

Clarion

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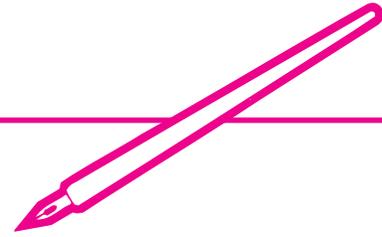


A prayer for labour

Numbers

10:1-10

By R. Aasman



Good Manners Do Make a Difference

Reality check

I was headed for the exit door when two young teenagers abruptly stepped in front of me, forcing me back to prevent a collision. They went through the double door exit, letting the doors slap behind them without any regard for someone who might be following. The language being used by these two young fellows was rough and filthy. Outside one of them treated me to the spectacle of a phlegm ball being spat on the sidewalk.

Shocking? Yes and no. Yes it was shocking because it was clearly a case of bad manners and bad etiquette. There was absolutely no consideration, no regard, for other people's feelings and needs. But no, it was not so shocking because this is not an uncommon sight in our society. Who of us can go to a local mall for a couple of hours and not be confronted by bad behaviour? That is not just the behaviour of teenagers. Bad manners are displayed by children, adults, parents and the elderly alike. True, the younger generations are often less restrained in exhibiting bad manners, but it is not their exclusive domain.

If Johnny wants to chew with his mouth wide open in a restaurant or to spit on a public sidewalk, then who is going to tell him this is wrong?

This is the reality of our society, and it is not very pretty. It is also a big change in behaviour patterns. Many of us can remember a different time – not a perfect time, mind you – but a time when there was a greater degree of politeness and respect for others. Quite frankly, the change has many people disturbed. It is not uncommon to read in the secular press an article about manners or a new column dealing with etiquette. There are help books on the subject, and there are groups where parents can send their children to learn basic good manners. Why are people concerned and even afraid about the abandonment of good manners? Because people recognize that there is a correlation between manners and healthy relationships. In other words, people who do not develop good manners do not develop good relational skills either. They do not learn such basic things as respect and empathy for others. Imagine where that leaves one in a relationship with parents, teacher, employer, neighbour, and one's future spouse and children. A lack of good manners creates huge problems in life.

What went wrong?

Why has there been such a change in our society in the matter of good manners? What went wrong? Something that has had a deep impact on our society is the whole "self-esteem" movement which permeated the field of education in the latter part of the twentieth century. In order to promote a child's sense of self-esteem and self-worth, he or she should be allowed to do what makes them feel good about themselves. If Johnny wants to chew with his mouth wide open in a restaurant or to spit on a public sidewalk, then who is going to tell him this is wrong? This might make him have a negative image of himself. This kind of training has created a generation of self-centred and narcissistic children. Because of the natural depravity of man, such children do not instinctively gravitate to good manners.

Another problem is a lack of adult supervision and role models. Dad and mom are too busy with their careers and leave their children too much on their own. There isn't the basic training by the parents which instills in their children a sense of politeness, consideration and respect for others. Of course, when parents no longer belong to a church and take their children to the worship services, then the directives of God's Word which speak of love for our neighbour are also lost.

Certainly not to be overlooked is the influence of television. TV shows which flaunt cynicism, disrespect, materialism, casual sex, vulgarity and glorification of violence is a huge influence on the psyche of our society. Moreover, it is depicted as completely normal behaviour on prime time TV to treat parents – particularly the father – as complete morons; to regard the older generation as being out of touch with reality; to regard politeness and etiquette as something only "dweebs" would do. When TV is a large part of anyone's culture, then generally speaking, good manners are not a large part of one's life.

Basically, good manners and etiquette are expressions of consideration and love for others.

Does it really matter?

The question that all of this raises is whether manners really make a difference. Does it really matter whether a young teenager holds the door open for someone else? Does it matter whether an adult is careful not to butt into a conversation between two other people? Does it really matter whether a

driver carefully signals a lane change and moves over only when there is enough space so as not to endanger or irritate another driver? Does it really matter in the big scheme of things?

J. Douma writes the following in his book, *The Ten Commandments*, in connection with the fifth word of the covenant: Using good manners shows respect for those relationships in which we cannot simply "let ourselves go." Manners are the brakes that conscience provides to slow us down in thinking only about ourselves and our own pleasure. This is why etiquette is such an important part of a moral disposition. The primary and most decisive schooling in this subject that we will receive for our entire lives happens in the home. What we learn (or fail to learn) there will have good (or bad) repercussions in other relationships across the entire range of the social order (pages 172-173).

Douma not only points out the importance of learning good etiquette in the home, but he also emphasizes how important this training is for all relationships in life. Basically, good manners and etiquette are expressions of consideration and love for others. It is a matter of empathy. This is another way of saying: I do to others what I would have them do to me. Good manners are simply a way of showing love toward our neighbour. It is keeping the Word of God as we read it in 1 Corinthians 13:4: "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud." Think also of Philippians 2:3, 4: "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others." There is also Philippians 4:8: "Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things." Those who are redeemed by Christ's blood and renewed by his Holy Spirit will have this mind of Christ, and this attitude to others whom God places in their path.

What's inside?

A lot of people are complaining about a general lack of good manners in our society. Even the secular media has been commenting on it and showing concern. But is it just a matter of good form and decency? Or do the formation of good manners, or the lack thereof, influence one's moral character? The editorial in this issue of *Clarion* takes a look at this matter.

We have two speeches in this issue. One is by S. Vandergugten to young people, speaking about being a light to the world. The other is by Rev. D.G.J. Agema to a women's league day, addressing the concern of apathy in the church. His speech is divided over two issues of *Clarion*.

Rev. J. DeGelder reports on the 68th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. This was an important assembly which accepted the offer of Ecclesiastical Fellowship by the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Rev. J. Slaa is welcomed to his new congregation in Kerwood, Ontario. We see the obvious joy of a congregation as she receives her pastor and teacher.

RA



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The benefits

In general, good manners cause us to be considerate and loving toward others. More specifically, the manners which we learn as children and which parents teach their children, manners such as respect for elders, holding a door open for others, saying “thank-you,” and not interrupting a conversation, train children how to relate to others in a meaningful and edifying way. A child may start off being polite to others simply as a ritual taught by parents, but when they see how it is appreciated, how it causes joy, how it enhances relationships, then it comes more and more from the heart to speak and act in a loving way toward others. The blessing is that children learn respect for their parents and elders; when they go to school there is respect for the teacher; in every relationship throughout life there is consideration and love for others. We can quickly see what blessings will come to a child who learns to respect and love others. There will be a desire to listen to and learn from the teacher; later on, moving into the work force, our children will naturally get along with others and relate to them with politeness, respect and consideration. Our children learn this and develop this from the time that they are taught basic good manners.

Manners don't just happen

Good manners don't just happen. They need to be developed. They need to be taught, particularly by parents to their children. Parents need to set a good example for their children. Dad cutting off someone on the highway and then waving a fist at that person when he blares his horn, is displaying bad manners. Children need to see in their parents a real love, respect and consideration for others – in word and deed. Children also need to learn that this comes from experiencing the wonderful

Children need to see in their parents a real love, respect and consideration for others – in word and deed.

salvation which is in Jesus Christ who in turn taught us to love God and our neighbour. Parents need to start training their children from early age such basic things as saying “please” and “thank-you.” They need to curb antisocial behaviour. It is not uncommon for a son to come home during grade one, proudly

announcing he has beaten up someone who got in his way. Dad might secretly be proud that his son is a tough little guy. How important it is to nip this in the bud and carefully explain that this is not proper behaviour. This is not an expression of the love of Christ which should fill our hearts. Letting this go unchecked and undiscussed will only encourage further antisocial behaviour and a bully mentality. Are these the kind of covenant children we are raising for a meaningful place in the kingdom of heaven?

No doubt another good thing to do is restrict TV watching and the kinds of programs being watched. Watch what your children watch, and discuss it carefully with them so that they understand what a negative impact this medium has on our moral upbringing.

Instilling good manners in our children is not an easy challenge. Often we will be disappointed not only in them, but also in ourselves. But under the guidance of God's Word and through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can enjoy the beginning of loving our neighbour as we love ourselves. This will be a blessing to them and to us. What is more important, it will be to the glory of God. 

What every well-mannered child has been taught:

- When making a phone call, to greet the person answering and identify himself before asking politely for his friend. For example, “Hello, this is A.J. May I speak to Nathan, please?” Not. “Yeah, is Nathan there?”
- To introduce his friends to you when they come to visit, and to greet his friends' parents and siblings when he visits. It is extremely rude to ignore anyone, even if you are shy.
- Visiting children should ask permission to use the phone or washroom and should not go uninvited into private rooms, fridges or cupboards.
- Not to criticize or comment if people do things differently. Negative remarks about housekeeping, cooking techniques or smells, and other personal observations are improper.
- To look at the person they are speaking with, and not fidget.
- To shake hands with the other team after losing a ballgame, rather than throwing a hissy fit.
- Basic table manners. Even young children can learn to wait until everyone is served before they begin eating, to avoid slurping and gobbling food, and to ask to be excused.
- To behave when dining in a restaurant rather than running around, screaming and tripping the waitress.
- When it is appropriate to interrupt a conversation, and how to do so gracefully.
- To hold the door for the next person, rather than let it close in her face.
- To be as polite to other children as they would to an adult.

– *World Class Etiquette and Etiquette Essentials*

Living as Children of Light

By S. Vandergugten

An address made to the Langley Canadian Reformed Young People, April 29, 2001

Light. What's the first thing you think of when I say the word light? And can you guess how many times the word light occurs in the Bible? According to my QuickVerse computer Bible program, it occurs 232 times in 205 verses. In almost every instance, it refers to light, the opposite of dark – not light the opposite of heavy.

Can you guess in which Bible book the word light is used the most often? I must admit, my own guesses were a bit off the mark. My first guess was the Psalms. That was a strategic guess, based simply on the fact that there are 150 Psalms, more “chapters” than any other book of the Bible. Also, I could think of a couple of Psalms, offhand, where light is mentioned. Psalm 27, “The LORD is my light and my salvation;” Psalm 36: “in your light we see light.” Psalm 43: “send forth your light and truth; let them be my guide.” As it turned out, Psalms was a close second, along with Isaiah, but there is one book that uses the word light twenty-five times, one more than the other two. It's the book of Job.

The next question should be easier to answer. In what chapter of the Bible is the word light used the most often? When I asked one of my sons this question, he replied, “John 1.” Now that was a very good guess: “In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.” But again, it was a close second. Have you guessed? Yes, it's Genesis 1. Seven times.

Let there be light

The first words the Bible records as coming from the mouth of God are, “Let there be light.” Immediately there was light, and God declared it good. It is worth noting that from the very beginning, wherever God was, wherever God is, there is light. Scripture often uses light as a symbol of the saving presence of God in a fallen world, with darkness being used as a symbol of sin or the absence of God. Light is the brightness that enables sight in the darkness. Let's trace this theme of light through Scripture and see where it leads us.

*Light is the brightness
that enables sight in the
darkness.*

The light described in Genesis 1 is natural light. This light – whether in the form of sun, moon or stars – is created by God and subject to Him. In Exodus, we encounter two instances where God controlled the light and the darkness in order to protect and bless his people, Israel. Exodus 10 tells the story of the ninth plague inflicted upon the Egyptians (led by the Pharaoh who is very reluctant to let God's people go). Moses stretches out his hand, and darkness descends on Egypt for three days. Imagine that, three days of darkness, a darkness “that could be felt.” There's an irony here. The worshippers of the sun god Ra are condemned to total darkness. The children of the living God, the creator of light, are not affected. Exodus 10:23 states, “No one [no Egyptian] could see anyone else or leave his place for three days. Yet all the Israelites

had light in the places where they lived.” Amazing!

Protective light

The second instance where God controlled light and darkness is just as amazing. God leads his people through the night by going ahead of them in a pillar of fire. When the Egyptians chase after them, the angel of the LORD (whom many believe represents the pre-incarnate Christ) comes “between the armies of Egypt and Israel. Throughout the night the cloud brought darkness to the one side and light to the other side; so neither went near the other all night long” (Ex 14:20). Again the Egyptians in the dark, and Israel in the protective light of God's presence.

In Exodus, we also discover that light played an important role in the tabernacle worship of God. The LORD is very specific in his requirements. “Make a lampstand of pure gold [34 kilograms of gold, no less] . . . then make its seven lamps and set them up on it so that they light the space in front of it” (Ex 25:31-37). You are to bring “clear oil of pressed olives for light so the lamps may be kept burning” (27:20). The seven lamps of the lampstand were to burn each and every night in the tent of meeting, outside the curtain that was in front of the Ark. The tabernacle, the place where the worship of God is centered, is to be a place filled with light.

At the outset, we noted that the word light appear most frequently in Job. That may seem unusual, since Job is a book that we associate with sadness and suffering, gloom and darkness. Well that's how the word light – better yet the absence of light – is used. Job rues the day he was born. “That day – may it turn to



darkness; may God above not care about it; may no light shine upon it" (3:4). And again "Why is light given to those in misery, and life to the bitter of soul" (3:20). It's not until much later that God questions Job: "Tell me, if you know all this. What is the way to the abode of light? And where does darkness reside? Can you take them to their places? Do you know the paths to their dwellings?" (38:18ff). Then Job realizes that he cannot contend with the almighty Creator of life and light. He simply needs to trust him.

Your word is a lamp

The Psalms further develop the idea that God's nearness bathes the believer in light. God is described as wrapping Himself in light as with a garment (Ps 104:2). "The light of his face shines on us" (Ps 4:6). His light radiates out from Him through his word into our hearts and minds so that we see the right path. "Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path" (Ps 119:105). "The unfolding of your words give light, it gives understanding to the simple" (119:30). "God turns my darkness into

light" (Ps 18:28). No darkness is dark to God. "The night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you" (Ps 139:12). There is no darkness in our lives that cannot be penetrated by the God of light.

We come to the prophets, focusing on Isaiah where the word light is used twenty-four times. What comes clearly into focus in Isaiah is that "light" is referring to something or someone specific. Isaiah is prophesying about a future event. "The people walking in darkness have seen a great light" (9:2). "I will make you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth" (49:6). "Your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear" (58:8). "Arise, shine, for your light has come . . ." (60:1). "Nations will come to your light . . ." (60:3). "The LORD will be your everlasting light . . ." (60:20). With New Testament eyes we look back, and see that Isaiah was talking about Jesus Christ. But this is no longer a pre-incarnate Christ, but the co-Creator of the world the one who spoke in unison with the Father, "Let there be light." He

is leaving the realm of perfect, brilliant light to bring that radiance into a dark and dreary world.

I am the light of the world

Little surprise then that Jesus declares, "I am the light of the world." What is astonishing is that He tells his followers, "You are the light of the world" (Matt 5:14). That's quite a tall order. How did we move so quickly from Jesus, Lord of the universe, to us, mere creatures, having such a crucial function in the world? The answer is simple, yet profound. When we belong to Jesus Christ – which we do, don't we? – Christ lives in us. We are in Him and He in us. What He is, we become. If He is light, then we are light. What an awesome task and responsibility. Christ tells us, "See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness" (Luke 11:35). Thankfully, He also enables us to be shining lights.

Take the example of the popular tea light candles. Imagine that we are such a lamp. We look not too bad from the outside. Pretty colors. Attractive. But not too functional if the candle inside is not lit. The light inside us is Christ. When that is lit, we become what we are meant to be. Our function fits our form. We become useful. We serve a purpose. "Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven" (Matt 5:16).

"Your word is a lamp to my feet, and a light for my path."

Several of the apostles exhort their readers to live in the light and to be a light. "Put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light" (Rom 13:12). "Live as children of light" (Eph 5:8). "You are all children of light and of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness" (1 Thess 5:5). "Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble" (1 John 2:10). "You are a chosen people. A royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). And we emphasize once more what Christ says,

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Light-emanating lives

This all sounds good, doesn't it, but I bet you wouldn't mind an example or two that demonstrates how being a light works real life. These are true stories, things that happened in the lives of ordinary people just like you and me.

After twelve years of Christian education, a young woman enters the nursing program at a secular institution. Early on in the program, before she knows any of her fellow classmates, she makes a class presentation. She sits down. A classmate leans towards her asking, "Are you a Christian?" "Yes," she answers, "but how did you know?" Her classmate replied, "When you were standing up there, I could just tell."

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."

Another young woman worked as a sales associate in a teen clothing store had a similar experience. A mother with a young teenage daughter came to buy school clothes. It soon became evident that mother and daughter did not have the same taste in clothes, the daughter being more daring in her choices than the mother preferred. With humor and good sense the sales clerk helped them put together a couple of outfits Mom and daughter were both OK with. Two happy customers reentered the mall. A minute later the mother nipped back into the store. "Are you a Christian?" she asked the helpful sales girl. "Yes," the young woman responded, rather surprised at the question. "I just knew it!" the mother exclaimed. "Thanks again for your help." She exited once more. One more true story. A number of decades ago, a different young woman – let's call her Alicia – was also enrolled in a nursing program. She became friends with a lovely, vivacious girl, Jen, who had the disturbing habit of using the Lord's name in vain. Alicia could not bear to hear this. She spoke to Jen.

"Jen, I love being your friend, but I won't be able to if you keep using God's name in vain." Jen apologized and promised to mend her ways. She did, quickly correcting herself whenever she slipped up.

The story doesn't end here. Jen and Alicia graduated, worked together off and on, married, moved away to different areas of the province, and kept sporadic contact over the years. A number of years later Alicia received a letter with joyful news. Jen and her daughter had become Christians. She thought Alicia would like to know. Her one prayer was that her husband would also see the light. Astoundingly, a couple of years later that prayer was also answered. Again, Jen sent Alicia the happy news.

No one will suggest that Alicia's request to Jen to watch her language worked this miracle, but it is remarkable that when conversion occurred, Jen's thoughts were led almost immediately to the young woman who had so earnestly asked her to honour God's name.

Light prevails over darkness

Light penetrates the darkness. No matter how dark it is, and no matter how small a candle flame is, it can be seen in the darkness. Try this experiment. Switch a flashlight on. Put it inside a box. Cover it tightly with a lid. Turn off all the lights in the room. Now open the box. The light lights up the room. It chases away the darkness. The only way the darkness returns is if the light is turned off, or the lid is put back on the box. Darkness cannot maintain its hold when light is present. Remember that. So, put on your armor of light. It is impenetrable.

Light is stronger than darkness. The light will prevail.

Try another simple experiment. Take an empty shoe box. Put the lid on tightly. There is nothing in the box, so we know that it is dark inside that box. This time, leave the lights in the room on. If you open this box "full of darkness" in a room full of light, do you notice the darkness? No, of course not. Light is stronger than darkness. The light will prevail.



Accepted the call from the church of Elora, Ontario:

Candidate Carl Vermeulen

Declined the call from the church of Armadale, Western Australia, to work as missionary in North East Paupa New Guinea:

Candidate Carl Vermeulen

Declined the call from the church of Grand Rapids, Michigan:

Candidate Carl Vermeulen

Called by the church of Toronto, Ontario to work as second missionary in the Port Moresby region of Papua New Guinea:

Rev. R.H. Knigge

of Leidsche Rijn, Netherlands.

The Lamb is the light

That's the profound reality we see in Revelation. In the end, light prevails gloriously. "The [New Jerusalem] does not need even the sun or the moon, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp" (Rev 21:23). "There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light" (Rev 22:5). Earlier in 1 Timothy 6:16, Paul offers a doxology of praise to the one who "alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see." The astounding thing is that we will see Him; we will bask in his brilliant, radiant presence; things will be back to normal. We will safely, exuberantly dwell in the presence of the one who said, "Let there be light." And it will be good; it will be very good. 

Is There Apathy In The Church? (Rev. 3:14)

Part 1

By D.G.J. Agema

1. August, 1944

I like to take you back to August 11, 1944, to an important meeting which took place in the Lutheran Church in The Hague, The Netherlands. This meeting is usually seen as the beginning of the Liberation. Today I will not deal with the issues involved in this Liberation, nor the consequences the Liberation has had for us here. Surely these are important matters, but in light of our topic I ask your attention for the first speech that was delivered on that meeting by the man who opened the meeting, Rev. H. Knoop.

Reformation of all of life had to come about.

We know from a stenographic report that he asked the meeting to sing Psalm 68:16 and 17, and after reading Micah 6:1-8 led in prayer. (*Handboek 1970 Ten Dienste van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland. Drs. D.Deddens editor. Goes. Bijlage II, p. 205-217*). Rev. Knoop's prayer begins with a confession of guilt and a passionate plea for forgiveness of sins because the churches had departed from the path of salvation. This is followed by the petition that the LORD may bring his people back to the simple obedience of faith. This prayer is striking because it does not really mention the issues involved in the Liberation, such as baptism, covenant, regeneration, misuse of the order of the church, but is a confession of sin. The finger was not pointed at others; instead there was the admission, "We have sinned and have departed from the truth." Reformation has to start with repentance. Yes, but then, not repentance in one area of life but in all of life.

Rev. Knoop brings this out in the opening address. Also in this address he emphasizes that the churches, after having received so many blessings in the past, had departed from the truth. It is true that the struggle in the churches came to a head because of certain doctrinal and church political matters, but behind it was a process of deformation in so many areas of life. The implication is clear, the churches would not be helped if they simply dealt with these doctrinal and church political issues. Reformation of all of life had to come about.

Rev. Knoop then goes on to highlight some of the symptoms that showed this deformation. I will list the ones he highlights.

1. A feeling of having arrived had entered the churches. People were content with what had been achieved and satisfied with themselves. Bigger was seen as better.
2. A shift in perspective had occurred. Primary matters had become secondary matters and the other way around. The church was seen in the first place in terms of what people do, rather than what God is doing.
3. The churches were absorbed in the successful struggle to influence society at large. This went hand in hand with the narrowing of spiritual life.
4. There was a lack of eschatological awareness. This showed in being more busy with this life than living in the ardent expectation of Christ's return.
5. There was a lack of oppression. Things went well. Church people were respected by society at large.
6. Materialism and worldliness had crept into the lives and relationships of people.

Then the LORD stepped in, not only in the occupation by the Germans, but also in the struggle that ensued in the

churches. The LORD used this to call the churches back to a total and heartfelt obedience to the Lord.

I mention these points because when you read them, you think: Isn't that what we see in our time too? No, I am not saying that we should have another Liberation as soon as possible. The Lord will take care of his church. But we have to learn from the past, and be aware that to be Reformed means to return daily to the Word of God. We have to keep our eyes and ears open for the danger of deformation, for the danger of apathy.

2. Apathy in the church?

This brings me to the question we will deal with this afternoon: Is there apathy in the church? This question came from the societies, which means it is a question that is living among us. In the information which I received from the Board, a Bible text was added to the question, namely Revelation 3:14. We read there that the Lord Jesus warns the church at Laodicea because she is lukewarm. That answers the question whether there can be apathy in the church. But I am sure that is not why this question was raised. What we want to know is whether we are dealing with apathy today. If so, how come, and what can we do about it?

There was some warmth, they listened to the Word, but it stayed on the surface.

Before we go on, there are two remarks to be made about the title. The first one concerns the word "apathy." It is not so easy to give a quick definition of this word. It can be described as a habitual lack of feeling. Other words

which can be used as “indifference” or “complacency.” Revelation 3:14 uses the word lukewarm, which means something is neither hot nor cold. Apathy is not the same as doing nothing or carelessness. Nor should it be confused with a lack of assurance of faith. Apathy refers to a lack of zeal in the service of the Lord, to do what is required but not from the heart. Apathy is to take God’s work of redemption for granted. This can show itself in many ways and is usually not an isolated matter.

The members thought highly of themselves. They had arrived.

The other remark concerns the word church. “Is there apathy in the church?” you ask. What do you mean with “the church?” We are all members of different congregations and in answering the question, we speak within the context of a local congregation. Situations can differ. You may have situations in your mind of which I am not aware and the other way around. In addition, when we speak about things that involve ourselves, we tend to be biased.

This afternoon we will first look at what we learn from the Bible about apathy. Next we will look at our situation.

3. Bible

Revelation 3

Let’s start with the text mentioned already, Revelation 3:14. In the beginning of Revelation the Lord Jesus is addressing the seven churches in Asia. In 3:14 He is speaking to the Church at Laodicea. This letter is different from the others. The others speak of opposition by gentiles or by Jews. They speak of heresies. Not this one. In a way you would say this church should be thankful. The problem here though is that they took things for granted. The church was not lazy. They worked, they were involved with activities, they even thought they were rich. From the way it appeared this was a good congregation. But the Lord shatters this false security. Why? Because they are lukewarm. There is no zeal. They are not opposed to the gospel and the service of the Lord, but their hearts are not in it. Christ even says, “I wish you were either cold (that is, not motivated at all by the gospel), or hot (that is, fully involved in it). But now you are in be-

tween, lukewarm.” There was some warmth, they listened to the Word, but it stayed on the surface. They were warm but not aglow. They were not gripped by the Word. It left them indifferent. No, they would not admit this. And if someone would have said it, they would have denied it. But the Lord knows more. He knew that they were filled with themselves and not with serving Him. In their opinion the LORD was there for them, rather than the other way around. The Lord will not tolerate this. He is ready to spew them out of his mouth. That would mean, they would no longer be his people. He gives them a warning, buy from me gold refined in the fire and so you can become rich. Repent and live from Christ.

We learn from this that lukewarmness, apathy, can come into the church, that it is deceptive and can hide itself under the pretense (or excuse) of being involved. We also learn that the Lord, who knows the hearts, will not tolerate it.

Isaiah, Amos and Zephaniah

When you use the concordance and look up the word “complacent” you will find references to Isaiah, Amos and Zephaniah. It will be helpful to look at these passages as well. In Isaiah 32 the women of Jerusalem are addressed as complacent women. These women felt secure; everything was going well for them. They had a good life. The LORD warns them. He will take their security away. The cities and lands will be destroyed. The prophet Isaiah had addressed these women already before, see chapter 3:16-26. These women were up on the latest fashion. The Lord calls them haughty. But there is no love for the LORD. He will punish them.

In Amos 6 both men and women are addressed. “Woe to you who are complacent in Zion, and to you who feel secure on Mount Samaria.” We notice again the combination of complacency and false security. These complacent people lived a luxurious life. They had it well. They had beds inlaid with ivory. They dined on choice lambs, use the finest lotions. But they had no time for the LORD and his service.

In Zephaniah 1:12 we read, “At that time I will search Jerusalem with lamps and punish those who are complacent, who are like wine left on its dregs, who think, ‘The LORD will do nothing, either good or bad.’”

We learn from these texts that apathy can be accompanied with haughtiness and worldliness. These people

were busy with themselves and not with the service of the LORD. The LORD had a place in their lives as long as, or, in as far as it fitted in their schedules and priorities. We also learn that the LORD will punish this.

1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrew 4

Although the word apathy is not mentioned in 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews 4, yet both chapters deal with this attitude. Both passages deal with Israel’s journey through the wilderness. 1 Corinthians 10 is perhaps more about the actual journey, whereas Hebrews 4 is more about the entrance into the promised land. Both also say that the things that happened are examples to us. Why did so many Israelites die in the wilderness? Why were so many not allowed to enter the promised land? Because of disobedience, of taking God’s work for granted. Yes, you can also say, because of apathy. Let’s first look that the passages mentioned and then go to the Old Testament history to which they refer.

They did not teach their children the antithesis.

The Church of Corinth was rather taken in with itself. The members thought highly of themselves. They had arrived. Everything was permissible, they figured. This led to sinful practices. There were divisions in the church (chapter 3). There was a case of sexual immorality (chapter 5) and participation in idol feasts (chapter 14). The apostle had to warn the church. He points to Israel, and their lack of zeal and faith. That can happen to you too. If you think that you stand, watch out (10:12). Apathy, lack of zeal can be the result of thinking too highly of oneself, of not wanting to miss out on the things of the world and finding excuses to participate.

The situation is different in Hebrews. There we are dealing with a church that was going through trials. Because of these trials there was the temptation to give up (3:12). It took the joy and zeal out of their lives. They started to skip their church services (10:25), they did not keep up their knowledge. And what is the answer? They have to see the riches of the covenant in which they live. They have to see the riches we have in Christ (4:14). They have to realize again how wonderful the worship service is

(chapter 12). They have to grow in knowledge. In this context Israel is used as an example of what happens to the church that takes its redemption for granted, it will not enter the promised land. Since 1 Corinthians 10 and Hebrews 4 use Israel as an example, let us look at Israel. We start with their journey through the wilderness.

Israel in the wilderness

When we have a closer look at this journey, then we notice that it was a journey which started so wonderfully. The LORD redeemed his people from Egypt, led them between the walls of water and brought them to Mount Sinai. (See Exodus 15 and 19:3-6). There at Mount Sinai, He declared his love to his people and gave his law. God's people were so rich. Yes, but what did the people do en route to the promised land? They complained when the food was not good enough (Ex 15:23,24; 16:1-3; 17:1, 2; Num 11:4-6). They murmured when it did not go their way (Num 21:4-5). They did not want to listen to the

leaders given by the LORD (Num 16). They complained about hardship (Num 11:1; 21:4, 5). They made their own idol when Moses was on the mountain (Ex 32). They refused to enter the promised land (Num 13 and 14). They joined the heathens in their pagan worship (Num 25). In short, they took God's work of redemption for granted. This manifested itself in many ways and was accompanied with many other matters.

Israel in the land

Did Israel learn from this journey through the wilderness? Knowing ourselves and our sinful nature, we know the answer: no. The LORD gave his people a wonderful country, a land flowing with milk and honey, it says. They were allowed to live with the LORD in this land, however, it did not take long and again they took this for granted. The next generation disobeyed the LORD. I think of what we read in the beginning of the book of Judges. The first chapters give an overview. There is a pattern to these chapters. Israel departed from the

LORD. The LORD had to send enemies to hurt them, then they would cry out to the LORD. The LORD would provide a judge. For a while it would go right, but the next generation repeated the mistakes and sins of the fathers.

What was the cause of this? Again the Bible points out several things. They refused to take possession of the whole land (Judges 1:21-27). They were satisfied with what they had. Why go on further? They let the other nations live in their midst and mingled with them. They followed the idols of the other nations in addition to serving the LORD (Judges 2:11). They did not see the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, between the church and the world. They did not teach their children the mighty deeds of God (2:10). The children forgot the past. The parents did not teach them to fight the good fight. They did not teach their children the antithesis. Judges shows us a nation refusing to live thankfully from what the LORD in his faithfulness provides. 

Prayer for Labour

Psalm 127

*A song of ascents.
Of Solomon.*

*Unless the LORD builds the house, its builders labour in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchmen stand guard in vain.
In vain you rise early and stay up late, toiling for food to eat –
for he grants sleep to those he loves.
Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from him.
Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one's youth.
Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.
They will not be put to shame when they contend with their
enemies in the gate.*

Report of the Delegates of the CCCA to the 68th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

By J. DeGelder

Introduction

General Synod Neerlandia 2001 had instructed the Committee for Contact with Churches in the Americas (CCCA) "to delegate one or two of its members to the General Assembly (of the OPC) in Grand Rapids in May/June 2001." Between the closing of Synod Neerlandia on May 14 and the opening of the General Assembly on May 30 there was no time to have a CCCA meeting and organize the work of the Committee. In consultation with the appointed convener of the CCCA it was decided that on behalf of the CCCA the undersigned, Rev. Jan DeGelder would attend the 68th G.A. of the OPC, which would be held at Reformed Bible College in Grand Rapids, MI from May 30 – June 6, 2001. I made the trip in the company of brother Gerry Nordeman, who was also a member of Synod Neerlandia, and who has been a member of the Committee for Contact with the OPC for twelve years.

Activities in chronological order

Wednesday May 30

We arrived late Wednesday afternoon, and had some time to get settled in and meet some old and new friends. In the evening a worship service was held. Several ministers participated and ruling elder Dr. James Gidley, moderator of the previous Assembly, presented an "exhortation," as he called it, in distinction from a sermon preached by an ordained minister. His message was based on Romans 12:1,2.

Thursday May 31

The next morning saw the usual business of the opening. After the roll call (there were between 135 and 140 commissioners/delegates) the Rev. David O'Leary was elected as moderator. The agenda (the docket) was established, thirteen advisory committees were appointed and the material was distributed among the committees. Rev. Jack J. Peterson, chairman of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations (CEIR) introduced us as fraternal delegates from the CanRC, and on motion we were seated as corresponding members with the privilege of the floor. Then the advisory committees went to work and the Assembly was not going to be reconvened until Friday after lunch.

We gave a brief overview of the history of the contacts between our respective churches, with a more detailed description of what had transpired since our Synod Abbotsford 1995.

In the afternoon we met with the advisory committee that dealt with Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations. We gave a brief overview of the history of the contacts between our respective churches, with a more detailed description of what had transpired since our Synod Abbotsford 1995.

As fraternal delegates from the United Reformed Churches (URCNA) Rev. Harry Zekveld (Strathroy, Ontario) and Rev. Paul Murphy (Dutton, Michigan) were present to discuss the beginning relationship between the URC and the OPC.

Considerable time was spent discussing the developments in the Free Church of Scotland (FCS), the split and the subsequent establishing of the FCS (continuing).

Friday June 1

This morning most of the advisory committees were able to finalize their work, except committee 1, which was dealing with the most controversial issue on the agenda, the conflict between the Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM) and the Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF). After lunch the assembly was in session again, and various committee-reports were presented and dealt with.

These were: the report of the Stated Clerk, Rev. Donald J. Duff; the report of the Trustees; the report of the Statistician, Mr. Luke E. Brown; the report of the Committee on Christian Education, presented by the Rev. Larry E. Wilson, the General Secretary of the Committee; the report of the Committee on Home Missions and Church Extension, presented by the Rev. Hilbelink. Included in the last presentation was also that three home missionaries spoke about the work they are involved in.

In the course of the afternoon Rev. Zekveld addressed the G.A. as fraternal delegate of the URCNA, and Rev.

DeGelder as fraternal delegate of the CanRC. Friday evening the main focus was on the report of the CFM (with exception of the Middle East matters). The report was presented by the General Secretary of the CFM, Mr. Mark Bube, who also introduced two missionaries who addressed the Assembly about their work: Rev. Hailu Mekonnen, missionary in Ethiopia, and Rev. Stewart Lauer, who is teaching at Kobe Reformed Seminary in Kobe, Japan.

Saturday June 2

The report of the CEIR was presented by its chairman, Rev. Peterson, who highlighted two developments, one sad and one joyful: the split in the Free Church of Scotland, and the relations with the Canadian Reformed Churches. With regard to the CanRC the CEIR recommended that the OPC enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CanRC, which recommendation was, after some discussion, adopted without dissent. We left at around 10:30 a.m. to return to Ontario.

The Relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches

At Synod Neerlandia the OPC delegate Rev. G.I. Williamson had expressed his doubts whether this year's G.A. would be able to deal with the matter. But the CEIR did not waste any time. The members of the committee

had received the complete decision of Synod Neerlandia by email, and they put a supplementary report together, which was handed out to the commissioners just before the opening of the Assembly.

In personal conversations many brothers had expressed already how thankful and thrilled they were that now we could move ahead to full Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

With regard to the CanRC the CEIR recommended that the OPC enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CanRC, which recommendation was, after some discussion, adopted without dissent.

In our discussion with the advisory committee considerable attention was given to the nature of the agreement on Fencing of the Lord's Supper and Confessional Membership, as well as to what has become known as the "false shepherds issue." In the end the advisory committee decided "to be silent" on the CEIR recommendations, which means that they supported these recommendations as they were.

On the floor of the Assembly the recommendations generated some discussion, and your delegate was given the floor to answer various questions about the supervision of the elders at the Lord's Supper celebration, the matter of Bible translations, and our contacts with, as well as the internal discussions in our Dutch sister churches. Several brothers expressed deep gratitude toward the Lord for bringing our respective churches at this point after so many years. For the Rev. J.P. Galbraith, eighty-eight years old, and one of the most highly respected ministers in the OPC, who had been involved in the discussions with the CanRC from the very beginning, it was a moving moment. He emphasized that for the OPC this is a unique Ecclesiastical Fellowship, as it includes the commitment to discuss the differences in confession and church government. He stressed the importance of this commitment: "We need to talk and learn from each other."

The General Assembly then adopted without dissent the following recommendations:

1. That the General Assembly approve the Agreement formulated jointly by the Committee on Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

Grounds:

 - a. The Agreement is in accord with the standards of both the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.
 - b. The recent Canadian Reformed Synod Neerlandia 2001 determined to approve the agreement and to "establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship" with the OPC "upon their acceptance of the proposed agreement."
2. That the General Assembly inform the Canadian Reformed Churches that it understands their action to mean that the two churches are in Ecclesiastical Fellowship as of this General Assembly's approval of the agreement, and request the Canadian Reformed Churches to inform the CEIR if that is not their understanding. Ground: This will help to clarify any possible misunderstanding as to the effective



*G.I. Williamson:
OPC minister at
Synod Neerlandia
2001*

date of implementation of the Ecclesiastical Fellowship.

3. That the Assembly express its deep appreciation to the Canadian Reformed Churches for offering amends to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and to the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic.
4. That the General Assembly humbly and gladly accept the apology of Synod Neerlandia 2001 for its felt "inconsistencies and lack of clarity in some of our dealings with the OPC throughout the many years of our discussions with them."

One of the topics of discussion at this moment is the interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 known as the Framework Hypothesis.

5. That the Assembly address the following letter to the Canadian Reformed Churches, with copies to the CCOPC and the CEIR:

Our dear brothers of the Canadian Reformed Churches:

It is with deep gratitude and humility that this, the 68th General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, has received through our Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations the recent gracious actions of your Synod Neerlandia 2001 in order to establish Ecclesiastical Fellowship between our two churches. We are also most thankful to be informed that this decision was reached unanimously. You have now expressed forcefully your sense of unity with us and we delight to express ours with you. Praise be to our wise and mighty God! How worthy He is of our worship!

This General Assembly therefore is happy to inform you that it has approved the Agreement, as your Synod Neerlandia 2001 did, thus opening the door for our two churches to enter into Ecclesiastical Fellowship with each other.

We understand the action of this General Assembly accepting the above agreement, in accordance with your action 5.5,

". . . upon their acceptance of the proposed agreement" to have the force of establishing the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship between us as of this date. We trust that this is your understanding also.

Further, this General Assembly concurs in your desire, expressed in 5.6, "to continue contact with the OPC by the CCOPC . . . with the mandate to continue the discussions on the existing differences in confession and church polity as noted in the considerations and to work toward further unity". We are grateful for this desire on your part for it is ours also, and our CEIR will plan to work fully with you to that end. Since it is your action and we are responding, may we ask that your committee take the initiative to arrange the next meeting?

Finally, we should be remiss were we not to express with this letter our gratitude to God and our appreciation of your churches' desire for the unity of the body of Christ, and the ongoing willingness of your CCOPC to work diligently and to meet with our CEIR over the years to bring us closer together. We do so now with a glad heart.

We believe that God has been glorified by our respective decisions to express our unity in Christ. We may now rejoice together that in His mercy we have this new unity for which we have striven for many years and which we hope will bring increasing perfection in years ahead; we presume now upon God to ask of Him further mercies to produce such fruit, bringing us increasingly closer to each other and to our God and His truth. "His tender mercies are over all his works." Psalm 145:9.

After the decision Rev. Peterson led in prayer of praise and thanksgiving, asking for God's continued blessing over the relationship between the OPC and the CanRC. During the coffee-break following the decision many shared their joy with us, and expressed the hope to hear and learn from us in matters of doctrine and church government. It was truly a wonderful experience to share this moment with the OPC brothers.

Other observations

Overtures

One of the topics of discussion at this moment is the interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2 known as the Framework Hypothesis. In an overture the Presbytery of Southern California asked to determine whether this view of the days of creation is consistent with the confessions. This was dealt with after we left.

Statistics

With a membership of almost 26,000 the OPC had at the end of 2000 a total number of 281 congregations (216 organized churches, and 65 mission works), compared to 267 a year before. There are 406 ministers. It shows a totally different structure from what we are used to in our churches. Over the last decade the OPC has enjoyed consistent and significant growth.

As mentioned in previous reports, in the OPC much energy and zeal is given to Home Mission work.

Christian Education

The task and purpose of the Committee on Christian Education (CCE) is "to provide biblically Reformed resources and training in order to assist the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in its service toward bringing God's people to maturity in Christ." For this goal the CCE is involved in a wide range of activities, from maintaining the website, publishing study and teaching material, to assisting in the training of ministers and prospective ministers in the OPC by means of the Internship Program, and the Ministerial Training Institute. The CCE also produces and supplies the magazine *New Horizons*, as well as the office bearers magazine *Ordained Servant*.

Home Missions and Church Extension

As mentioned in previous reports, in the OPC much energy and zeal is given to Home Mission work. With praise to God for his mighty acts the committee reported that also in the past year there has been a rapid and dramatic expansion. It is really amazing.

Various preaching points develop into worshipping congregations looking for pastors, and new preaching points are being set up, sometimes upon request of people in that area. Today one in five OP Churches is a mission work. The Home Missions Committees of the Presbyteries have the direct responsibility for this work, and the general Committee on HM and CE provides assistance in many different ways, as well as financial support. With the support of this committee the OPC employed during 2000 six full-time regional home missionaries.

Foreign Mission

The foreign missions work of the OPC is conducted through its Committee on Foreign Missions (CFM). The committee reported extensively on the work of the missionaries that are active in China, Ethiopia, Japan, Kenya, Korea, Suriname, and Uganda.

The committee reported in detail on the conflict with the Middle East Reformed Fellowship, which resulted in the dissolution of the ministerial relationship between Rev. Victor Atallah and the CFM. This section of the report had generated many protesting letters from MERF, the Presbytery of the Midwest, various individuals, as well as a lengthy appeal from Rev. Atallah. One member of the CFM wrote a more than twenty pages minority report on this issue. The CFM responded to this material in a "Supplementary Report" to the G.A.

In the beginning of 2001 the CFM had filed charges against Rev. Atallah, but in September his Presbytery, after a lengthy investigation, concluded "that the charges brought against Mr. Atallah did not warrant a trial, and therefore he remains a minister in good and regular standing."

On February 3, 2001 the Presbytery of the Midwest approved the call of the congregation of Covenant OPC in Orland Park, Ill, to Rev. Atallah as "Associate Pastor serving as a missionary evangelist, teacher and administrator with the MERF." He was installed in accordance with that call the next day.

The ongoing difficulties and animosity threatened to cause a major division in the OPC, which was reflected in the atmosphere at the G.A. Many delegates expressed their concern about the possible impact and harmful results of this conflict. We were not pre-

sent anymore when this matter was discussed and dealt with on the floor of the Assembly, but we learned later on that reconciliation had taken place and that from both sides forgiveness was asked and granted.

The CFM is also involved in Mission work in Quebec, in cooperation with the ERQ. In March 2001 Mr. Ben Westerveld was ordained as pastor-evangelist in Quebec City by the Synod of the ERQ. In a Cooperative Agreement the ERQ accepts the ecclesiastical oversight over the evangelist, while the CFM pledges to finance and promote this work for an initial term of four years. We have asked whether there had been any form of coordination or consultation with the CanRC, and suggested this might be a good thing to do, since the CanRC are seeking Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the ERQ, and are also involved in its home mission work.

A special subcommittee of three men had visited Scotland in January 2001 to speak with all the parties involved in the church split to find out what happened, and to gather information on the background and the roots of the conflict.

Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations

Beside the Ecclesiastical Fellowship with the CanRC and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in England and Wales, both established at this G.A., the OPC maintains this relationship with the following churches:

1. the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church
2. the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands
3. the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland
4. the Free Church of Scotland
5. the Presbyterian Church in America
6. the Presbyterian Church in Korea
7. the Reformed Church in Japan
8. the Reformed Church in the United States

9. the Reformed Churches of New Zealand
10. the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland
11. the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

The churches in "corresponding relationship" are:

12. the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church
13. the Church of Christ in the Sudan among the Tiv
14. the Presbyterian Church in Uganda
15. the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (liberated)
16. the United Reformed Churches in North America

A separate section in the report dealt with the situation in the Free Church of Scotland. A special subcommittee of three men had visited Scotland in January 2001 to speak with all the parties involved in the church split to find out what happened, and to gather information on the background and the roots of the conflict. They met with representatives of both the FCS and the FCS (continuing). Their report gives an impression of the history and the background of the dispute, reports on the meetings, and presents a detailed evaluation. The CEIR then adopted a statement with recommendations, to be sent to both parties in the conflict, urging them to bring about reconciliation, and to seek each other with the greatest possible sincerity and determination.

Conclusion

It was again a privilege to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at a General Assembly of the OPC, and I firmly believe that both our churches can benefit from the fact that we have come to the relationship of Ecclesiastical Fellowship. The only condition is that we take our own commitment seriously and use the momentum to continue our discussions with the OPC.

This can (and should) be done in meetings with the OPC Committee on Ecumenicity, but there are also ways to address directly the office bearers (through articles in *Ordained Servant*) or the membership at large (through articles in *New Horizons*). The editors of both magazines have indicated the willingness to receive contributions from our side. 

Welcome Evening for Rev. J. Slaa and Family

By P. Taminga

June 16, 2001 was a special evening for Kerwood congregation. After only a short period of vacancy we could already welcome a new minister. We, as congregation, were very thankful to hear that Rev. J. Slaa had accepted our call.

This evening was then dedicated to welcome Rev. and Mrs. J. Slaa and their four children, Daniel, Timothy, Matthew and Hannah, to Grace Canadian Reformed Church of Kerwood. Mr. B. Dokter began the evening with the reading of Ephesians 4:1-10 and we sang a song of praise to God with the words of Hymn 64. A special welcome was then also extended to our guests, Rev. Wynia from the URC in Wyoming and Rev. Zekveld from the URC in Strathroy.

We started off the evening with a delicious and bountiful potluck dinner and dessert. After a quick clean up and a tasty coffee in hand, the formal part of the evening was started. Mr. Bill Dokter gave a brief history of the Watford/Kerwood church and how we came to be and how much we have grown.

Deacon John Boeringa then presented a book to Rev. Slaa and his family called the "Clans of Kerwood." Each page was dedicated to a family from the church to show them who we are, where we live and the things we like. The following song was then written to further introduce us to them. Each member was to stand up when their last name was called.

(To the tune of My Grandfather's Clock)
The folks here in Kerwood are happy indeed, we may welcome the Slaa family

We're so glad that you're our new minister here, may you take up your task joyfully

Then to help you put names to the faces you see, we will all try to help keep it straight

So we'll stand, smile and then take a bow as the verses go down through the list.



Kids' Club singing "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet."

Meet Barbosa's, the Bloemendal's, the Boeringa's and Boersema's

The Borks, and the Dallinga's the Dickeisons, the Dokter's

Our old building became far to small for us all, so we moved a few miles down the road.

This is bigger and better by far you'll agree; we're so thankful for this new abode.

Yes, our name had to change when we moved to this new town; it is Kerwood we now call home

So we'll stand, smile and then take a bow as we move further down the list.

Meet the Dejong's and the Faber's, the Haan's and Mr. Kampen

The Janssens', the Lantings, the Lentings, the Oosterhofs.

For a small congregation we're spread out a-far, Huron Park and Parkhill to the North

Bright's Grove is as far to the west as we go while Inwood is down to the south

Some in Watford and Kerwood and Wyoming too, while Strathroy there live quite a few

But we all live in reach of the manse, our coffee is on any time!

Meet the Smid's and the Taminga, the Taminga's etcetera, the Vander-Griendts, VanGorkum's and now Versteeg's have joined us. Wattel's will close out the list. This song's not real great but we tried!

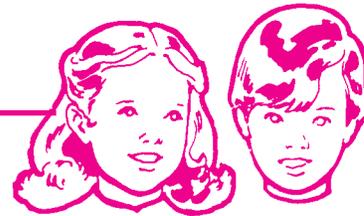
I hope they managed to match all the faces to the names!

We were then delighted with all our Societies making a presentation or singing a song: Women's Society, Bible Study Club, Young People's, EverGreen Club and Kid's club. Other members also shared their musical talents with singing of hymns and psalms. Our guest ministers, Rev. Wynia and Rev. Zekveld, then gave words of welcome also.

At the end of the evening Rev. Slaa spoke and expressed his feelings of welcome already. He gave words of appreciation for this evening and said he was looking forward to meeting everyone and being a pastor in our midst and bringing to us the bread of life. He prayed that the Lord would use him as an instrument in our midst.

Our closing song was Hymn 61 and our organist Mr. Smid closed the evening with prayer asking that the Lord will bless his ministry here among us. 

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

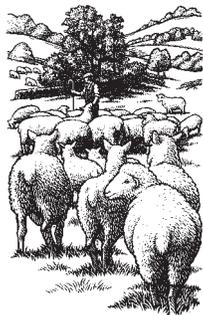
How did your Tangrams work? Did you find lots and lots of different figures? I hope you used your imagination and made plenty of unusual ones.

Love from Aunt Betty

Puzzles

Creatures!

The creatures God made were often used to teach important lessons. Fill in the blanks with the name of the proper creature.



1. Jesus cautioned people not to "throw your pearls to . . . If you do, they may trample them under their feet," Matthew 7:6.
2. The writer of Proverbs tells us, "Go to the . . . , you sluggard, consider its ways and be wise," Proverbs 6:6.
3. God used the foolishness of an . . . which lays her eggs on the earth where they may be stepped on to convince Job of God's mighty works," Job 39:13-17.
4. Jesus illustrated God's care for mankind by these words, "Are not two . . . sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from the will of your Father," Matthew 10:29.
5. Jesus likened His love for Jerusalem to a . . . which gathered her little ones under her wing," Matthew 23:37.
6. Isaiah likened the person who waited upon the Lord to . . . , which soar above the earth, Isaiah 40:31.
7. The psalmist used the ". . . on a thousand hills" to show God's ownership of everything, Psalm 50:10.
8. The psalmist advised, "Do not be like the . . . or the . . . , which have no understanding, but must be controlled by bit and bridle," Psalm 32:9.
9. Luke described Jesus as being "led as a . . . to the slaughter," Acts 8:32.
10. Solomon said, "The righteous are as bold as a . . . ," Proverbs 28:1.



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PAPER TOYS

Inside Out

The idea for this trick is simple. Solving this fascinating puzzle can be frustrating. You may even be tempted to call it impossible, but it isn't. The secret is to have patience and the willingness to keep on trying.

Inside Out is not hard to make. It will last as long as you want the puzzle to last. After you solve it, it is the perfect puzzle to use as a challenge to others. What is better than knowing how to do something which no one else can do?

Begin by making four squares from stiff material. An ideal size for the four puzzle squares is 4 inches by 4 inches. Make certain the squares are all the same size. Old spiral-notebook covers are perfect, but so is a file folder or a cereal box. If the material is already one colour on the front and another on the back, you are ready to begin. Otherwise you will need to take a few minutes and colour the squares on one side.

Now cut each square into four triangles from corner to corner. After cutting each square into triangles, rebuild the square with about 1/8 inch of space between the triangles.

Now tape the four triangles of each square back together to reform four squares. Be certain the same coloured side is down for all pieces. Each re-taped square will be plain on one side and coloured on the other.

Leave 1/8 inch of space between the triangles when you tape them together. Tape both sides of the squares. His double layer of tape is necessary so that the puzzle will hold up to lots of use. Also it keeps you from having a sticky strip on one side of the puzzle.

When the four squares are re-formed, place them side by side in a row.

Leave 1/8 inch between each square. Make sure the coloured side is down for all four pieces. Now tape the four squares together. Remember to tape both sides of each joint. Finally, join the two ends together with tape so that the coloured side is inside and the plain side is outside. Your inside-out puzzle should look like a hollow box.

Limber up the puzzle by folding it along each of the taped joints. This includes the diagonals between triangles as well as the joints between squares. Do not bend any of the triangles. Now that the joints are easy to fold back and forth, it is time to solve the puzzle.

Begin with the plain side on the outside. By folding the puzzle along the taped joints and twisting and turning it, you will be able to turn it inside out. That's right. The puzzle is solved when the coloured sides of all squares are on the outside of the hollow box.

I am going to leave you with two weeks to work out how to solve this puzzle.

Next time, I will give you the solution. Don't give up, okay!!!