is in his final year of studies at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton. 

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Suggested improvements to Yearbook

It is another sign of Spring when the new *Yearbook* of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches has arrived. A very helpful tool when travelling, and excellent for reference all year round. The only part that is read at once by most of us, I presume, are the statistics. And of course the annual Review of the Year, which this year again has been very well taken care of by Dr. J. DeJong. I am always surprised to see how informative the review is. Especially for those who save these yearbooks they certainly have historical value for future generations. And for that reason I have a suggestion. In his Year-end Review Dr. DeJong makes reference to the “growth” of our churches. He writes: “Last year’s growth . . . still lags behind the usual averages.” And he goes on to give, what he considers the prominent reason for this, and indicates that he gleaned this information from “bulletins and other sources.”

For us and for future historians this does not seem the best source of information to draw conclusions from. My suggestion is, that we, as a church federation, with a history of close to 50 years, should gather some better statistics to give us, as well as the compilers of the Year-end Review, much better sources to draw conclusions from. Those who are familiar with the *Handboek* published annually by our sister churches in the Netherlands, know exactly what I mean. For those who are not, I would just like to mention, that it would be very helpful if the statistics in our Yearbook indicated not only the net increase (or decrease: see Australian numbers), but also numbers of members received through baptism, and the numbers lost through death. The numbers of members received from outside of our federation, and from where. The numbers withdrawn from our federation and where they went, and so on. The surprising thing is that in the Netherlands almost all churches, each year again, do respond to the questionnaires sent to them to gather this very much detailed information. Credit to those churches, but even more to the one who organizes the effort. I would hope that some consistories will write to the publishers of our *Yearbook*, as well as to Synod, to have these statistical improvements incorporated in future editions of our Canadian/American/(Australian) Reformed *Yearbook*. Obviously the cost of the book may increase, but perhaps the publisher could offset this by soliciting some advertising for the *Yearbook*, again just as has been done in the Netherlands for many years, in order to keep the cost per copy as low as possible.

Gerry Denbok, Burlington

## Quite laudable . . . nevertheless . . .

Please allow me to make a few remarks about the proposal of Dr. DeJong in “*Clarion*” March 5, 1999 in his Editorial.

When reading it, I came to the conclusion that the basics are quite laudable. A tiered approach might indeed be very helpful in contacts with other churches. Nevertheless, there are some things in which Dr. DeJong is going too far. So for instance when he writes: “Why not opt for a relationship of table fellowship with some form of an ecclesiastically responsible procedure regarding guests and an occasional pulpit exchange policy without the right to actually call ministers from either federation?”

I would ask: Why “occasionally” pulpit exchange as long as there is not a unity? I would “opt” for a full sister-church relation first, and not pretending that there is a unity already, not on the pulpit and not at the table either. Calvin is very clear about unity (see *Institutes*, book 4, chap. 1, par 7) Professing unity in true doctrine, by partaking of the Lord’s Supper. “Unity in doctrine first. In the same “*Clarion*” Prof. Faber writes about Covenant and Election, as this was a doctrinal difference in the time of the Liberation. In the Westminster Standards, we find something similar. In

the Larger Catechism, Answer 31 is stated that “the covenant was made with Christ as the second Adam, and in Him with all the elect as His seed. On the other hand, in Answer 166 it is confessed that “infants descending from parents, either both or one of them professing faith in Christ and obedient to Him, are in that respect in the covenant and are to be baptized”. The Westminster Standards teach **both** a covenant with the believers and their seed, and a covenant with Christ and all the elect. At least we can say that the Standards have a two-sided approach. That can lead to the same difficulties as in 1943/44.

We did learn enough through the struggle in the time before the Liberation. It might be that some have forgotten, but I am sure not so Dr. DeJong, seeing his discussion in *Clarion* with Prof. Engelsma during 1991/92, about the same topic. Why then this proposal of Dr. DeJong?

Another reason to be very careful with this “tiered” approach is what Dr. DeJong writes in footnote 9 about the “categories adopted at the 64th General Assembly of the OPC (like they are quoted from the minutes 1997, 30). Dr. DeJong adds: “Apparently this form of contact will be pursued to replace the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the Christian Reformed Churches.”

The Can. Ref. Churches have always tried to convince the OPC to break the contact with the Chr. Ref. churches. Now that contact is finally broken, there is already a new form of contact in the making.

I am convinced that we shall be rather careful not to drag in the Trojan horse of an artificial union, endangering at the same time our own unity.

W. DeHaan, Wardville, ON

My thanks to Br. De Haan for his remarks. It is always good to know that when a proposal is put forward for discussion, church members are willing to read and thing along! I can respect my brother’s opinions, but would offer a brief rejoinder:

1. When I suggest an “occasional pulpit exchange” and responsible table fellowship I am not assuming, as Br. De Haan writes, that there is “not a unity.” On the contrary! There is a unity of faith and a recognition of each other as faithful churches in the service of the Lord. As Br. De Haan knows, both the synods in Holland and here in Canada have consistently maintained this point with various churches of Presbyterian background, despite the fact that the Westminster Standards have a different approach to covenant and election than that echoed in the Three Forms of Unity. As Reformed Churches we can live together with those who uphold these confessions, because, contrary to the spirit of the synodical churches in 1944, that view is not being made *binding* upon us.

2. Ecclesiastical Fellowship one step removed from a full sister church relationship as it is defined in our church order would allow us to *practice* our unity as it has been recognized so far, and also give time for us to carefully deal with those important matters – as, for example, the elements of liturgy and church government – which need to be resolved in order for a full sister church relationship to work effectively. Is that a Trojan horse? Not if the churches are careful in doing their homework! In fact, it may well serve as a vehicle to sharpen each other with a view to the common heritage of the Reformed faith, and so contribute to a more united and more effective Reformed witness on this continent.

J. De Jong

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.

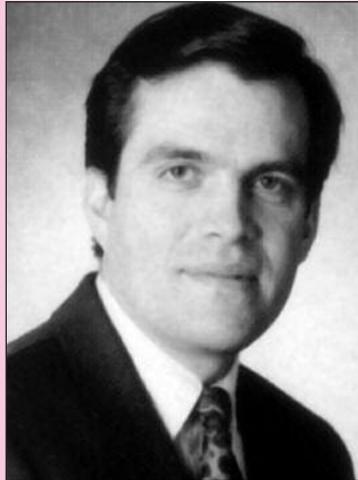


# Canada Family Action Coalition

By R. Aasman

We live in unsettling times. In April of 1998, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled on *Vriend vs. the Government of Alberta* and ordered the Province of Alberta to grant homosexuality special status under its Individual Rights Protection Act. This past December, the BC Supreme Court declared that a Surrey School Board could not use religious beliefs in determining not to use books which depict gays and lesbians. For ten years the British Columbia College of Teachers has denied accreditation to Trinity Western University because students are required to sign a statement that they refrain from adultery, premarital sex and homosexual behaviour. Another very disturbing fact is that 20% of Canadian and 25% of American pregnancies now end in abortion (over 100,000 in Canada). There are other significant current issues like same sex spousal benefits, homosexual fostering and adoption, pornography laws and euthanasia. We could go on with other examples.

As Christians we know what the Bible teaches us about moral issues. We also understand that the governing authorities are established by God and are answerable to Him. Many courageous Christians have stepped forth and spoken clearly about matters such as abortion, euthanasia and homosexuality. However there are also many who remain silent. Perhaps they are afraid to speak up. Perhaps they are simply not familiar or comfortable with finding an avenue by which their voice may be heard. But one thing should be clear: our governing authorities are very sensitive to the input of their constituents. We see this in our federal and provincial governments: when letters, faxes and phone calls come flooding in on a particular moral issue, a government dares not ignore them. You see, there will be a future election. In other words, when Christians do speak up and make their moral convictions known, they will have an influence on the moral direction of this country.



Rev. Roy Beyer

It was with a view to motivating, training and activating Christians to defend and promote biblical principles in Canada that the Canada Family Action Coalition (CFAC) was formed. The goal of the CFAC is to provide strategies, networking, training and information to enable Christians to effectively influence their government. This works best when each local congregation has a Contact Person who will receive from the CFAC information about current issues and will pass this on to the congregation. Congregational members will be made aware of current issues for the purpose of prayer and being able to contact the appropriate Member of Parliament or organization with their concerns.

Recently, Rev. Roy Beyer, president of the CFAC, was invited to speak in Edmonton and Neerlandia to our church members. His presentation which included a video presentation on the CFAC was enthusiastically received. He made clear that when Christians are aware of current moral issues and they send a letter or fax or make a phone call to the appropriate people outlining, even briefly, their concerns, that will

have a great impact on the "decision making tables of our nation." Roy Beyer expressed the hope that more of our churches will invite him for a presentation. Hopefully this will be done. The CFAC can be contacted through its website which is

[www.familyaction.org](http://www.familyaction.org)

Its Edmonton phone number is

780-944-9130 and

fax is 780-408-3080

Anyone can become a member of the CFAC and receive their regular newsletters as well. This is a rich opportunity to inform and mobilize Canadian Christians to timely and effective social and political action. 

## CHURCH NEWS



**CALLED** to the church of Houston, BC

**Rev. J. Slaa**

of Elora, ON

\*\*\*

**DECLINED** the call to the Free Reformed Church of Australia at West Kelmscott

**Rev. J. VanWoudenberg**

of Watford, ON

\*\*\*

On March 24, 1999, the consistory of Launceston church deposed

**Rev. F.J. van Hulst**

as minister of the Free Reformed Church of Launceston, Tasmania

\*\*\*

**DECLINED** the call to Smithers, BC

**Rev. R. Aasman**

of Edmonton (Providence), AB



# Campfire!

## Children's Summer Bible Camp

Yes, *Campfire!* is being fanned to flame again this summer, for our third year in operation. It will be an expanded five weeks of fun and learning. If you missed the news on *Campfire!* 1998, the year-end *Clarion* had an enlightening article on the work of the camp last summer.

*Campfire!* will be held God willing, from July 26 to August 28 of this summer at the Hockley Valley Boy Scouts camp just outside of Orangeville, Ontario. The first week will be a Teen Leadership Camp, for teens 13-16 from the Canadian Reformed community and their neighbourhood friends. The following three weeks are Discovery Camp, for children ages 8-13, from our church and Hamilton's north-east end. The final week features a Wilderness Adventure Camp, again for Canadian Reformed teens 13-16 years old, but registration is limited to 18 courageous campers for this trek into the uncharted wilds. In the same week, but for two and a half days at our regular Orangeville location, a Sprouts Camp will be held. This mini-camp is for young 'uns aged 5-7, to give them an exciting first taste



of camp life. The cost is \$50 per sprout, or \$75 for two. For the other weeks, the fee is \$150 per child, or \$250 for two. The camper application deadline is June 1.

The camp needs campers, but also staff, counsellors, and counsellors-in-training (CITs). Two staff positions are open, head counsellor and

assistant director. Counsellors must be at least 18, CITs 16 and above. May 1 is the application deadline for these positions.

You can support *Campfire!* in many ways, from sending your children for a week, to signing up as a cook, bus driver, nurse, or camp-parent. You can also be a part of *Campfire!* through the opportunity to "send a kid to camp", sponsoring a child who wouldn't otherwise be able to go. We don't want to exclude children from camp, and our hope is that there will be funds donated to cover the costs of those less fortunate. Most importantly, we ask that you support *Campfire!* in your prayers. Please pray for all those involved in its operation, and also that God's Name might be spread and glorified by this work.

### For information, please contact:

Camper Registration:  
Nadia Zietsma (905) 389 8314  
tzietsma@spectranet.ca

Counsellor and Staff Registration:  
Jody Vandooren (905) 689 8099  
vandoojm@mcmaster.ca

General Inquiries:  
Ian Wildeboer (905) 521 9852  
wildebid@mcmaster.ca



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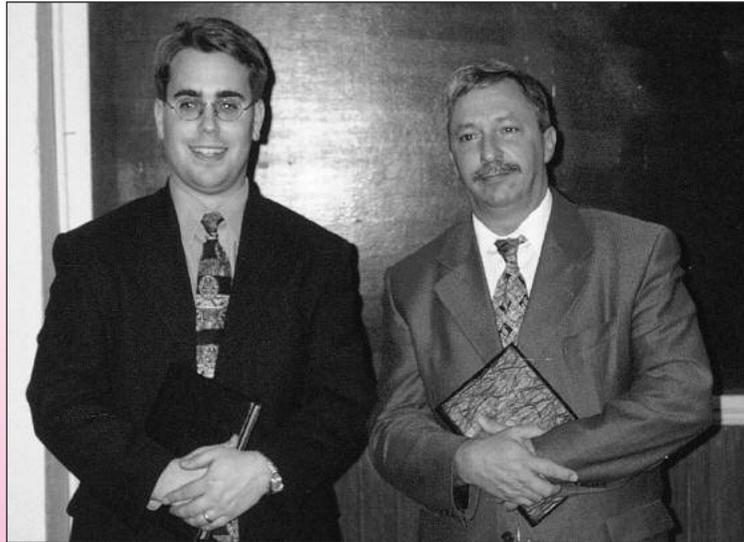
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# A joyous occasion in Denver: Installation and welcome evening for the Vandeburgt family

On January 10, 1999, the congregation of Emmanuel American Reformed Church, Denver, Colorado, witnessed the ordination and installation of Rev. Doug Vandeburgt to the ministry of the Word of God, receiving the pastor and teacher whom they had called. After weeks of anticipation, and indeed, suspense, the effort to obtain a temporary work visa in the United States was finally crowned with success when the Vandeburgt family arrived in Denver, along with several relatives, among whom was the Rev. Clarence Stam, who had been invited to ordain and install Br. Vandeburgt. Members of the congregation noted that Rev. Stam had preached several years earlier at Denver, making this second visit on this particular occasion so much the more appropriate.

Rev. Stam chose as his text, Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever." He noted in his sermon that just as early Hebrew Christians faced difficulties, change, and uncertainty in their personal and congregational matters, so the congregation in Denver likewise has gone through a time of difficulty, and as well, shall face new concerns and challenges. Yet as the Hebrew Christian of the apostolic age could be comforted that Jesus Christ continues to govern his church by his Word and Spirit, so the church at Denver may and must find comfort in this same assurance. At the same time the congregation was confronted with the consequences of this confession. Just as the Hebrew Christians of old were called to be faithful both as individual members and as office bearers, so the congregation at Denver, with such spiritual promises placed before her, is also called to be faithful in all things.

Following the sermon and the ordination and installation of Candidate Vandeburgt to the ministry of the word, Br. Paul Buys, chairman of the consistory, took the opportunity to read a number of congratulatory letters from



across the classical resort, and from across Canada and the United States.

After a delicious potluck luncheon prepared and served by the ladies of the congregation, and a period of relaxation and fellowship, the congregation and visitors were again called to worship. The newly ordained Rev. Vandeburgt chose for his inaugural sermon, the text found in Paul's letter to the church at Colossae: "Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to his working which works in me mightily." (Colossians 1:28-29)

Rev. Vandeburgt summarized this text under the following theme: The proclamation of the Lord's Name is every minister's first task. He noted that while there will be vanity in the manner and mode of leading, the character of this proclamation is to be consistently rooted in God's revelation in Jesus Christ to his people. Secondly, he noted the goal of preaching, that the congregation may be nourished, edified, and made mature in Christ. Finally, he noted the power of this

proclamation in Christ; the energizing power of every minister's proclamation of Christ must be the energy which is supplied by God in Christ, an energy graciously given in faith.

This worship service was also the joyful occasion of the baptism of one of our covenant children. Thus Rev. Vandeburgt was able to administer the sacrament of baptism to the newly born member of the congregation, Chloe Moorlag.

At the close of this afternoon worship service, the members of the congregation left for their home with great joy and thankfulness to God for his evident care for His church here in Denver.

A welcome evening was held some weeks later for the Vandeburgt family. By this time, due to the small size of the congregation, our new pastor was acquainted with each member of the congregation. Nevertheless, an evening of fellowship and casual entertainment had been arranged. The evening commenced with some opening remarks given by Mr. Paul Buys. He gave a brief overview of the previous years of church life, and, on behalf of the consistory, expressed his gratitude for the

Lord's gift of a pastor and teacher in the person of Rev. Vandeburgt. His comments were followed by the presentation of a welcome banner from some of the children in the congregation to Rev. Vandeburgt and his wife.

After this, those in attendance were seated at the dinner tables, and treated to a "Mystery Dinner," organized and served by Ms. Vi Van Otterloo and the youth group of the church. Following this delicious meal, the Rev. and Mrs. Vandeburgt were presented with a number of gifts intended to humorously portray the various occupations represented by members of the congregation. Finally, a slide show depicting the history of the church in Denver was presented. Our new pastor and teacher brought this enjoyable evening to a close with a few remarks, and closed with us in prayer.

Although few in number, the members of the congregation are filled with gratitude to our Faithful God and Father for granting us a minister of the Word. It is our hope and desire to see the ministry of our new pastor be both a blessing to our congregation and an honor to the Name of our God, who has established his church here in this place.



## The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

### Funding the expansion project Update and launch of Phase II

Gifts have arrived from church members in Australia, the United States of America, and from all of the churches in Canada. A group of young people in B.C. held a fund raiser. The annual hockey tournament in Ontario is advertising that its proceeds have been designated to the College's expansion fund. We received quite a few donations from businesses, some from anonymous donors, and a significant one from someone who is not a member yet sympathetic to the cause.

During a Finance & Property Committee meeting at the end of February it was reported that 1127 gifts had come in which, combined with funds already accumulated and earmarked for the expansion project, resulted in \$548,000 being available towards the estimated costs of \$680,000. It was acknowledged with joy and gratitude that the "green light threshold" imposed on the project by Synod Fergus 1998 (80% of the total estimated costs was to be on hand and/or be committed before construction could begin) had been met.

We are now launching the second phase of the funding program. Its goal is to raise the remaining \$132,000 to ensure full funding of the originally estimated costs. The construction plans will be carried out in a stewardly manner, and it is hoped to complete the project within the

amount of the original estimates. The goal is well within reach, considering two factors:

1. Thus far only 20% of the combined communicant membership of the churches in Australia and North America have supported the funding program with a gift.
2. We are aware of a few significant gifts that already have been committed to Phase II.

If you belong to the eighty percent of the people who may have postponed their gift for whatever reason, we are inviting you as yet to participate. Now would be a good time to send your gift to the College. Should you have mislaid the brochure that was made available several months ago, all you need to do is write a cheque, note on it the congregation to which you belong, and mail it in an envelope addressed to The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, ON L9C 5A1.

We thank the Lord for the good results He has provided by means of his people. Please remember with us in prayer the College, the outcome of the funding program, and the efficient and safe execution of the building plans.

On behalf of the Funding Committee,  
W. Smouter



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# Welcome, Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder and Family!

The congregation of Flamborough was instituted in September of 1997 and God has certainly blessed us with much since then. We were able to have pulpit supply every service since being instituted and on February 14th, a year and a half later, God blessed us with our own minister.

Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder and three of their children arrived in Flamborough on February 3rd. A week and a half later, Rev. DeGelder was installed as minister by Rev. G.H. Visscher.

## Installation

As his text for the morning sermon Rev. Visscher chose 2 Timothy 4:1 and 2, which speaks of the following charge: "Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke, and encourage, with great patience and careful instruction."

Rev. Visscher's theme and points were as follows:

"Paul, the departing apostle, charges Timothy to be steadfast in preaching the Word of God."

1. The seriousness of this charge.
  2. The nature of the task of preaching.
- After the sermon Rev. Visscher read the form for installation of ministers of the Word and Rev. DeGelder was installed as minister of Flamborough.

Following the service an opportunity was given to anyone who wished to speak a few words. Some letters were read and a number of delegates from the surrounding churches also took the opportunity to congratulate the congregation and speak words of encouragement to Rev. DeGelder.

In the afternoon service we had the privilege of listening to Rev. DeGelder preach to us for the first time as our minister. He chose Galatians 1:3-5 as his text: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord Jesus Christ." He summarized the text as follows:

"The apostolic preaching begins with grace and peace."

1. The origin of grace and peace.



*The DeGelder family*

2. The grounds for grace and peace.
3. The purpose for grace and peace.

## Welcome evening

On the evening of February 19th, we, as congregation, were able to welcome our new minister and his family in a variety of ways.

After the opening and welcome we were treated to a brief history of the Burlington churches, put together and presented by our most senior member, Mr. S. VanDam. The first Burlington congregation was formed in 1955. Some 16 years later, in 1971, two congregations were formed, Burlington East and Burlington West. Then, in 1983, due to further growth, Burlington South was instituted. God continued to bless His church with much growth and it soon became clear that Burlington West was, once again, becoming a very large congregation. Consequently, in 1997, two congregations were formed from Burlington West, Burlington-Waterdown and Flamborough. Rev. G.H. Visscher remained with Burlington-Waterdown as their minister. Flamborough was, therefore, vacant. Once again, however, we see how God continues

to provide and care for his church as Flamborough has now received their own minister, Rev. DeGelder.

A number of societies from the congregation also made some presentations. The women society wrote up an "Introductory Directory" aimed at introducing the members of the congregation to the DeGelder family. As a story was read you were to stand up when your occupation was named. Needless to say the landscapers outnumbered all of the occupations!

Another Bible study group introduced the congregation with pictures. Each group of pictures, put together, made up a word, either a family name or occupation of that family. Once again the card that matched the most families in the congregation was the "landscaper" card.

The young peoples society presented us with quite a comical "interview" with Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder. A question was asked by the young people after which Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder had to open a gift. The gift was the answer to the question. A couple of examples were:



Our M.C. for the evening,  
Mr. Ron Bremer



"To the praise of God, the King."



"Welcome, Rev. & Mrs. DeGelder!"

1. *Question:* "Rev. DeGelder: Who do you think has the most say in the church, the men or the women?"  
*Answer:* "Depends."
2. *Question:* "What do you think of the young peoples you've seen?"  
*Answer:* "Smarties."

The Covenant Christian School Society made a presentation to Rev. DeGelder in the form of a card signed by all the students and a large wooden key. The key symbolizes the fact that the school doors are always open for Rev. DeGelder and that he is most welcome to visit anytime.

The cadets, a group of boys from the congregation, dressed in uniform, presented us with their march and drill and their theme song.

An impressive variety of musical talents was also displayed, ranging from performances by the school and Flamborough choirs, to instrumentals such as organ, piano, violin, cello, tin whistle, and flute. One of the songs we all joined together to sing was Psalm 150, definitely a very fitting song of praise, considering the great variety of voices and instruments performing throughout the evening!

Rev. DeGelder ended the evening with words of thanks and a closing prayer after which we all sang our thanks with the words of Hymn 63:1 and 2 – "I'll thank Thee O my God and Saviour, and praise Thee in my evensong. . . ."

Following the closing we all gathered downstairs for some delicious goodies and coffee. Each family was

given the opportunity to talk with Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder and present them with a rose and a card. Every family made their own card, including information such as a map to where they live, names and ages of family members, a family picture, or whatever they thought relevant to include. It was a rather neat way to make introductions and something the DeGelder family is likely to refer to time and again.

As congregation we thank God for providing us with a minister of his Word and pray that He may give Rev. DeGelder wisdom in his task that, through the preaching, we may know our Father better and learn to serve and obey Him more and more all the time.

Cynthia VanderLaan 

# Cloverdale Canadian Reformed Church Welcomes New Minister

Friday, January 8, 1999 was a memorable and joyful turning point in the history of Cloverdale Canadian Reformed Church. The congregation gathered that evening to welcome Rev. J. Huijgen and his family. The festivities began with a welcome song and a few words of welcome spoken by the entertainment organizers for the evening, Mrs. Ann Bysterveld and George Gunnink.

The Credo Christian High School Band entertained the audience with several pieces, which they performed with considerable energy and flourish. Conducted by their band teacher, Mr. Heres Snyder, the first piece was entitled *Joyance*, a collection of hymns which includes a pleasant arrangement of Hymn 35. The congregation was invited to sing along and accompanied the band with several stanzas of Hymn 35. The walls of the newly refurbished building were literally vibrating with sound as the congregation and the band made a "joyful noise to the Lord!" The band followed with a bright and cheerful selection called "Jazz Medley" which allowed the whole congregation to experience what is really meant by the phrase "Let the clashing cymbals ring."

The band's performance was followed by a number of entertaining skits performed by several groups in the congregation. The Boys and Girls Club called their parents down to the stage, and after mixing them up, forced Rev. Huijgen to match the children with the parents. He passed with flying colours. The Cloverdale Young People's Society



presented a review of the history of the congregation, which included short speeches by each of Cloverdale's former pastors. Mike Wendt's memorable imitation of Rev. J. Mulder, complete with a Dutch accent, had the congregation roaring with laughter.

Classis representatives, Rev. C. VanSpronsen and Rev. C. VanderVelde extended official words of welcome. The Women's Society treated the audience to a new version of the game show "Jeopardy," in which the contestants had to identify members of the congregation with trivia clues. The Men's Society, not wishing to be outdone, made an interesting presentation about the va-

riety of vocations and industries represented in the congregation. Soon, we had a collection of farmers, mechanics and carpenters on stage, complete with work clothes and tools!

The evening closed on a pleasant note when the Master of Ceremonies, Henry Voorhorst, read a fax from our former pastor Rev. J. Moesker. Rev. Moesker expressed his congratulations and joy that the Lord had granted us a new pastor and teacher. Rev. J. Huijgen closed the evening by leading us in a prayer of thanksgiving. Then the congregation retired to the annex for coffee, cake and serious conversation.

S. DeJong 

*In LINK with you*



Check out Clarion's website at:  
<[premier.mb.ca/clarion.html](http://premier.mb.ca/clarion.html)>

Churches Note: We invite you to link Clarion's homepage to your church's homepage.



## Press Release of Classis Northern Ontario of March 12, 1999

### Opening

Rev. R.E. Pot opened the meeting. He read Scripture and asked for God's blessing. He observed that God's blessing of growth had made a division of Classis Ontario North necessary and spoke a word of encouragement on the basis of the Scripture he had read, with particular reference to Psalm 124:8, "Our help is in the name of the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth."

### Constitution

The credentials were in order, therefore, Classis was constituted. The officers were appointed as recommended at the last Classis, to wit, Rev. P. Feenstra as chairman, Rev. P. Aasman as vice-chairman, and Rev. B.J. Berends as clerk. The agenda was adopted. The chairman welcomed the delegates at Classis as well as guests. Special welcome was extended to Rev. Shouwstra, minister of the Grace Orthodox Reformed Church of Guthrie (of the United Reformed Churches of North America).

### Reports

- Classis received a financial report from the Treasurer of Classis Ontario North, dividing the remaining funds between Classis Northern Ontario and Central Ontario. The Church of Burlington & Waterdown reported that the books of the Classical treasurer had been audited.
- Classis also received a report from the Church of Guelph for the Needy Student Fund, indicating that the Fund had now become completely depleted.

### Question Period

The Chairman asked the questions required by Church Order Article 44. According to the testimony of the delegates, the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued and the decisions of the major assemblies are being hon-

oured. Two of the churches asked for advise to help in the proper government of the church.

### Fraternal Address

Rev. B. Shouwstra was given the floor. He thanked the Classis for the invitation to attend this meeting. He brought greetings from the United Reformed Churches of North America, expressed thanks for the growing contact between their churches and the Canadian Reformed Churches, and spoke words of encouragement on the basis of Psalm 121, "My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."

### Appointments

- Annual Appointment: Because this was the first convening of the newly formed Classis Northern Ontario, all appointments needed to be made for the first time. They were as follows: coordinators for the preparatory and peremptory examinations (Reverends J.G. Slaa and A.J. Pol); Church Visitors; Church for taking care of the Archives (Owen Sound); Church responsible to inspect the Archives (Orangeville); Classical Treasurer (br. F. Hoekstra of the Church of Owen Sound); Church for auditing the books of the Treasurer (Grand Valley); Church for Financial Aid to Students of the Ministry (Guelph); Church for auditing the books of the Fund for Financial Aid to Students of the Ministry (Fergus); Committee for Needy Churches (F. Westrik, W. Oostdyk, C. Lodder); Church to Audit the books of the Fund for Needy Churches (Fergus).
- Appointments for the next Classis: The Church of Owen Sound was appointed to convene the next Classis on June 25 at 9 am.

### Review of the Regulations for Classis Northern Ontario

The Church of Elora was appointed to receive suggestions for changes to the Regulations and to report to the churches before the next Classis.

### Conclusion of the Meeting

Question period was held. The Acts of Classis were adopted. The Press Release was approved for publication. In prayer, the chairman gave thanks to God for this meeting and asked for a blessing on the decisions. The Classis was then closed.

## Press Release of Classis Central Ontario, held March 12, 1999

### 1. Opening:

On behalf of the convening church of Ottawa Rev. M. Jagt called the meeting to order. The assembly sang Psalm 87:1,2 and 5, Isa 26:1-15 was read and Rev. Jagt opened in prayer. He welcomed the delegates noting that this was a special occasion, the first Classis Central Ontario.

### 2. Examination of Credentials:

The church of Ottawa examined the credentials. All the churches were properly represented. The church of Burlington Ebenezer had an instruction under article 44 C.O.

### 3. Constitution of Classis and Appointment of Officers:

Classis was constituted and the following officers took their places:  
chairman – Rev. G. Nederveen;  
vice chairman – Rev. C. Bosch;  
clerk – Rev. W. den Hollander  
The chairman mentioned the historic character of this meeting. He welcomed Rev. M. Jagt and congratulated the church of Ottawa in receiving him as minister of the Word. Rev. C. Bosch declined the call extended by the church of Legana, Tasmania. A word of welcome was also extended to Rev. J. De Gelder of Flamborough. Flamborough was also congratulated in receiving him as her first minister. Rev. Nederveen expressed thankfulness to Burlington-Ebenezer for opening its doors to host this Classis.

#### 4. Adoption of the Agenda:

After the addition of some items the agenda was adopted.

#### 5. Signing of the Form of Subscription:

Because of the nature of this Classis the "Form for Subscription" was read, adopted and signed by all the ministers present.

#### 6. Question Period according to Article 44 of the Church Order

The churches declared that the ministry of the office bearers is being continued and that the decisions of the major assemblies are being honored.

Only the church of Burlington Ebenezer requested the judgment of Classis in a matter of discipline. Advice was given in closed session.

#### 7. Correspondence Received:

- 7.1 A report from Br. J.J. Poort treasurer of Classis ON North was received with thanks.
- 7.2 An audit of the books of the treasurer by the church of Burlington-Waterdown was received stating that the books had been checked and found in good order.
- 7.3 A letter from the church of Guelph was received informing the churches that the Fund for Needy Students is now depleted.

#### 8. Proposals:

Proposals from the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed church and the church of Ottawa re: Classical regulations are read, discussed and adopted

#### 9. Committee Appointments:

Classis made the following appointments:

Committee of Examiners:

The following ministers were appointed:

Coordinators

C. Bosch and W. den Hollander

Exegesis Old Testament

G. Nederveen

Exegesis New Testament

G. H. Visscher

Knowledge of Scripture

M. Jagt

Doctrine and Creeds

J. de Gelder

Church History

W. den Hollander

Ethics

M. Jagt

Church Polity

G. Nederveen

Diaconiology

C. Bosch

Church Visitors:

C. Bosch, W. den Hollander

and G. Nederveen.

Church for taking care of the archives:

Burlington-Ebenezer

Church to inspect the Archives:

Burlington-Fellowship

Treasurer:

J.J. Poort – Alternate: J. Dykstra

Church to audit the books of the Classical Treasurer:

Burlington-Waterdown

Church for Financial Aid to students for the ministry:

Guelph

Church for Auditing the Books of Fund Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry:

Burlington-Waterdown

Committee for Needy Churches:

The brothers: F. Lodder, B. Hordyk, W. Van Huisstede. (Treasurer F. Lodder)

Church to audit the Books for the Fund Needy Churches:

Burlington-Waterdown

Observers Free Church of Scotland:

G. Nederveen

Convening church for next Classis

Toronto June 11, '99

Suggested officers:

chairman – Rev. G. Visscher

vice chairman –

Rev. W. den Hollander

clerk – Rev. G. Nederveen

#### 11. Question Period:

Was made use of.

#### 12. Censure according to article 34 of the Church Order

The chairman determined that Censure was not required.

#### 13. Adoption of Acts and approval of Press Release

The Acts were read and adopted. The Press Release was read and approved for publication.

#### 14. Closing:

Rev. Nederveen thanked the brothers for their good cooperation. The assembly sang Psalm 107:1,12,17 and Rev. Nederveen closed in prayer.

### Press Release of Classis Pacific East March 25-26, 1999 held at Chilliwack, BC

1. On behalf of the convening church at Chilliwack, Rev. M.H. VanLuik requested the singing of Psalm 139:1,4,5,13, read John 3:1-21, and led in prayer. He then spoke some words of welcome and wished the brothers the Lord's blessing in all their deliberations.
2. The delegates of the church at Aldergrove reported that all the credentials were in good order. One alternate delegate was present.
3. The members of the moderamen took their places – chairman: Rev. R. Schouten; vice-chairman: Rev. C.J. VanderVelde; clerk: Rev. W. Wielenga.  
The chairman of Classis observed that Aldergrove does not yet have its own minister and also noted that Rev. VanLuik recently declined two calls.
4. After some additions, the agenda as adopted.
5. Classis adopted the overture by the church at Lynden to ask Regional Synod West to overture the next General Synod to increase the number of delegates from sixteen to twenty-four and to change CO Article 49 accordingly. This would give more representation from the churches and promote the perception of procedural fairness and due process.

6. Classis entered into a preliminary discussion of five appeals. Three committees were struck to deal with these appeals. These committees met until late in the evening.
7. After the brothers sang Psalm 86:3,4, Classis was adjourned for the day.
8. Classis reconvened at 9:00 a.m. the next day. The chairman requested the singing of Psalm 145:3,4, read Matthew 13:24-43, and led in prayer. He welcomed the brothers. All the same delegates were present.
9. After plenary session, all the appeals were sent back to the respective committees. After further plenary discussion and also more committee work, Classis concluded its work with respect to the appeals in the evening.

10. A church asked for advice of Classis as per instruction.
11. Church visitation reports pertaining to the churches at Vernon and Chilliwack were read.
12. The treasurer's report was received for the period Jan. 1/98 - Dec. 31/98.
13. The Needy Churches Fund report was received for the period Jan. 1/98 - December 31/98.
14. The church for the inspection of the archives sent a letter that the archives were not available for inspection at this time.
15. Question Period according to CO Article 44 was held. One church asked for advice for the government of the church.
16. Appointments
  - Convening church of next Classis: Lynden; Date: June 17/99 (October 7/99 as alternate date); Officers - chairman: Rev. C.J. VanderVelde; vice-chairman: Rev. W. Wielenga; clerk: Rev. D. Moes.
  - Committee for Examinations, church visitors, archive church, church for the inspection of the archives, the treasurer, the church for auditing the books of the treasurer, the Committee for Aid to Students for the Ministry, the Committee for Needy Churches, and deputies for preaching arrangements were all reappointed.
  - Classical arrangements for preaching at Aldergrove were made.
17. Question Period was held.
18. Censure according to CO Article 34 was not necessary.
19. The Acts were read and adopted.
20. The Press Release was read and approved for publication.
21. The chairman thanked the brothers for the good spirit of cooperation and also thanked the church at Chilliwack for the laptop computers at the disposal of Classis. The chairman requested the singing of Hymn 63:1,2 and led in prayer. The chairman then declared the meeting closed.

On behalf of Classic,  
C.J. VanderVelde, clerk 

## I.L.P.B. Update April, 1999

As another Bible study season draws to a close, it is a good time to see what Reformed outlines are available so that you can determine what to study next fall.

Please contact the I.L.P.B. representative in your congregation for a brochure on the outlines and topical books available. They will be pleased to help you. Remember there will be a 10% discount when you order 10 books or more!

The I.L.P.B. is a joint venture of the Men, Women, and Young People's Societies. Our mandate is to translate and publish Reformed Bible study material and our goal is to promote the study of God's Word.

Currently we are working on Acts; 2 Corinthians; Believe and Confess; James and 1 & 2 Peter; Joshua; Een Koning naar Gods Wil; Jona, Profet van God; Wat is Hierop Uw Antwoord; The Bride's Treasure and To the Praise of His Glory.

New publication available now: Confess Your Faith! by Rev. A.J. Pol. This is a real gem, especially for pre-confession classes but also a good refresher course for young people of all ages.

Coming soon: a reprint of You . . . His Child & You . . . His Guest, by P.C. van Wijk.

Thank you for your support. We pray that the Lord may continue to bless our endeavours to promote the study of His Word.

For the I.L.P.B.,  
Jo Anne Werkman



# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



## Dear Busy Beavers

It's been a great holiday, and now we're back at school. Don't you feel very blessed to be allowed to go to a Christian school where your teachers tell you all about God and the Church? Yes, I often felt that way too, when I still went to school. And that we are able to celebrate events in the Church, and understand why we are celebrating. Wow, that's just so great.

Lots of love, Aunt Betty

## GRADE 4 STUDENTS

Find all their names, then decipher the secret message of this puzzle with all the remaining letters. You may find it easier if you put circles around all the letters you use, instead of the whole name

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

**FIND:** MISS VAN GROOTHEST JOHN  
 PAUL P ASHLEY KELLY PAUL V  
 BEN KEN RACHEL BRENT  
 KLAARISSA SCOTT BRITTANY LEANNE  
 SHELLEY B CURTIS NADINE SHELLEY O  
 DAVID NANCY TONYA JACLYN  
 NAOMI WESLEY

Now find the secret message. It has three sentences.

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## April Birthdays

9	Kimberly Tuininga	19	Marli DeVries
12	Bradley Bergsma	21	Jaclyn Nobel
16	Megan Strating	24	Rianne Lodder
18	Melissa Brouwer	29	Lynette DeHaas

## CODE BREAKER

By Busy Beaver *Shawna Bethlehem*

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

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



## FROM THE MAILBOX

Whew, I got a whole envelope full of letters from the Grade Four students at the Maranatha Christian School in Fergus. It was lots of fun reading their letters, and seeing the puzzles and games. Since there were too many to write back, I have made a puzzle out of all their names. Thanks also to Miss Van Groothest, who organized this as part of her Church History class. It was really wonderful to get so many letters, and all at once.

Hello also to *Shawna Bethlehem*. Thanks for your letter and puzzles. It was great to hear from you again. I hope you take very good care of Charcoal, your cat. I can imagine that he is very very cute. Write again, won't you Shawna.

