

Volume 52, No. 20
September 26, 2003

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE



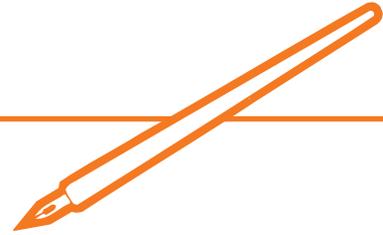
Streetlight Ministries

INSIDE:

- *Addressing the Shortage*
- *Why no alcohol for the priests?*
- *Religious Toleration*



By J. Visscher



Addressing the Shortage

Our present and future dilemma

At present, as many of you know, there is a ministerial shortage in the Canadian Reformed Churches. Currently, there are nine congregations in Canada looking for ministers. This means that about 20% of our churches are in need of a pastor. At least one more new church may be instituted in the coming year and another church is giving serious consideration to calling a second minister. Obviously, the demand is there, and it is growing.

But what about the supply side? Currently, we have one man eligible for call. Two more brothers hope to be declared eligible soon. Another brother in graduate studies may seek eligibility in the coming year. Finally, two students entering fourth year will hopefully be available next year. Thereafter the number of student prospects grows thinner.

We need more ministers!

In addition, one needs to factor in that the demand in the coming years is not expected to lessen. Currently, our sister churches down under, the Free Reformed Churches in Australia, stand in need of at least three pastors. As well, there are mission vacancies both here and there. Add to that ministers retiring in the coming years, as well as ministers having to retire early for health reasons, and you have a bleak situation. We need more ministers!

Dealing with the problem

Yet how do the churches go about obtaining more ministers? Where does the solution lie? For one, it does not lie with a continuous bemoaning of the problem. Neither will flights of speculation in this or that direction get us very far. No, we need to move beyond the problem and devote our energies to solutions.

But where do solutions lie? As I look at it, I think that they lie in three key areas: the home, the church and the college.

The home as incubator

If in the future we are going to see an increase in the number of students studying to become ministers of the Word, then the place where we need to start is in the home. This is the setting in which future students are born, raised and nurtured. This is where they spend their formative years. This is the time when parental influence and impact is greatest.

In many ways, then it comes down to the parents in the church. It comes down to their leadership and example, their modeling and mentoring. A home in which the Lord is loved, in which the gospel is lived, in which the church is esteemed, in which the office bearers are respected, in which serving is stressed, will prove to be a great incubator for one's children. It will do so much to instill in them the sorts of abilities and attitudes that are so necessary for effective service in church and kingdom.

If you have trouble seeing that then just consider for a moment the opposite. When children are raised in a home where there is no zeal for the Lord, no faithfulness in worship, no interest in Bible study, no commitment to holiness, no stress on involvement in the church and no need for self-sacrifice, we all know the results – lukewarm children, indifferent children, wayward children. The likelihood of ministerial prospects coming from such homes is rare.

Parents in the church, then, need to take a good, hard look at their homes. They need to weigh their values, their priorities, and their activities. They will also need to counter the spirit of the age which assumes that the only worthwhile career choices are the ones that have to do with earning lots of money, exercising lots of power and attracting lots of prestige. Unfortunately, many young men who have a real gift for ministry are sacrificed on the altars of their parents' dreams of success.

The church as facilitator

If the home is the place where prospective pastors are nurtured, then the local church is the place where they need to be supported, directed and encouraged. In short, future students need to be exposed to and to experience a healthy church life.

Parents in the church, then, need to take a good, hard look at their homes.

Recently student Ian Wildeboer, who did his summer internship in the churches of Langley and Willoughby Heights, B.C., and I hosted an evening for students interested both remotely and intensely in the ministry of the gospel. We did not know what to expect and even wondered whether we would end-up spending the evening drinking coffee and eating Tim Horton's donuts all by ourselves. To our surprise

and delight, however, twelve young men showed up and a few more sent their regrets. Together we had a great evening of sharing and interacting.

Yet as we did so one thing kept on rearing its head and it had to do with how some churches treat their pastors. These young men had heard stories either real or fictitious, accurate or exaggerated, balanced or one-sided, about the abuse that some pastors in our churches had suffered or were suffering. They saw this as a real obstacle.

The common line goes something like this: "Here you study for eight years after high school, make many material and personal sacrifices together with your girlfriend or wife, enter a calling and church that has high expectations, entails long hours, and calls for much wisdom, and what do you get, but a rough ride?"

Now, we did our best to re-assure the young men present that this is neither the standard nor the common scenario. For every difficult and demanding congregation, there are many more that deal with their pastors in a loving, supportive and understanding fashion.

The problem is, of course, that even one case of church conflict has a way of tarnishing many churches. As a result, the onus is very much on local churches to ensure that they do all they can to foster and stimulate an environment in which their pastor can work with purpose and pleasure. Such an approach will not only pay dividends locally, but it will also make the ministry so much more appealing to young men who are considering their futures.

The college as educator

Having looked at the home and the church, there is one more cog in the wheel that deserves our attention, and it is

What's inside?

Every reader of this magazine will understand the importance of the preaching of the gospel. However, to have the preaching the churches also need preachers. We may be thankful that we have our own Theological College which is eminently qualified to train young men for the ministry. However, we need more students and more ministers. What is holding back a steady flow of new recruits? This is addressed by Dr. J. Visscher in his editorial.

We are starting a two part series of articles by student Reuben Bredenhof (from our Theological College) dealing with toleration. He examines the idea of toleration from the perspective of the Reformation in the sixteenth century and how that should influence our approach to toleration today.

We have two press releases – one of a Classis Contracta and the other of a joint meeting between Canadian and United Reformed on the matter of a common church order.

We have our regular meditation, an interesting report on a league day in Calgary, and a report on the important work of the Streetlight Ministries in the Hamilton area.

RA



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd., Winnipeg, MB

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 2003

	Regular Mail	Air Mail
Canada*	\$41.00*	\$67.50*
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$43.50	\$56.00
International	\$67.00	\$100.00

*Including 7% GST – No. 890967359RT

Advertisements: \$13.00 per column inch

We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada, through the Publication Assistance Program (PAP), toward our mailing costs.

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Agreement No. 1377531

PAP Registration No. 9907

ISSN 0383-0438

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the college. Of course, I mean by that the Theological College in Hamilton. What can it do to alleviate the present and future shortage? What is its role in all of this?

The best thing that the College can do in the present situation is to continue what it has been doing, namely turning out a quality product. As I listen to voices from all across the country, I hear many words of appreciation for the work being done at our College. Its students come across as well-trained in the basic skills needed for ministry and many of them have become or are becoming effective pastors. Of course, I also hear from some that the course of study is too long and the workload is too demanding, but when I talk with students who have graduated and are in the regular ministry, I hear only appreciation for having received a quality education. So keep up the good work – Theological College!

Why is this beautiful and functional building not humming with activity at night?

Only, we should not stop here. If there are ways in which a good education can be made even better they must be explored, examined, and implemented. In this connection I think of what has happened over the last number of years through our Pastoral Training Program. Having been involved somewhat in the set-up of the program and now experienced it first hand on several occasions, I can only applaud this effort. Churches are enthusiastic about it. Students look forward to it with anticipation. The College profile is raised. In short, there are winners here all around.

Speaking about the College profile, however, I do think that ways and means need to be found to raise it even more in our churches. One of the many advantages of having a denominational seminary is that there are few worries about viability and sustainability. The College assesses, the members contribute faithfully and the means are there.

Contrast that with independent seminaries who are always having to beat the bushes for support. And yet there is an upside to the latter, and it is that for such a college to remain alive it has to have good contact with its supporters. It can not take anything for granted. On the other hand, in our situation things seem to run almost automatically. And that represents a danger. I would say that we need to market our College just as aggressively as if it was an independent seminary that can take nothing for granted, that places a premium on contact with its constituency and is constantly looking for new opportunities to strength the tie between College and churches.

Some modest suggestions

Perhaps in this connection I can be so bold as to offer a few suggestions. For one, I think that it would help if our College had a proper name and a name change. The official name is “The Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches,” and as such this name very much reflects our Dutch roots. Now there is nothing to be ashamed of there, but when almost all theological institutions on this continent have a name and call themselves “seminaries,” is it still fitting to take such a generic approach? So, what about the General Synod charging the Board of Governors to solicit suggestions from the churches for a proper name?

Another suggestion has to do with the College building. I am told that if at night the lights are shining it is because the students are studying and the staff is cleaning. Why is this beautiful and functional building not humming with activity at night? Why are courses not being offered in leadership, evangelism, office bearer training, and a host of other areas? This does not mean that the professors should be called upon to teach these courses. They have enough to do. But why can other talented people in the community not be asked to teach and to contribute?

Personally I think that more traffic flow would be a wonderful thing for our College. Indeed, it should function in many ways as a hub for our churches. In this way too the College and its work will receive much more exposure among our members.

If I may be allowed one more suggestion, what about an active College promoter? What about a man who visits the churches, the elementary and the high schools across this land (and Australia too) and who promotes the ministry and the training for the ministry at our College? In this connection I can think of a number of retired ministers who could serve as excellent ambassadors and promoters.

I would invite you to consider these suggestions. If you have other ones, please let me know and, if fitting, I am more than willing to share them with you, the readers.

Together in our homes, churches and at the College, let us do whatever we can to address the shortage that we have, and that means work, but also prayer. After all, the church is neither our property nor our creation. It owes its life and well-being to the ongoing work of our Saviour, the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit and the grace of God the Father. Also when it comes to men for the ministry of the gospel, may our Triune God see fit to hear us and to bless us for the glory of his Name. C

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By J. Van Woudenberg

Why no alcohol for the priests?

Leviticus 10:9

In Leviticus 10 we find that well-known and dramatic story about the striking down of Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, because of the fact that they offered "unauthorized fire." In the middle of this chapter, however, we find some interesting legislation regarding alcohol usage by the priests, "Then the LORD said to Aaron, 'You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come.'" Why such legislation in this chapter?

Some explainers cheaply suggest that this legislation has nothing to do with the dramatic striking down of Nadab and Abihu, even though the story surrounds this legislation. Others suggest that God struck Nadab and Abihu down because they were in fact intoxicated. However, there is no corroborating evidence for this, and Deuteronomy 29:6 explicitly states that in the desert the Israelites "drank no wine or other fermented drink."

To understand the legislation, we indeed must understand the context of the striking down of Nadab and Abihu. After God had struck them down, then Moses said to their shocked father Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke of when he said: 'Among those who approach me I will show myself holy; in the sight of all the people I will be honoured.'" Clearly, they had not honoured God as "holy" or "weighty." Rather, they had dishonoured Him by treating his word "lightly." When Moses later on did not obey God's exact instructions and struck the rock instead of spoke to it, then God there too accused Moses saying, "You did not trust in me enough to honour me as holy" (Num 20:13).

Although it appears that Nadab and Abihu did something with the incense that was out of the ordinary, we

don't know exactly what they did that fell outside of God's commands. Yet God struck them down very dramatically. This dramatic striking, however, does not mean that Nadab and Abihu were specially wicked priests such as Hophni and Phinehas who "treated the LORD's offerings with contempt" and who "slept with the women who served at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting" (1Sam 2). Neither does it indicate that Nadab and Abihu went straight to hell. Rather, God wanted to drive a lesson home to his people. As God said to Aaron via Moses, "in the sight of all the people I will be honoured."

God had just moved into the tabernacle, his earthly palace, and the Aaronic priests had just started their work. Right at this key moment in redemptive history God wanted to drive home a very important lesson for God's people to keep in mind as long as they have God dwelling in their midst in the tabernacle. That lesson is this: "Especially as I now am so close to you, I must be treated and respected as holy! My people, never minimize my holiness! Never minimize my Word for how to do things! Never start freewheeling in your worship of me. That's not the way to go with me living in your midst!"

Right as that lesson is being driven home so dramatically, God says to Aaron, "You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die." We all know what alcohol can do: it can cloud our minds so that we can't think straight anymore, and so that we get things mixed up. So it lowers our inhibitions; under the influence we tend to do things that otherwise we would not do, like saying crude jokes, like making illicit sexual moves, etc. Hence alcohol can easily get in the way of obedient service to the LORD, of treating the LORD and his Word as holy, weighty!

Says God then, "especially among my priests I cannot have that." Why not? Because in the words of verses 10 and 11, "You must distinguish between the holy and the common, between the unclean and the clean, and you must teach the Israelites all the decrees the LORD has given them through Moses." In other words, "with me dwelling in your midst, you have to have your minds clear to do the work I give you in the way I instruct you."

That's instruction we too ought to pay attention to in our own day. After all, we too are called to serve as priests of the Lord (Lord's Day 12). In fact, we have the Spirit living in us! These facts explain why Paul says in Ephesians 5:18, "Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit." Says Paul, "drunkenness is completely antithetical to having the Spirit dwelling in us." That's why it is important that God's people don't become hooked to the bottle – or if they do, to not shove it under the carpet but instead deal with it decisively! Not only so they don't kill someone on the road while under the influence, but because holy God dwells in them!

No, that does not mean that we today can never enjoy any alcoholic beverage. Scripture is clear that we may use it in festive occasions: think especially of the Lord's Supper celebration. So it speaks of proper medicinal usage: Paul urges Timothy to take some for his stomach ailments.

But the point is this: we may never let alcohol (or other drugs) impede us in our priestly service of the Lord, in which clear headed practical obedience is so important. That's why Paul rebukes the Corinthians when he hears that members actually come to the Lord's Supper celebration drunk. Says Paul, "that's why many of you are dying! God is lashing out!" (1Cor 11:30).

That's also why Paul instructs Timothy that office bearers especially should not be given to drunkenness (1 Tim 3:3). Rather they should be driven by the desire to obey holy God in their offices with clear minds. That's so important for the well being of the whole congregation. The same counts for parents: they should not be given to drunkenness, but rather by the desire to obey holy God in their office as parents of God's chil-

dren with clear minds. That's so important for the well being of the family. Misuse of alcohol can be so devastating for the whole family.

We do well to note that the alcoholic beverages in our day are generally much stronger than they were in biblical times. As such we more than ever should be vigilant in this matter, and extremely careful with our alcohol consumption.

As Reformed believers, familiar with 1 Corinthians 6:18-20, we know

the bottom line reason why we should flee sexual immorality: we today are temples of the Holy Spirit! Do we realize that really the same applies to misuse of alcohol? Grateful to have God dwelling in our midst, let's strive for holiness, also in our handling of alcohol. **C**

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Religious Toleration (Part 1)

By Reuben Bredenhof

Introduction

"Toleration" is a word that is frequently heard in our postmodern times. This term occurs in many contexts: in the popular media, in contemporary philosophy, and in government statements on those values that define our nation. An appeal is often made to "toleration" as that key mindset that will solve the divisive ills of society resulting from race, sexuality, and religion. Indeed, it is safe to say that "toleration" has not only entered but shaped the contemporary politically-correct language, and as a term is entrenched in the prevailing world view that champions inclusiveness and individual freedom.

The idea of toleration is not an old one, of course. In this series of articles particularly the idea of *religious* toleration in the time of the *Reformation* will be examined, with a view to gaining some insight into how we are to approach "toleration" today.

Definition and aspects

The present-day idea of toleration is different than the older understanding of it. The meaning often implied in toleration today is "the willingness to respect the complete freedom of any conviction and of the attitude to life that originates from it and is connected to it, no matter how deviating this practical attitude to life may be from

traditional convictions and moral maxims as they may still be found among the majority of the people."¹ This "twentieth century" concept of toleration has been expanded from the historically older understanding, where toleration was not an unrestricted respect but "a forbearance in judging the beliefs and behaviour of others, a grudging and temporary acceptance of an unpleasant necessity."

"To persecute, a man must believe that he is right, that the point in question is important, and that coercion is effective."

It may be helpful before we begin the historical survey to note the opposite side of the matter: for what reasons are people religiously intolerant? Forbearance in judging the beliefs of others was/is often limited when dissenting views are seen to be dangerous, subversive, or alien to the dominant religion and culture. Connected to this is the view that two forms of religion cannot exist in the same state without disastrous consequences, and that civil rulers therefore have the right to determine the religion of their subjects.

The idea of toleration before the Reformation

There is general agreement among historians that the thorough debate on toleration had its beginning in the period of humanism and the Reformation, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Yet this matter has long been addressed, which is something that must be considered before we begin our look at the Reformation period.

The young and occasionally oppressed church of the first two centuries AD had little opportunity to ponder the legitimacy of persecuting those who were not members of the church. However, by the third and fourth century, after some times of peace and influence, the church had developed a basic model for persecution and toleration: "To persecute, a man must believe that he is right, that the point in question is important, and that coercion is effective." The first two points were not in dispute, for the church was sure of her faith, and saw membership as integral to salvation. There was more debate over whether heretics were to be cast out of the church, or unbelievers forced in. The church father Tertullian maintained, "It is not in the nature of religion to coerce religion, which must be adopted freely and not by force."

More church fathers echoed Tertullian's sentiment, and viewed the scriptural

teaching on toleration as clear. The Old Testament penalties for idolatry, blasphemy, and apostasy were understood to outline the proper approach to heresy. Further, such a New Testament text as Titus 3:10 concerning the rejection of a heretic after two admonitions was considered relevant.

The Reformation was a movement away from the errors and hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and so can be seen as a step on the way to true religious freedom.

As we will note throughout our survey, there was a blurring of the lines between church and state in the early Christian centuries. With the conversion of Constantine and his favouring of the Christian religion, there was a trend away from the rejection of coercion toward an acceptance of the persecution of heretics for the stability of the state. Constantine's decree in the Edict of Milan in 313 gave all religions a degree of liberty, granting both to Christians and all men the freedom to follow the religion which they choose. Though the decree did proclaim religious liberty, this was done firstly in the interest of Christianity – Constantine hoped that Christianity would unify the Empire. His later practices went contrary to the Edict of Milan, for he used constraint in the suppression of heretics (e.g., Donatists, Arians), as well as when he persecuted pagans, destroying temples and imposing the death penalty on those who offered sacrifices to pagan gods.

With changes in leadership of the empire, the viewpoint of the church on persecution and toleration was altered. Under Constantine's sons, there was a renewal of the separation of church and state. Hosius declared that the clergy should not rule on earth, and the emperor should not burn incense. Athanasius agreed, "Truth is not proclaimed by swords and missiles, nor by means of soldiers, but by persuasion and counsel." Despite this hesitancy, the fourth century saw an increase in the severity of legislation against heresy, with the first instance of the infliction of the death penalty in

385, against Priscillian and his followers in Spain.

The church fathers Chrysostom and Jerome are figures that stand out for their contrasting views on tolerance. Chrysostom said that capital punishment is not to be afflicted, though the right to assemble may be denied to heretics. In one place he writes, "The wanderer cannot be dragged by force or constrained by fear. Only persuasion can restore him to the truth from which he has fallen away." Conversely, Jerome did not specify the precise lengths to which the church could go with respect to heretics, but left few doubts: "A spark should be extinguished, fermentation removed, a putrid limb amputated, an infected animal segregated" (referring to the heretic Arius as a spark that was not immediately extinguished, causing the world to catch aflame) and again, "Punishment of murder, *sacrilege*, and poisoning is not bloodshed, but merely execution of the law."

Augustine is a divided figure in the matter of religious toleration. Up to 404, he was not willing to appeal to the state for assistance in dealing with various heretical groups, yet his battles with the Donatists helped to break down his reservations, for he regarded the Donatists' association with the lawless Circumcellions as potentially harmful to the peace. Suppression of these rebellious people was not an immoral constraint of conscience, but a necessary protection of the peace. The central motif in Augustine's theory of persecution was love: "How can genuine affection suffer a loved one to die a death more tragic and more real than that in the flesh? How can it permit him to commit a crime worse than murder, which destroys only the body,

Augustine is a divided figure in the matter of religious toleration.

whereas schism and heresy shed spiritual blood?" To justify the persecution of heresy, Augustine turned to the Scriptures, to the Old Testament legal texts on penalties, as well as to the story of Elijah's slaughter of the priests of Baal – but he also was the first to cite infamously the New Testament text, "Compel them to come in" (Luke 14:21-23).² Though Augustine did



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change his views to favour the persecution of heretics as a duty of the Church, he always objected to the death penalty, and imposed limitations on the scope of heresy – some matters were essential to the faith, others immaterial.

The Middle Ages contributed little to the theory of persecution and toleration as stated by Augustine and others. Aquinas added his own view to Augustine's statement regarding heresy being worse than murder on account of its destroying the soul, and that counterfeiting of divine truth is worse than the forging of money which is punishable by death. Though this period knew of some suppression of ideas (e.g., the ban of Aristotle's works) and heretics (e.g., the Cathars), there is by no means a consistent picture of a "persecuting society" in the Middle Ages as some have suggested. This is not to say that toleration was accepted as a policy, but rather that religious diversity was not easily "regulated," and the forums for debate could by no means be

closed. Coexistence of different mainstream religions in the medieval period was rare, except perhaps in Spain, where Christians, Muslims, and Jews lived in harmony.

It was often expected that the state support and assist the Reformed religion in any way, including the removal of opposing religious groups.

As we approach the Reformation, we can identify four factors that contributed to the rise of tolerance and its discussion. Firstly, there was the increase of medieval mysticism, which placed a greater value on an individual experience of the divine and absorption into his Being than on doctrine. Secondly, the humanism of the Renaissance and early sixteenth century emphasized the freedom of investigation and inquiry into all and new areas of thought. Thirdly, there was the splintering of Roman Catholicism by sectarianism, which typically placed obedience to God or the Holy Spirit above obedience to the Pope. Finally, the pre-Reformation figures such as John Wyclif and John Huss, with their calls to return to the Scriptures, can also be seen as contributing to the Reformation atmosphere of liberation and freedom of belief.

A survey of the Reformation

The Reformation was a movement away from the errors and hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and so can be seen as a step on the way to true religious freedom. It might be thought that because they were “themselves dissenters from an established tradition, they [would look] with a little more hesitation upon the suppression of dissent.”³ But though it certainly was a time of regained freedom, the Reformation also witnessed a sudden increase in religious intolerance: Church and State were often closely linked together, so religious dissent was identified with political dissent and was dealt with accordingly.

It would not be appropriate to lay all the blame for religious intolerance at the feet of the Roman Church. Indeed, the Catholics were constrained to resist the sudden undermining of its

authority, and they expressed this defensive position with severity, as John Calvin himself experienced in Paris and France. But Protestants were by no means innocent of the intolerance that arose after the Reformation’s inception; Caspar Olevianus worried about the reputation the Protestants were gaining, for “As soon as the Reformed religion has seized hold of a province, its followers try to oppress and destroy the opposing party.” This statement can characterize the volatile situation in Europe in the first thirty years following the breakthrough of the Reformation, but the furor slowly subsided. Yet neither persecution, because of its political implications, nor tolerance, because of the deeply entrenched religious loyalties, won the day.

Unlike in the Reformation, the medieval period had known mostly “localized” heresies, errors that were limited to certain areas. Despite the suppression of heretics, there was also the attitude that deviants could be given time to confess their error and return to the truth. In the Reformation, however, “the battle lines” were clearly drawn, with little room left for forbearance.

There was a basic difference among those who advocated toleration and those who did not, and this is reflected in their perception of heretics. In the view of many Roman Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists, heresy sprang from arrogance and stubbornness; heresy could not be treated by spiritual exhortation, but rather punishment and coercion were required to sway one from error. On the other hand, those who advocated an attitude of tolerance perceived the heretic as an erring person who, if necessary, could be encouraged to change his mind, not by coercion but by appropriate arguments and patient instruction.

The Reformation churches generally looked on the state with its structure of authority as a divine institution. It was often expected that the state support and assist the Reformed religion in any way, including the removal of opposing religious groups. The view was that the government had received authority to maintain the law of God, especially as codified in the Decalogue. The “first table” of the law was understood to mean that the State was required to permit only the right worship of God. The vast majority of theologians (both Roman Catholic and Protestant) agreed that

doctrinal error should be punished by the civil authorities.

Despite the maintenance of the alliance of the church with the state, the Protestant movement did emphasize one principle that was integral to later views on toleration, and that was its emphasis on liberty of conscience. When Luther stood before the Diet of Worms, he affirmed this key principle in his powerful speech of defence, “I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.” His conscience was free, free to be bound by the teaching of Scripture.

The debate on religious toleration had a pronounced impact on political institutions of the time. The traditionally close unity of the Christian church with the state began to splinter especially in the last thirty years of the sixteenth century, as secular magistrates recognized that a situation of religious pluralism was not a real danger to the state, but rather could be profitable. The turmoil of religious conflict and the weakening of the state was seen as something to be avoided not through enforced uniformity but through toleration. Economic considerations played a role too, as it was perceived that some religious minorities made valuable contributions (e.g., the Jews in Venice), and therefore should not be troubled in their religious practice.

Though it is not a perfect picture of peace and tolerance that emerges from the Reformation era, this period did see important advances for religious toleration.

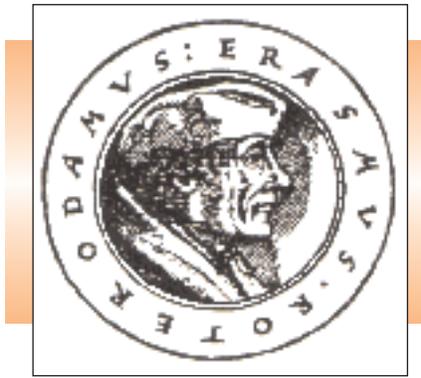
Countries adopted different approaches to the diverse religions existing in their territory. Even after the break-up of the idea of the state as a political and religious unity, several European countries (e.g., Spain and the Italian states) remained firmly intolerant and suppressed any hint of religious dissent. Certain political systems afforded the opportunity for a coexistence of different religious groups. The two Swiss *Landfrieden* treaties of 1529 and 1531 allowed both the Roman

Catholics and the Protestants to observe their faith in peace. Other countries followed this model, favouring the principle of confessional equality.

Most countries placed restrictions on heretics or adherents of other religions. A basic restriction was that they could not publicly pronounce their opinions. Permission for private non-conformist worship was sometimes granted, and even the right to conduct public church services in specified places was occasionally won. The highest form of toleration or religious liberty was expressed when the rulers of a country allowed all religious groups within its territory to practise their faith without restriction (e.g., the Warsaw Confederation in Poland, 1573).

An important political step towards toleration is expressed in the Peace of Augsburg of 1555. This agreement was based on an equality of confessions (Roman or Lutheran), and on the important territorialist principle of “whose is the land, his is the religion:” the unified state should be assisted by unified religion. Rulers of the empire’s territories were given freedom of religion, while the common man was not penalized for leaving one territory (and religion) for another. This attempt to gain latitude of confession failed with the Thirty Years’ War, when the laws against heretics were still being enforced. The 1648 Peace of Westphalia restored the Peace of Augsburg to a degree, giving the German princes the choice to enforce or ignore the laws against heretics. The Peace of Westphalia was the first official employment of the word “toleration,” stipulating that Roman Catholics in Protestant lands and Lutherans and the Reformed in Roman Catholic lands should be “tolerated patiently” if they were obedient to the civil authorities and did not cause trouble.

There were also humanist and religious groups in Europe that pleaded for religious toleration from not a political or economic standpoint, but from a particular understanding of the Scriptures. Groups such as the Anabaptists made a sharp distinction between the Old and the New Testaments, asserting that the New Testament alone was authoritative in doctrine and life. They laid great stress on the words and acts of Jesus Christ, often assumed a militant stance towards civil governments, and denied the possibility of a Christian state. Other groups sought to reconcile conflicts by lessening the requirements



of faith to those doctrines plainly stated in the Bible; the English latitudinarians advanced the (still well-known) motto, “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

Regarding the movements for toleration in sixteenth century Reformation Europe, we have to keep in view the terrible violence that did occur (e.g., the massacre of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew’s Day) and the seventeenth century’s many instances of religious intolerance and persecution: the Protestants in France came under increasing pressure, English dissenters had to leave the Isle, in Poland, the Roman Catholic Counter-Reformation movement successfully destroyed the religious peace, and the Thirty Years’ War was also defined by confessional disagreement and demands for freedom of worship.

Though it is not a perfect picture of peace and tolerance that emerges from the Reformation era, this period did see important advances for religious toleration. Though humanism stimulated free inquiry and the exchange of ideas, we do well to focus on the return to the Scriptures as vital to the “rediscovery” of both tolerance for others and the insistence on personal freedom – guided by the Scriptures, the Reformation was a liberation from the man-made burdens of the Roman Catholic Church.

Some Reformation snapshots

In order to illustrate the general statements made above, we will now briefly look at some chief Reformation figures and events that defined the debate on religious toleration.

Desiderius Erasmus

The inquiry-based tendencies of humanism as well as mysticism’s desire for a less intellectual understanding of God converge in Erasmus. In the early

decades of the sixteenth century, it was his liberal spirit that dominated in many parts of Europe, and bore great influence on later humanists and theologians. He rejected long discussion and constraint on matters that could not be known with certainty. Mysticism surfaced in Erasmus’ sharp separation of things spiritual and things physical. He felt that the religious controversies of his day (a spiritual matter) simply could not be waged on the physical level as was done, by way of executions or constraint – according to him, this was the chief heresy and blasphemy. To burn a man for his beliefs was completely useless in producing a right religious spirit.

As mentioned, Erasmus was also tolerant with respect to doctrines because of his uncertainty: there were some matters of faith that could not be resolved, and so could not be insisted upon. He stated in connection with his theology of reduction, “The sum of our religion is peace and unanimity and these can scarcely stand unless we define as little as possible and in many things leave each one free to follow his own judgment.”

Though Erasmus did valuable work on the Greek text of the New Testament, the religious toleration encouraged by him did much to weaken the authoritative character of the Scriptures – he felt that one could not be sure of some teachings of Scripture, and therefore one could not admonish or convince another. This and his “theology of reduction” began to open the door to relativism and false toleration, where what one believes does not matter.

To be continued . . .

Notes

¹ Jacob Kamphuis, “Remarks on Church and Tolerance.” In *Proceedings of the International Conference of Reformed Churches 1993* (Neerlandia, AB: Inheritance Publications, 1993), pp. 213-214.

² Cf. Paul Aasman, “How shall we make them come in?” *Clarion* 52 (2003), p. 233.

³ Owen Chadwick, *The Reformation. The Pelican History of the Church 3* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1972), p. 398.



Reuben Bredenhof is beginning his final year at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Alberta Ladies' League Day held in Calgary, Alberta on May 28, 2003

By Sharon Helder

Love as our Creator meant it to be

On any other Wednesday morning, the building belonging to the Canadian Reformed Church at Calgary would be full of eager students on their way to their classes from grades 1-8, since the church building also doubles as Tyndale Christian School. But on this overcast but warm morning on May 28, 2003 in Calgary, Alberta, while the students were attending school upstairs, fifty-nine ladies travelled from north, south, east and west to gather together to enjoy our annual League day for 2003. The ladies in attendance had travelled to Calgary from Barrhead, Neerlandia, Edmonton, Coaldale, Taber, and from Chilliwack, B.C. After registration and enjoying coffee together, the day was formally opened by sister Karin Wallace with congregational singing and prayer. All the ladies were welcomed heartily.

Karin then led us in Bible reading from Genesis 2:15-25, Ephesians 5:25-33 and Song of Songs 6:11-7:9. After singing together, Karin introduced our speaker for the day, Rev. Richard Eikelboom, minister of the Canadian Reformed Church of Calgary who would deliver his speech entitled **"Love as our Creator meant it to be."** Rev. Eikelboom delivered a series of sermons in Calgary on the Song of Songs that were very well-received this past year, which sparked the idea for a speech on the same topic for League Day.

Rev. Eikelboom began by discussing some sentiments in society today regarding how women have been deceived and betrayed by the feminist movement. He summarized the teachings of feminism and outlined the correct Bible-based response to these teachings. The goal of feminism was to set women free from the dominion or abuse of men, but now women have



gained the right to do basically whatever men do, and yet are still primarily responsible for the running of the household! Women work just as hard at their jobs as men do and also do most of the work at home. So who really benefits? We are deceived by big business such as the cosmetics industry, and pornography where unrealistic images of girls posing as women are portrayed as "typical." This cruel manipulation leads to a difficulty to love and respect ourselves because we do not have perfect figures. And if we can't accept ourselves the way we are, can we believe that God does? All this is to say that the world influences us far more than we may realize. This look at the world's view of femininity stood in contrast to the remainder of the speech that then looked at what the Song of Songs has to say about the relation between a boy and a girl and a man and a woman.

Rev. Eikelboom's speech led us to many different references throughout the book of the Song of Songs. He

showed us that this book is not, in the first place, about a married couple or the relationship between Christ and his church. This is a normal young man and young woman looking forward to marriage who experience all of the physical attraction that is part of this growing love for each other. We should not seek to destroy this attraction, but to control it, since God created man and woman to be attractive to each other, but this has been tainted by the fall into sin. The comparison was made to a stick of dynamite, which has great power and must be treated with utmost respect or it will explode. In 2:15 the foxes that ruin the vineyards are seen as the issues and challenges in relationships that need to be dealt with. If allowed to fester, these issues will destroy a relationship. Through other texts we are shown that when the Lover is strong, the Beloved is weak, and when she is strong, he is weak and won't take "no" for an answer. And yet in 5:6, we see the effect of the Lover's sin when, after inviting her to commit



Calgary Canadian Reformed Church and Tyndale Christian School.

adultery, he eventually goes away, and the woman is the one who is left feeling bad for saying “no.” The woman is often the one who is left feeling responsible in these situations. But both partners must take responsibility. It is good that one is strong when the other is weak, but one partner should not always be the strong one. *That is love, as our Creator meant it to be.*

The Beloved’s beauty is not hidden but highlighted. Beauty is not evil, nor is it wrong to accentuate beauty. What is wrong is to accept the world’s definition of beauty as the standard to achieve. The Beloved has “something” that fills the Lover with respect and continues to thrill him for his whole life. Even though she considers herself to be plain (a lily was very common), he considers her to be a lily among thorns. This love is not blind. In 8:12 the Beloved describes herself as a vineyard that is entrusted to the Lover. His God-given privilege and responsibility is to make this vineyard blossom and bear fruit. In a relationship of love, the partners can’t just let each other go their own way. In chapter 7, the Lover goes into a very detailed description of the physically attractive appearance of his Beloved. Yet time and again we are shown that all of his observations are made in appropriate detail through clothing and with admiration of her physical appearance as well as her confident presentation, giving thanks to God. He looks forward to the wedding day in 7:8, 9 when she will be his to have and hold completely and in 7:9 she expresses her joy that he loves her, as well as her desire to have him kiss her passionately. This is how they express their love for each other. And this is *how our Creator meant it to be.*

The biblical standards for sexual behaviour for young unmarried people must be taught to our youth and explained according to scriptural principles by the parents and the church. The Song of Songs can be a very useful tool in this guidance. This instruction must also be backed up with accountability to parents. And if these boundaries are not taught to the youth, they will set their own standards, with the eager encouragement of the world.

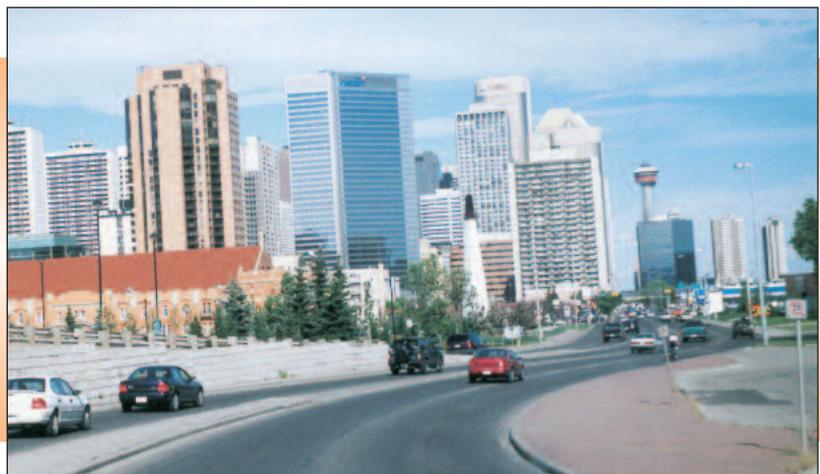
The passage that we read from Ephesians 5 demonstrates that we are to model love after the love of Christ for his church. By submitting to our husbands, we are able to show in a practical way what it means to be a Christian. Yet the observation may be made that it is far easier to submit to the perfect Lord than an imperfect husband, yet God commands us to submit to our husband, *as to the Lord.* The Lord does not promise us a “happy” marriage, but he does promise that if we obey, he will make it well with us in this life

or the next. *Love as our Creator meant it to be* requires much prayer and work. Rev. Eikelboom expressed his prayer for us women to love our husbands in a Christian way, and also expressed encouragement to assist young people to enjoy this gift as our Creator meant it to be.

Rev. Eikelboom was thanked for his informative speech. We broke into five smaller discussion groups and then enjoyed a delicious and relaxing lunch, followed by some musical entertainment. After the entertainment, Rev. Eikelboom was given opportunity to address some of the questions that had arisen in the discussion groups and also those which arose from the audience. These questions dealt with a variety of matters, including the sensitive issue of spouse abuse, inappropriate dress, courtship, whether women need to fight for their rights, mentorship, marital counselling and the place of office bearers and/or professionals in marital counselling.

After question period, Rev. Eikelboom was thanked for his speech and presented with a small token of our appreciation. Sister Wallace then wished all the ladies God’s blessing on our ways home and then led us in a prayer of Thanksgiving for a wonderful day of learning and fellowship. Refreshments were made available once again after which we all made our way home with new insight and encouraged in our task, whether the Lord has placed us in a situation of being single, a wife, a mother or grandmother.

And in case any ladies are interested, the church in Neerlandia, Alberta will host Alberta’s League Day for 2004 and we would love to see you there!



Busy downtown Calgary.

Streetlight Ministries

You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16 NIV

Streetbeat From the Evangelist

Anyone who has been driving in downtown Hamilton on Wilson Street or Ferguson St. N. in the last few months will certainly have noticed the presence of the Streetlight Christian Centre. With a very visible presence in the downtown area we are experiencing a big jump in the number of people coming out to the Sunday night outreach service, as well as the Tuesday night group Bible study. A few people have even come in and joined the Sunday night service because they were attracted by our wonderful new sign. Many of the people have heard of Streetlight Ministries before but now that we are so close to the downtown area, it seems easier for them to come and join us. Pray that the influx of new people coming to the service and Bible studies will not be too overwhelming for me and the many volunteers who help me out. Our hope and prayer is that they will be consistently fed true spiritual food and be encouraged in the faith in the fellowship of believers. Yet with so many new people coming, I often do not have time to meet everyone even irregularly, to see where they are spiritually and encourage them in the faith. Most of the people who come need consistent encouragement and pastoral care. As the number of those who come regularly grows, and as this same group grows into a fellowship, the need for a full-time pastor is truly becoming more evident.

Since we have started services in our new building we have also made some changes. The service now starts



at the earlier time of 6:30. Before the service a simple meal consisting of buns and juice is also now enjoyed by all those who make their own way to the Streetlight Christian Centre, which includes a number of volunteers. It has proved to be a good time for us to mingle together. Meal time seems to provide an excellent time to have fellowship together. Before the meal, I or one of the volunteers reads a passage from the Bible, prays and encourages all to stay for the service. An equally important development for the Sunday night service is the fact that most of the people who now come to the service find their own way there. It is truly a joy to see a group of people chatting outside, waiting for the doors to be opened when I or one of the volunteers come. Although there are some who come only for the meal, most stay to be fed spiritually after their bellies have been filled. Many also help to set things up for the service. I feel it is important that we continue to make it possible for those who cannot make it to the service for legitimate reasons to be picked up, but I hope most of those attending the service will make their way there through their own efforts.

With the increased number of people to visit, John Luchini, a recent convert who lives near the Streetlight Christian Centre and knows practically every person who has entered its doors, has recently begun to visit many of the people I do not always have time to see. This has been a real blessing for me and has allowed John to use his talents to the furtherance of the Kingdom.

The Tuesday night group Bible study is entering its fourth year. As I mentioned earlier, it is also growing in numbers. Although the four of us who began studying the Bible together are still doing so, we are now joined by over twenty regulars. Although we usually split up into groups, we form a quite close fellowship of people who desire to learn from God's Word. This fellowship was very much witnessed on a recent picnic we enjoyed together. Although everyone loved the food (KFC) and the games and the fellowship, they were very happy that we still opened the Bible and had a short Bible study and a time for singing Christian songs. Although we have people of different abilities and although some still seem to be searching



Vacation Bible School



when we meet together, all seem to be encouraged in the faith. Pray that as more people are coming to this Bible study, the intimacy of the fellowship will remain, and more importantly that those of us who lead this evening will have the patience and wisdom to teach God's Word in a way that is understandable and applicable to the people who come out each week.

One of the great things about my work is hearing an individual ask to be taught one-on-one. In the last year a number of people have asked me this. This is often when they have made a conscious decision to seek the LORD. For some this means they want to get deeper in the Word to understand God in a clearer way; for others it means they want to make a profession of their faith. In either case pray that these individuals will not waver in their decision, that the one who teaches will teach well, and that we as church will not dampen their enthusiasm.

Richard Bultje

Sunday Evening Kids' Corner

In September 2003 I went for the very first time to a Sunday night at Streetlight Ministries. I did not, however, listen to the message in the adult service – I was in Kids' Corner. Kids' Corner is for a group of children up to twelve years old who cannot sit in the service the whole time. We have them

in a separate room with volunteers and one leader. The format is a story, question & answers, prayer, snack time, and games. Most often we have an average of eight to ten children – sometimes a lot more!

The storytellers are wonderful, capturing the attention of all of the children and the volunteers too! It is a beautiful thing to see children "fighting" to answer the questions, to see the excitement in their eyes about the Lord. It is humbling to see the children scramble for a snack. It is amazing to see them settle down and fold their hands to pray quietly and respectfully. It is wonderful to hear them laugh and thank you for playing with them. Kids' Corner is important for the ministry as it allows children to understand the importance of paying attention and behaving and having respect for the Lord.

Kids' Corner, although sometimes difficult and overwhelming, is most often a reminder of how thankful I am that I am able to work with these children and show them the love of Jesus. It strengthens my faith and is a reminder of the importance of this ministry. Matthew 19:14: "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.'"

Sarah Heyink

From the board

As you have just read, Streetlight Ministries reaches out both to adults and to children of the downtown community. In many ways, it is an interesting and dynamic mission, bringing the people of the Canadian and United Reformed Churches into a different culture. The people in downtown Hamilton have needs many of us have no idea about. Some face mental illness, others are recovering addicts, many are third or fourth generation welfare recipients, some have been abused. Some are put in government-paid, "for-profit" homes and abandoned by family. These problems present many challenges to the ministry and the mission worker. Personally, I find this cultural divide one of the greatest opportunities our Reformed community has to learn and understand life from other perspectives. When you get involved in Streetlight, the first thing you begin to understand is the need to learn a new language. It is difficult to communicate effectively in the same way to the downtown people as you might with your brothers and sisters in the local church many of us have grown up in. I feel that challenge acutely whenever it is my opportunity to speak a few words on Sunday evenings. Not only must you alleviate excessive verbiage, you must try to understand your audience

in order to communicate effectively. It is certainly humbling.

As a board, we are faced with a myriad of new decisions as the ministry evolves. We continue to look to God for guidance through his Word, knowing full well that He can reach through the seemingly hopeless circumstances of life and touch the hearts of those He chooses. The ministry has been abundantly supplied with financial and human resources. However, as the ministry grows, so grow the needs. Our mission worker, Richard, is over-worked. The Board recognized this situation long ago and Ancaster Council agreed that the next step should be to call a missionary. This step, however, has not progressed very quickly, quite simply because in order to call this missionary, we need budgetary support from more churches. At the same time, we recognize the tremendous financial requirements placed on so many in our community. We commit our situation to prayer as we continue to work toward a solution and ask that you also pray for the ministry. We are confident that God will provide enough resources if it is His will.

Rick Buist



Please direct donations and correspondence to:

Streetlight Ministries

P.O. Box 78001
Westcliffe Postal Outlet
Hamilton, ON L9C 7N5

Evangelist:

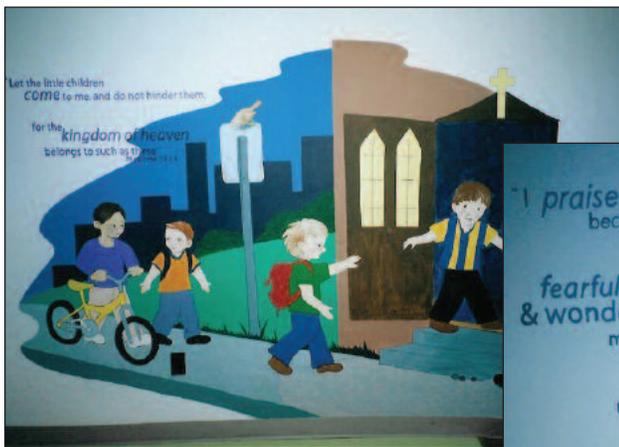
Richard Bultje

Tel: 905-317-8117

Email: rjbultje@attglobal.net

Ministry Center:

82 Ferguson Avenue
Hamilton, Ontario



Wall murals



Press Release of Classis Central Ontario (Contracta) held August 15, 2003 in Burlington, Ontario

This Classis was convened in order to approbate the call to the Church of Burlington-Waterdown accepted by Rev. J. Huijgen. The Church of Ottawa, as convening church, had asked the Church of Burlington East to act on its behalf in convening this classis seeing the distance from Ottawa to Burlington remains rather long.

The meeting was opened in a Christian manner. Present were delegates from the churches of Burlington Ebenezer, Burlington Fellowship and Burlington-Waterdown as well as Rev. J. Huijgen. The required documents as per articles 3 as well as 5B and 5C of the Church Order were presented and found to be in good order. Classis then approved the call. The chairman, Rev. G. Nederveen congratulated the Church of Burlington-Waterdown as well as Rev. J. Huijgen on this happy occasion, after which the meeting was closed with singing and prayer.

*For Classis,
Rev. C. Bosch, clerk e.t*

Press Release of the Meeting of the Combined Committees of the Canadian Reformed and United Reformed Churches to Propose a Common Church Order held August 5-7, 2003 at the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington, Ontario

Present were: Dr. Nelson Kloosterman, Rev. William Pols, Rev. Ronald Scheuers, Rev. Raymond Sikkema and Mr. Harry Van Gorp, representing the United Reformed Churches in North America (URCNA), and Dr. Gijsbert Nederveen, Mr. Gerard J. Nordeman, Rev. John VanWoudenberg and Dr. Art Witten of the Canadian Reformed Churches (CanRC). Dr. Jack DeJong of the CanRC, due to reasons of health, attended the meeting on a limited basis.

On behalf of the Canadian Reformed Churches, Br. Nordeman welcomed the committee members and introduced Dr. Nederveen who will serve the CanRC committee as an advisor on an interim basis.

Dr. Kloosterman opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer.

He welcomed in particular Dr. Nederveen. It was agreed that Dr. Nederveen would fully participate in the work of the committee. An agenda and timetable for the next three days were circulated and adopted. The minutes of the February 13-14, 2003 meeting were reviewed. It was agreed to add to these minutes the third consideration that was used to not include an article regarding "exceptional gifts" (Dort Art. 8) in the proposed church order. These considerations are: 1) instances of abuse of this article in the past, especially in the experience of the URCNA, 2) potential abuse in the future, and 3) the churches' requirement that every minister be thoroughly trained for the ministry, a training that at present is readily available. A review of the articles thus far adopted resulted in a few modifications.

The consideration that the function of a minister extends beyond the local congregation and is available for call among all the churches of the federation suggests that declaring a man eligible for call is not the task of a consistory but more appropriately that of a classis. This principle will be included in the appropriate article. It was agreed that, when a vacant church wishes to call a minister for the second time during the same vacancy, classical approval is required.

The Dort provision for "recent converts wishing to enter the ministry" is adequately covered in the proposed article headed "An Ordained Minister Without a Congregation Entering the Federation," where a requirement for "an adequate period of consistorial supervision" is stipulated.

An extended discussion took place on the division and alignment of churches, classes and synods. A consensus was reached that among the churches of the federation, four assemblies shall be recognized: the consistory, the classis, the regional synod, and the general synod. The terms "classis" and "synod" designate either ecclesiastical assemblies or ecclesiastical regions. As assemblies, classes and synods exist only for the duration of their

meetings. These assemblies are deliberative in nature.

Appropriate articles were formulated prescribing that those delegated to the broader assemblies shall be issued proper credentials by their delegating body, thereby receiving authorization to deal with all the matters properly placed before them; and that in all assemblies only ecclesiastical matters shall be transacted, and only in an ecclesiastical manner. The broader assemblies shall exercise jurisdiction exclusively relating to matters properly before them. All matters must originate with a consistory and must first be considered by a classis and a regional synod before they may be considered by a general synod. Only those matters shall be considered in the broader assemblies that could not be settled in the narrower assemblies, or that pertain to the churches in common. Each broader assembly shall approve for publication a press release regarding its proceedings.

Regarding delegation to broader assemblies a consensus was reached that classis shall choose the delegates to both the regional synod and the general synod proportional to the number of classes participating. This would ensure a better distribution of delegates from among the churches. The exact formula still needs to be determined.

Agreements were also reached on the proposed wording of articles relating to the specific function and makeup of a classis and that a classis shall be held every four months, unless the convening church, in consultation with the neighbouring church, concludes that no matters have been sent in by the churches that would warrant the convening of a classis. Cancellation of a classis shall not be permitted to occur twice in succession.

Decisions regarding "church visitors" include the understanding that classis shall appoint a number of its most experienced and competent ministers and elders to visit all the churches of the classis, and that at each church visit at least one of the visitors shall be a minister. A description of the specific task and function of the church visitors was agreed upon.

Agreements were also reached on the matters pertaining to archives, counsellors, regional synod and deputies of regional synod. A regional synod, consisting of three or more classes in a region, shall ordinarily meet once per year. This synod shall deal only with such matters as are placed on its agenda by the member classes, and with appeals from consistories or church members who have previously processed their appeals through their consistory and classis.

Reports to the churches and synods of the two federations will be composed by each sub-committee and compared to ensure that in the areas of

accomplishments and recommendations they are in full agreement.

The next meeting will take place, the Lord willing, November 4, 5, and 6, 2003. At the close of the meeting Dr. Jack DeJong informed the meeting that because of his health he can no longer function effectively as an active member of the committee. This makes it necessary for him to resign from the Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity as well as the sub-committee for the church order. It is with profound regret that the committee took note of this decision. Br. DeJong was thanked for his outstanding contribution, not only in this committee, but

also for his committed efforts in the whole unity process. All the brothers wished him well. Dr. Kloosterman led in devotions and committed Dr. DeJong in the care of our faithful Father.

The press release was read and approved for publication. In his closing remarks Dr. Kloosterman expressed his thankfulness to the Lord for the brotherly manner in which the committee could proceed with its work. A considerable amount of work could be accomplished. After Scripture reading and closing prayer by Rev. Sikkema, the meeting was adjourned.

For the committee,
Gerard J. Nordeman 

CLARION ADVERTISEMENTS

Births

With thankfulness to our Heavenly Father who has blessed our family with another of His covenant children, we joyfully announce the arrival of our son and brother

LINCOLN W. SCOTT

Born May 31, 2003

Bill and Lorraine Louwerse (nee Bosch)

Colter, Raina and Kiara

2344 Grant Street, Abbotsford, BC V2T 2M7

louwerse@telus.net

SHELBY GRACE ROSEANNE is here not by chance, but by God's choosing. His hand formed her and made her the person she is. He compares her to no one else – she is one of a kind. She will lack nothing that His grace can't give her. He has allowed her to be here at this time in history to fulfill His special purpose for this generation. With thanks to God for the special purpose He has for this precious new life we **Kevin and Tonja Bos**, *Shawna-Marie* and *Megan* announce the birth of our daughter and sister, June 2, 2003. She is named after her auntie Marian Grace and in honour of her grandma Donna-Marie Roseanne.

6th grandchild of John and Donna-Marie† Bokker

15th grandchild of Don and Tiena Bos

With joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father, we announce the birth of

LEVI CADEN

on August 2, 2003

Doug and Karen Vandeburgt

A brother for Leah, Joel, and Seth

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Announcements of Weddings, Anniversaries (with Open House) should be submitted six weeks in advance.

Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me! Psalm 66:20

Thanks be to God who has answered our prayers and blessed us with a baby girl!

HANNAH LAUREN VANDENBERG

Born July 8, 2003

Gregg and Laura Vandenberg

2nd grandchild for Henk and Ria Vandenberg of Aldergrove, BC

3rd grandchild for John and Thea Heyink of London, ON

265 Bold Street, Hamilton, ON L8P 1V9

Great is the LORD, and most worthy of praise. Psalm 48:1a

With thankfulness to our Heavenly Father, we joyfully announce the birth of our second son

AUSTIN LOGAN

Born August 11, 2003

Gerald and Michelle Knol

A little brother for Tristan

64 Karen Court, Orangeville, ON L9W 3S3

Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from Him. Psalm 127:3

We praise our Almighty Father who has once again shown us His power through the birth of our second son

MERRICK JOHN KOTTELEBERG

Born on August 7, 2003 and baptized on August 17, 2003.

Brian and Melissa Kottelenberg (nee Spanninga)

A little brother for Braden Curtis

Proud grandparents are John and Wilhelmina Kottelenberg and John and Hilda Spanninga

Another great-grandson for Renske Post and Roely Kamphuis

40 Ontario Street, Orangeville, ON L9W 2V1