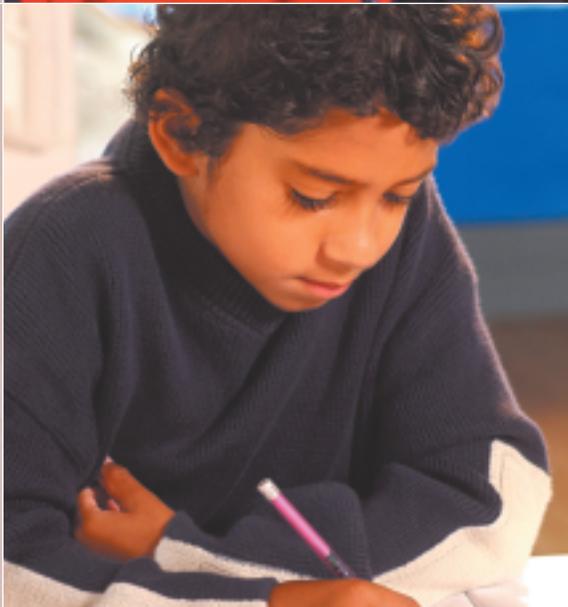


*Morally
Unacceptable*

*Immeasurable
Love*

*Farewell to
Rev. J. VanVliet
and family*



*Homework:
A Biblical View*



Cl. Stam

Rev. Cl. Stam is minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton, Ontario. clstam@canrc.org

Morally Unacceptable

The point is rather that a promise was made and not kept.

In a previous editorial I commented on the speech delivered by Dr. L.W. Bilkes at the Synod of Chatham, 2004. I stated that this speech was rather “ambiguous,” whereby I meant that I was not sure actually what this delegate was trying to say.

But there is something else in the appendix to the Acts on this point which bothers me much more. Br. P. van Woudenberg responded to the speech of Dr. Bilkes. You can find this response in the appendices, page 152. Br. van Woudenberg states that the Canadian Reformed Committee was “shocked” to read the report of the FRCNA deputies to their Synod in Hamilton. There the FRCNA deputies stated in their report that “we continue to sense a lack of understanding what an experiential, discriminating ministry should be. This is especially evidenced in the preaching.”

After more than fifty years of official discussion overseas, little progress has been made, if any.

Why were the Canadian Reformed Deputies shocked at reading this official statement? In the Acts, Article 85, where we read the report of our deputies to Synod Chatham, we find that the “combined subcommittees were able to express appreciation for each other’s sermons. However, in the report to their Synod, the FRCNA committee stated that they continue to sense a lack of understanding of what an experiential, discriminating ministry should be. Though this statement was to be corrected on the floor of the last FRCNA Synod, *this was not done.*”

In the official report of our Committee to Synod Chatham, we find that “the [FRCNA] brothers promised that this statement would be corrected on the floor of Synod. *Alas, this was not done.*”

“Alas, this was not done”

We take note of the fact the FRCNA brothers made a promise and did not keep it. It could have been a matter of oversight, but the attention given to this point before the FRCNA Synod and the explicit promise of their deputies makes it unlikely that it was a matter of being forgetful. The

way I read it, the FRCNA deputies simply did not want to acknowledge that their report was erroneous.

I will not speculate on any reasons why the report was not corrected as promised. I have some ideas, but I’ll keep these to myself. The point is rather that *a promise was made and not kept.*

It does not concern a minor point. The matter is quite central and crucial: the view on the congregation and the manner of preaching. This touches one of the marks of the church, as we confess it in the *Belgic Confession*. The FRCNA Deputies reported to their Synod that the Canadian Reformed Churches are not up to par when it comes to the preaching of the Word. This is a serious allegation, maintained in the face of a promise to state otherwise.

We can stand back and look at this, and simply say “alas.” That is a word by which we express unhappiness or concern. The matter, however, is too important to simply express sadness. A promise of this magnitude involving the proper redaction of an important report must be kept. “Simply let your ‘yes’ be ‘yes’ and your ‘no’ be ‘no’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one” (Matt 5:36).

This is especially important when we are being accused of having a “lack of understanding of what an *experiential, discriminating* ministry should be.” Failure to keep a promise involving the good reputation of brothers in Christ does not give evidence of experiential faith and discriminating ministry. Regenerated men keep their promises. I find the whole matter not only to be rather distasteful but also to be *morally unacceptable.*

Closer contact?

Our General Synod Chatham decided to charge our deputies (CPEU) “to continue meeting with the FRCNA with a view to pursuing Ecclesiastical Fellowship, while at the same time promoting and maintaining the desire for federative unity, discussing whatever obstacles there may be on this path. . . .”

Our Synod also considered that “statements of mutual agreement made at the committee level still need to be *corrected* at the FRCNA synod level.” This is almost an understatement. We are sometimes so kind. Maybe we should get tougher. How can closer contact be sought and maintained when there is not even proper reporting going on?

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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Visscher; Managing Editor: R. Aasman
Coeditors: N.H. Gootjes, W.B. Slomp, Cl. Stam

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION, 26 Inverness Crescent, St. Albert, AB T8N 5J3
Fax: (780) 418-1506 E-Mail: raasman@canrc.org

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Why should we continue to seek “federative unity” with the Free Reformed Churches of North America? Let’s be honest: the FRCNA don’t want federative unity with us, or with anyone else. They will maintain their distinctives at all costs and would rather remain separate. For this reason they have adopted the Kuyperian theory of the pluriformity of the church as being quite acceptable in their speaking about the church. Closer contact with them will have to fall within that category, or it’s a no-go.

From the appendices we also learn The Deputies of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands tried to be helpful in this respect (Acts, page 132). Rev. R.C. Janssen said, “Your troubles with the Free Reformed Churches remind us of the hurdles that have been or still have to be taken in The Netherlands with respect to the CGKN. . .” For the Dutch it was apparently an all too familiar scene. After more than fifty years of official discussion overseas, little progress has been made, if any. They added, “There is also much material available in The Netherlands on the issues addressed in the report of the Committee for the Promotion of Ecclesiastical Unity.” So we don’t have to reinvent the wheel.

We do not know what kind of different nuances and viewpoints may abound within the Free Reformed Churches of North America. But an obviously erroneous report should be corrected. Otherwise it makes very little sense to continue any discussion. Closer contact can grow only when we deal truthfully with one another.

At another time I hope to deal, the Lord willing, with the matters of experiential preaching and the (proper) view on the congregation. I had to get this off my chest first. —

Inside . . .

In a previous editorial (issue 18) Rev. Cl. Stam commented on some concerns about our discussions with the Free Reformed Churches in North America. He continues with that topic in the current editorial. He has some deep-rooted concerns.

We have the final submission by Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff on the topic, “How Do We Read the Bible?” In connection with this series, we have a letter to the editor by P.H. Torenvliet.

Women’s Savings Action has clearly been a huge blessing to our Theological College again this year. We have a report on that. Also, we read that the Lincoln congregation says farewell to Rev. J. VanVliet and family.

We have our regular columns, *Children’s Catechism*, *Treasures, New and Old* and *Education Matters*.

Finally, we have three press releases from three Classes. It is a blessing to read what is going on in the ecclesiastical assemblies around the country.

RA

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MATTHEW 13:52

Immeasurable Love

You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:6-8

With what shall we compare the love of God for us? The apostle Paul is busy with that in the text. Comparing God's love, and measuring. What's God's love like? Or what's it not like? How far does God's love go?

Why does the apostle seek to compare the love of God? In order for us to see that it is actually incomparable and immeasurable. That's his point. God's love is not like the best of love that man might know or come up with. It is truly divine love; divine in its design and working and reach. When we know this love, we know God – it's divine love. No one can say: But I know someone who loved like this once. There is no one who did – as Paul will show – but God only. Why compare the love of God? That we might see how incomparable it really is. Which gives us reason to trust and hope in God alone, who worked this divine love so uniquely and to such an extent.

How, then, does the apostle Paul seek to compare the incomparable love of God? It's in verse 7: Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. It is rare in the human realm, among men, for someone to give his life for anyone else. Not so easy to give up one's life for another. Why? Because we love life, our own life. That's not so hard to imagine. One certainly would not give up his life for anyone. Rare to see someone do that even for a righteous man. Though it might happen. But then only because of the righteousness of the

righteous man. At least a righteous man would be worth dying for because of his righteousness. Nevertheless, you will still rarely see this happen. The apostle goes on: Perhaps for the good man someone would dare even to die. It's possible to see it happen like that: a man giving his life for the good man. But then, only because the good man is good. A good man's goodness would anyway be worth dying for. Even then, though, it takes some courage. One might dare to die for the good man. The point being: this sort of love is so extremely rare between people. It's hard to come by; it's incredibly hard to come up with this reach of love. Even though it's not so hard to love a righteous man, to love a good man. Even though a righteous man, a good man, might be worth dying for. Still then, one does not easily give his life.

Now consider God's own love. He gave his own Son Jesus Christ. Like this: while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Paul adds that this happened "at the right time." This may emphasize that it was according to plan; not an untimely sort of death. It's exactly what God had in mind: the how and the when of Christ's death for us. We were helpless and ungodly. More than that, says verse 8, we were sinners. And in verse 10, the apostle lumps it all together in the term "enemies." Christ died for us while we were enemies. All the terms the apostle uses have a purpose: helpless, ungodly, sinners, enemies. It's like saying: God and Christ knew exactly whom Christ was

dying for. This kind of people: not at all righteous, not at all good – but enemies. Which is to say, keeping the comparison in mind: not worth dying for at all. Yet, according to God's plan, at the right time, this is exactly what happened.

One person might, perhaps (though hardly dare) die for another righteous, good person. Rare, this love between people. Can anyone now imagine that God would give his Son to die for sinful man, enemies? The divide between God and sinful man is infinitely bigger than the divide between one noble person and another righteous, good person. God's love crossed the infinite divide. This, then, is the demonstration of God's love. It's incomparable love; it's quite inconceivable. Can't find anything like it in this world. Divine love only; from above.

And now sinners, like us, are set free, having our sins paid for. This love reconciled us to God: a love that stretched across the immeasurable divide to bring us incredibly near.

Restored to God's favour. So that we can live new life. So that we may love again according to God's love revealed and given to us. Amazing love, how can it be?

In God, whose love we know and trust, we may hope. As Paul says further in this letter, in chapter 8: He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him freely give us all things? And nothing shall separate us from this love.



J. Wiskerke van Dooren

Lord's Day 23



Mrs. J. Wiskerke van Dooren published a Children's Catechism in Dutch. This has been translated with her permission.

There was a serious traffic accident. Two cars collided. Whose fault was that? The police came. They looked at the tire tracks and checked the brakes. They measured the distance from the corner and looked at the damage. And they wrote everything down. But they did not make a decision on whose fault it was. The case has to come before the court. The judge has to find out how the accident happened. Only then it is decided who is guilty. And the other driver is told: you are innocent.

What about you? No, not because you ran into someone on your bike. Think of God in heaven. He is our heavenly judge. Just as with that accident, God as the heavenly judge is going to find

out whether you are guilty or not. Will he say that you are not guilty?

Think about all the things you did. Have you always done what you should have? And was your heart always full of love for God? You know that's not the case.

But before God, the judge in heaven, makes his decision about you, Jesus the Saviour speaks up. And he says something like: Father, first look at me. Yes, your children on earth have done wrong. They are guilty. But I was crucified on the cross. I took their guilt onto the cross. Their sins are paid for.

Then God says something wonderful to you and to all his children: I look at you as if you have never done any sin. Yes, that is for sure, you can believe it. What if

you do not believe that? Then others will receive this forgiveness, but you will not.

Or perhaps you wonder: But how can I be forgiven? You remember some of the wrong things you did. You know of times you have been in a bad mood, and you have been disobedient. And during prayer you sometimes think about other things.

You should be ashamed of that. The Lord wants to see you are really sorry. All the same, He will forgive your sin for the sake of Jesus.

Do you receive this forgiveness because you believe? No, you don't. You receive forgiveness out of grace. Because God is gracious to us. Always remember that.



Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff is a historian in Hamilton, Ontario.
fgo@allstream.net

How Do We Read The Bible? (6)

The discussion on ethics

On May 17, 2003, a conference was held where Reformed theologians of different church backgrounds discussed De Bruijne's essays in *Woord op schrift*. In this concluding article I deal with the evaluation of the third and last essay, namely the one on ethics. The men involved in the discussion were Prof. Dr. G.C. den Hertog, ethicist at the theological university at Apeldoorn (*Christelijk Gereformeerd*), Dr. J. Hoek, director of the theological college of the *Gereformeerde Bond (Nederlands Hervormd)*, and Dr. H.J.C.C.J. Wilschut, pastor of the *Gereformeerde Kerk at Assen-Zuid*. The presentations by these three theologians, as well as De Bruijne's own opening speech and his responses, were published in the weekly *De Reformatie*. My references in this article will be to that periodical.¹

Is the Word still central?

Referring to John Calvin's accommodation theory, Den Hertog (691-6) admits that the metaphor theory as used by De Bruijne is indispensable in biblical interpretation. Also valuable in De Bruijne's approach, he says, is the insight that Christian ethics must not be seen as a simple obeying of abstract rules, but that the entire human being is moved by the story of the Bible and its call to discipleship. Den Hertog further underlines the need for a congregational ethics.

He wonders, however, if De Bruijne does not stress narrative and image at the expense of the Word and of the universal validity of God's commands. He

fears that the idea of an "image," as called forth in us by the biblical narrative, comes in the place of God's living Word, which always breaks through our subjective images and frees us from them. In short, it seems to him that De Bruijne makes the human process of knowing too independent from the working of the Word. The imagination, Den Hertog concludes, must be more closely tied to the Word.

Narrative and normative

Dr. Hoek begins by saying that as a *Nederlands Hervormd* ethicist, educated at the University of Leiden, he has learned much from Reformed theologians like J. Douma and W.H. Velema (pp. 713-6). He admires their faithfulness to Scripture and their simultaneous openness to the ethical challenges and questions of today.

On the other hand there are those who see the Bible as an ethical handbook with a specific answer to every specific question.

Hoek contrasts their attitude to Scripture with that of the Bible-critical theologian H.M. Kuitert, who teaches that the biblical narrative simply gives examples of the wisdom of earlier generations, which we are free to follow or not. For Kuitert, "narrative" and "normative" are mutually exclusive.

On the other hand there are those who see the Bible as an ethical handbook with a specific answer to every specific question. This view is often combined with the opinion that all the prescriptions of God's law must be literally followed unless the Bible has clearly abolished them, or unless one can legitimately assume that they were embedded in ancient-biblical culture. Commands and examples that have not been explicitly abolished but are nevertheless no longer followed (such as, for example, the prohibition of taking interest, or the foot-washing of John 13) belong to the second category and are to be explained away as conditioned by their times. This means that the Bible is only partly relevant for us today. It is here that De Bruijne's theories of narrative, metaphor, and the role of our imaginative rationality are important. They do justice to the existence of differences in the one redemptive-historical narrative but show at the same time that the entire Bible remains relevant and puts its stamp on our lives. The biblical narrative is fully normative.

Returning to his opening remarks, Hoek once again expresses gratitude for the instruction received from men like Douma and Velema and adds that it would be a calamity if their biblical approach should be abandoned by the new generation, which has now taken over the leadership in the Reformed community. He admits that we must indeed be on our guard, but also believes that there is no reason for disquiet or alarm. Hoek's evaluation of De Bruijne's work is positive.

Danger of subjectivism

Far less positive is the evaluation by Dr. Wilschut, the third speaker (717-21). Wilschut does appreciate various aspects of De Bruijne's vision. He agrees, for example, with his protest against a rationalistic use of the Bible and with his emphasis on discipleship. The life with God does not consist in obedience to a number of rules but implies a following of Christ. He further acknowledges that obedience to God's will requires a "translation" of the biblical data into the present-day context, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. On these points, he believes, De Bruijne is right.

Wilschut's main objection to De Bruijne's approach is that it makes room, in his opinion, for what he calls an "uncontrollable subjectifying." This is in large part a result of the emphasis De Bruijne places on the role of the congregation in the believers' understanding and use of the biblical message. Wilschut quotes De Bruijne's statement: "The life in the Spirit within the Christian congregation must become the hermeneutical key in our association [omgang] with the Bible." This suggests, he believes, that the will of God becomes clear not first of all in Scripture as such, but in the Spirit-guided interaction between Scripture and congregation. It leads De Bruijne to the statement that "Only in the inter-subjectivity of the network lies the guarding [bewaking] of the objectivity."

Wilschut fears that such a position contradicts the doctrine that the Bible stands over against our human ideas and critiques them. "Is our point of departure still the word of Scripture," he asks, "or is it the impression which this word – through the Holy Spirit – makes upon the congregation?" If the latter, how can Scripture still speak for itself? Wilschut remarks that our communal and personal ethics must have the Word as external gauge and standard. He draws also attention to the fact of our

sinfulness, a condition that makes it particularly dangerous to assume that the meaning of the Spirit-guided congregation is necessarily the meaning of the Spirit Himself. It is true that the discernment of God's will is a matter of the believers together, but not even a collective judgment will guarantee that the process is objective. In the end, scriptural argumentation must be decisive. When visiting the congregation, Wilschut writes, he prefers to say "Thus says the Lord" (that is, when it is indeed justified and when discussion is no longer possible), rather than "Thus is the Spirit-guided feeling of the congregation."

The life with God does not consist in obedience to a number of rules but implies a following of Christ.

Wilschut concludes that De Bruijne's attempt to integrate a number of modern-theological insights into a Reformed framework has been unsuccessful.

Response: the centrality of the Word

We come to De Bruijne's closing presentation. Den Hertog had suggested that De Bruijne makes the believers' ethical knowing too independent of the Word. Responding to this criticism (769-73), De Bruijne remarks that there is a misunderstanding here. Instead of ignoring the Word, he sees it, with Den Hertog, as central. It comes from God, and rather than depending on our knowing, it comes before that knowing. What he wrote was not to replace the Word, but to analyse what happens when the Word directs us in our life. In trying to answer that question he did not repeat what we already know (the Word

is central) but tried to find out what we did not know so well (how does this Word lead us in our making of ethical choices). To interact properly with what he wrote, one should not restrict oneself to speaking true big words about the centrality of the Word, but also say something about the manner in which we base our ethical reasoning on that Word.

He further points out that he does not suggest a turning away from an ethics that stresses God's specific commands. The Bible does present us with concrete moral rules and direct commands from God, and he is not setting a congregational ethics over against a command ethics. His intent is to place the manner in which we are accustomed to making our ethical choices within a specific framework and in that way to supplement it. But again, unlike some advocates of a congregational ethics, he does not remove from that framework the concrete moral rules and direct commands of God. These remain fully normative.

Subjectivism

Dr. Wilschut, the last speaker, had expressed the fear that, by promoting congregational ethics, De Bruijne's work implied an "uncontrollable subjectifying." Wilschut preferred visiting the congregation with the message: "Thus says the Lord," rather than with the words, "This is the feeling of the congregation." In his response to Wilschut (784-8), De Bruijne says that he agrees with this sentiment. He too, when visiting the congregation, prefers to speak in the name of the Lord. In fact, he would never confront believers with the words: "This is the feeling of the congregation." Whoever suggests that has missed the point. His mentioning of the role of the congregation was not intended over against the Word, but over against the increasing individualism and subjectivism in the use of the Word. He did not say, "So far we have spoken of good and evil

on the basis of God's Word, but from now on it must be done on the basis of the consensus of the congregation." He is saying, rather, "At the moment each individual draws his personal conclusions from God's Word regarding good and evil. Instead, we must together as congregation apply that Word in our lives. For the Bible wants to be read and applied *within the community of the church*."

In accusing him of subjectifying the biblical message, De Bruijne remarks, Wilschut seems to ignore the fact that a radical subjectivism exists already. There is an increasing number of issues on which individual believers have different opinions. Rather than encouraging such an individualistic and subjectivist use of the Bible, he wants to counteract it with his stress on the duty of studying the Bible together. Hence his statement, "Only in the intersubjectivity of the network lies the guarding of the objectivity." If we leave the matter in the care of the individual conscience, we are asking for trouble. The Bible has been entrusted to the congregation. The same Spirit who speaks in the Bible lives in the congregation. Those who in dependence on the Spirit and "together with all the saints" search in the Bible for God's meaning will necessarily have to let go of their absolutely personal view. To seek together God's will in His Word is therefore not to endanger but to guard the objectivity.

There is also the problem, De Bruijne points out, of the instances where the Bible does not give a specific word. We can think here again, by way of example, of new medical technologies. In such cases it can become especially risky to say, without further ado, "Thus says the Lord." To do so could well mean that the pastor sells his own insight into the consequences of the Word for that Word itself. That easily becomes a sin against the third commandment – an error that has not always been avoided among us and that constitutes one of the causes of

the present-day subjectivism and relativism within the church. With ethical questions that can't be resolved with a direct word from the Bible, the danger of subjectivism and individualism is of course also greater than in other cases. And the Bible gives room for differing conclusions (Rom. 14:6). Nevertheless, the unity of the believers in their following of Christ must become clear. There must be a growing towards each other (Phil 2:2ff., Eph 4:14ff.).

Too idealistic?

De Bruijne mentions that not only Wilschut, but others as well, have suggested that he may be too idealistic in his view of the congregation and that he forgets the power of sin. He admits that this warning is to the point, but also remarks that the same charge of idealism has been levied at the current approach.

His mentioning of the role of the congregation was not intended over against the Word, but over against the increasing individualism and subjectivism in the use of the Word.

People have warned that to mention only the command is to forget the sinfulness and brokenness of life. We should also be careful that we do not use our sinfulness as a cover for our unwillingness to change. According to the Bible it is indeed "normal" that sin occurs in the congregation, but according to the same Bible it is also "normal" that the congregation outwardly and inwardly shows the image of Christ. We must pray for renewal and leave it up to God how and when He will hear us. The Lord does

Church News

Called by the Free Church of Albany, Australia:

Candidate John Smith

Examined by Classis Alberta on October 19, 2004 and successfully sustained the preemptory examination:

Candidate R. Bredenhof

The ordination will take place, D.V., on October 31st in the worship service of the St. Albert Canadian Reformed Church.

Called by the church of Yarrow, British Columbia:

Rev. C. Bouwman

of the Free Reformed Church of Kelmscott, Western Australia.

Called by the church of Carman East, Manitoba:

Rev. P.H. Holtvlüwer

of Aldergrove, British Columbia.

give to us according to our faith and our expectation. The use of the words "idealism" and "impossible" can imply a scepticism regarding the work of the Spirit. If we expect less than we have been promised, we also receive less.

To conclude:

De Bruijne's writings on the hermeneutical question have met with approval but have also caused a good deal of questioning and unrest in Reformed Holland. Many a theologian is concerned, and so is many a person in the pew. Why is this so?

An important factor is the suspicion that De Bruijne unjustly tries to integrate, in Dr. Wilschut's words, "modern-theological insights into a Reformed framework." The reference here is to concepts such as "narrative," "image" and "imaginative rationality," as

well as “metaphor” and “congregational ethics.” The first three are indeed largely of modern-theological vintage and will for that reason alone already be suspect among us. The other two, although they have been around longer, are also under a cloud. Whereas John Calvin was very open about the fact that he gave metaphorical explanations, later orthodox theologians have been more circumspect and have used the term far more sparingly, if at all. A major reason is that their modernist colleagues employ it as a means to downplay the historicity of Scripture. The same goes for the word narrative, which is often given the meaning of “mere fiction.” And the term congregational ethics is in the Reformed tradition tainted as well, again especially because of its abuse by liberal theology, which uses it to replace the authority of the Bible in ethical matters with that of the congregation.

De Bruijne’s writings on the hermeneutical question have met with approval but have also caused a good deal of questioning and unrest in Reformed Holland.

De Bruijne believes that these and similar concepts, in spite of the wrong use that has been made of them, can and should be reclaimed for Reformed theology. His critics, including two of the theologians whose reaction I just described, disagree. Yet there is ambivalence here, for both Den Hertog and Wilschut, while avoiding some of his terminology, appear to agree with much of the substance of De Bruijne’s views. Den Hertog admits that the metaphor theory is needed in biblical interpretation, and Wilschut, while

avoiding endorsement of the term, agrees that it is necessary to ‘translate’ the biblical message into the modern context. Both also underline De Bruijne’s criticism of a rationalistic and legalistic approach in the making of ethical choices, asserting that we are not asked to obey some abstract rules, but are called to discipleship, to a following of Christ. And finally, both condemn, at least by implication, an individualistic approach in ethical matters. Den Hertog admits the necessity of “reflecting on something like a congregational ethics,” and Wilschut, although again avoiding the term, states that the discernment of God’s will is to be done not by the isolated individual but by the believers together.

In spite of the critical tone, then, there is substantial agreement. It is good to note this, for I believe that De Bruijne helps us in important ways to a deeper and richer understanding of Scripture. That applies, as I showed earlier, to his work on biblical historiography. Many of the problems believers have for centuries struggled with in that area turn out to be quite capable of solution, thanks to new research on the nature of ancient historiography and of ancient narrative conventions. This research makes it possible to give definitive answers to many a question posed by Bible-critical scholars.

De Bruijne’s work on ethics is of a different nature. Here the stress is not on new scholarly insights, although a number of these are indeed used. But the core of the essay is a summary of the ancient and well-known biblical message regarding the Christian life. It is the message not of a detached and legalistic obedience to rules, but of discipleship, of a following of Christ via the cross to the resurrection. That message has always been heard in Reformed churches. At every baptism, for example, the congregation prays that the baptized child may be incorporated into Christ, so that it may be buried

with Him by baptism into death and raised with Him to walk in newness of life. And the life of discipleship, as Reformed theology has always stressed as well, is to be lived within the framework of the congregation, which is the body of Christ.

It is the message not of a detached and legalistic obedience to rules, but of discipleship, of a following of Christ via the cross to the resurrection.

As to the centrality of the Bible in Christian ethics, De Bruijne is essentially telling us that we must live according to the spirit of the law, rather than according to the letter. This can be risky, as his critics have rightly pointed out. It can lead to subjectivism, to an overemphasis on the differences rather than the similarities in the redemptive-historical narrative, and to an underemphasis on the continuing authority of concrete, direct biblical commands. Questions can legitimately be asked on these scores. The same applies perhaps to the use of certain terms and concepts. As De Bruijne himself admits, he has not necessarily spoken the last word on all these matters. But that his core message is fully biblical seems to me to be without doubt. In fact, as I have shown, it is implicitly admitted by some of his more prominent critics. I hope that the discussion will continue and that believers in Canada and elsewhere pay attention, listening not only to one side but to both. There is much to be learned.

¹ The presentations are in the issues of June 14, June 21, July 12, and July 26, 2003, pp. 688-96, 713-21, 769-73, and 784-88 respectively. In my references I again give page numbers only.



Presentation of the Women's Savings Action at the College Evening, September 10, 2004

Mr. President, Members of the Board and Faculty, Graduates, Brothers and Sisters

This year we may celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Theological College and also of the Women's Savings Action. Right from the beginning we have been able to provide funds for the library as well as other items. Thirty-five times a presentation has been made on the College Evening and a cheque has been handed over to the Principal of the College. We are very thankful that the Lord has blessed the Women's Savings Action during all these years and that many brothers and sisters have contributed generously time and again.

For this evening we would like to go back to the very beginning of the WSA, its birth, and its first birthday. In the "Pink Pages" of the *Clarion* of December 6, 1969 we find what may be seen as the birth announcement of the WSA. I will quote a few paragraphs:

At the meeting with delegates of the League of Women's Societies in Ontario, held in Fergus, a unanimous decision was taken to organize a savings action for our College. In answer to several requests from West Canada, we included the societies there also in our plan of action. . .

Mrs. Van Beveren was appointed to discover a means of obtaining tins suitable for the action. She had 1000 tins available, 500 were taken home by delegates and visitors of the Annual Convention. The other 500 were moved out West. Mrs. Van Beveren will look after the

distribution of these 500 tins in Mid- and West Canada. . .

At the meeting Mrs. Lindhout was appointed to take care of bookkeeping and secretarial work, assisted by Mrs. L. Selles.

So far the *Clarion*. Many of you probably remember the tins of the WSA. They were emptied two or three times a year. Nowadays many people give a cheque, and even for change the tins are no longer used. Some people would need those big apple juice tins to hold all the change they collect in a year.

Now let us move on to the first birthday of the WSA. At the College Evening of 1970, the first anniversary of the Theological College, Mrs. Geraldine Selles, the wife of Prof. L. Selles, the New Testament professor, said:

The Women's Savings Action celebrates its first anniversary too. It has grown from a newborn baby to being an infant. Like an infant, it needs constant care and attention. All of us who participate in the savings action are proud of this baby, if I may call it so. We hope that it may grow to be very old and wise and bear fruit for the Theological College.

Mrs. Selles also remarks:

Up till today we have provided drapes for the library, meeting room, two professor's rooms, lecturer's room and stencil room. Glass curtains for all windows. We bought a set of china and flatware to serve twelve persons, to be used for board and staff meetings. Also the necessary items to be used in a kitchen.

Today on your and our first anniversary we like to give you a birthday present. On behalf of all the women of our church from all over Canada, I may present you this Gestettner Stencil Machine. Also this cheque to be used for the library, the amount is \$500.

Our total paid out was \$2,035.30. Our total income was \$2,544.46.

That was how the first birthday was celebrated in thankfulness to the Lord.

We now may celebrate a 35th birthday together with the College which we have all supported for so many years. The infant has indeed grown into a man. This year our many volunteers collected a total amount of \$32,760.61. Thanks again to all of you!

We also would like to give the College a birthday present. Again an object and a cheque. Not a stencil machine, but a portable barcode scanner attached to a very small computer which can store the records of the entire library collection. It should make the process of inventory taking a lot easier for our librarian. Today there is also a cheque. A special one, for a special year. Mr. Principal, it is with thankfulness in our hearts that we may present now: thirty-five thousand dollars for our thirty-five year old College.

President: Mrs. Joanne Van Dam
Secretary: Mrs. Dinie Gootjes
Treasurer: Mrs. Chris Nienhuis

The Lincoln congregation says farewell to Rev. J. VanVliet and family

On the evening of September 4, the Lincoln congregation bade farewell to her minister of almost eight years, the Rev. J. VanVliet and his family.

The leadership for the evening was in the capable hands of Br. George Alkema, who invited us to sing the verses 1,2,4 and 6 of Psalm 84, read Psalm 141 and led us in prayer. He set the tone for the evening when in his welcome words he suggested to call this evening a "Fare Thee Well" evening rather than a farewell evening. Reasoning that the word farewell has a certain finality to it, whereas in "Fare Thee Well" the emphasis is more on the journey itself. A journey, which began in Lincoln eight years ago and now, continues in Surrey, B.C.

As the evening unfolded it became clear that the VanVliet family had grown deep and lasting roots during their stay in Lincoln. The Reverend by his faithful and humble way in which he proclaimed the riches of the gospel, and as a family in seeking and taking an active part in congregational life.

The evening was filled with song and laughter, music and games. As well the history of the VanVliet family's life during their stay in Lincoln was related in both serious and comical ways.

But perhaps the highlight of the evening's entertainment was the performance by the "Anchor Band"



The VanVliet family.

under the able direction of Br. Ries Heemskerck. It was easy to see that these special members of the flock had won an important part in the hearts of the VanVliets.

Gifts, to remember the Lincoln congregation by, were presented to the minister and his wife by several members of the congregation. Also a beautiful tablecloth, embroidered with the names of all the members of the women society "Hannah," was presented to Janet VanVliet.

Br. P. Feenstra, on behalf of the "Covenant" Church of Grassie, spoke

words of thanks and appreciation to Rev. VanVliet for his willingness to help out and assist their recently instituted church in both word and deed. He presented Rev. VanVliet and his wife with a gift of the choicest wines from our local area.

Both Br. H. DeVries, chairman of council, and Br. N. VandenOever, vice-chairman of council, spoke on behalf of council and the congregation, thanking Rev. VanVliet for his steadfast, faithful, and humble leadership of our congregation. They stressed that it is the Lord who provides in all circumstances. Br. DeVries, on behalf of council, also presented the



VanVliets with an album of photographs offering a panoramic view of the Niagara peninsula.

The VanVliets were then presented with a congregational gift, a beautiful framed photograph of the Lincoln church building and manse, as well as a special album containing all the names of the members of the Lincoln congregation.

In keeping with the spirit of the evening the VanVliet family then joined in a thank you song to the congregation. The Reverend and his three children sang "Thank you Lincoln" accompanied by his



wife Janet at the piano. This, to my knowledge is another first, to add to all the other firsts the VanVliets experienced in Lincoln.

Yet another first was the gift of a beautiful ornamental tree presented by the Van Vliet family to the congregation. This, the Reverend explained, was to even things up in the church auditorium.

At closing, the Reverend thanked the Lincoln congregation for their kindness and care shown him and his family during their stay in Lincoln, assuring them that

good and lasting memories would be with them for the rest of their lives. He also exhorted us to remain faithful in our worship, expecting all things from the Lord. The Lord who will provide for him and his family as they journey to Surrey, B.C., is the same Lord who will also provide for the Lincoln congregation now that she is vacant. He, at his time, will provide another shepherd and teacher to lead her.

We then sang Hymn 59, after which Rev. VanVliet closed this part of the evening with thanksgiving prayer.

The congregation was then invited downstairs for refreshments and the opportunity to bid the VanVliets a final farewell.



W. Hoogerdyk

W. Hoogerdyk is a teacher at Dufferin Christian School in Carman, Manitoba, who has personally struggled with seeing the value of doing homework, assigning homework, evaluating homework, and who finds Margy's article a very readable and positive contribution to understanding the place and purpose of homework in a Christian home and school.

*(Margy Tripp who has written an article with the above title, is the wife of Tedd Tripp, author of the well-received and highly recommended book *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. In this article, the author explains the contents of the article, which is available at www.shepherdpress.com under the Catalog link. Mr. Hoogerdyk's article was first published in the school magazine, *The Beacon*, of Dufferin Christian School in Carman, Manitoba.)*

Undoubtedly the mere title of this article will have some readers put down this issue of *Clarion* to go check whether their son or daughter is actually doing his or her homework. Homework is something that can put students, parents and teachers on edge. Students may have to do homework that is too boring, too hard or too time-consuming. Parents often have to stand looking over shoulders to ensure work is done. They also have to go on scavenger hunts to find appropriate materials for projects. Teachers get the pleasure of planning and assigning the homework, checking to see if it is done and marking it when it finally comes in. It seems that homework, if anything, is a necessary evil. How then does Margy Tripp fit a biblical perspective around homework?

Energy spent for eternal gain

We can see this biblical perspective take shape if we begin with a consideration of what is valuable to us. Do our spiritual treasures or our earthly treasures and pleasures take priority in our lives? Do we rush through our daily tasks to enjoy life's pleasures, or do we take the time to do the work set before us, understanding the "world of spiritual

reality as it applies to tasks such as homework?" Do we understand that God places homework before us as part of our calling to serve Him? At school, we do not learn to make money, to gain power, status, influence, esteem or the like. Some or all of those things may come as a result, but they are not *why* we learn. We learn because we are called to learn. We need to see our response to this in the light of Colossians 3:23: "work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

Do we understand that God places homework before us as part of our calling to serve Him?

Now we begin to understand where we must apply our energy. Margy Tripp bluntly states: "May I suggest that energy spent for eternal gain is a better value than working to accumulate stuff that will end up in the landfill." Again, from Colossians 3, we are encouraged: "Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things." Christ also encourages us to store up our treasures in heaven, not on earth, "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21).

Approaching the challenge

Parents and teachers must come to realize their responsibility to their children or students. They need to demonstrate the life-changing truth of the gospel as it applies to homework.

Homework: A Biblical View

Students must approach the challenge of homework with godly resolve, faith and the expectation that they "can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Phil 4:13). In homework, as well as other activities, students must show that they love and know God.

The challenge of working through the homework remains. Certain activities and projects will test us severely. Students can be comforted by the fact that also in these sometimes trying situations, they *must* turn to the same God and Father who promises that not a hair can fall from our head without his will. The things we consider too insignificant to bring to Him, He commands us to communicate in prayer.

Through homework, disciple our children

Margy Tripp continues her discussion of homework by mentioning that it is a way for parents to disciple our children, to teach them a Christian world view. She explains that we disciple our children by giving them biblical hooks, namely principles and absolutes upon which they can hang the stuff of life.

The first one she mentions is that children need to see the bigger picture. They need to see homework as something they have received from God's hand, and they must accept it responsibly as such. In completing their homework, they will learn godly qualities of patience, endurance and diligence.

Secondly, the children need a transformed mind. This is revealed in homework by the attitude we display in getting it done, as parents, teachers and students. Do we use bribery, threats and compromise to motivate, or do we get

them to understand homework from a biblical perspective? Do students lie, cheat, and demonstrate laziness, rebellion and irresponsibility? These are evidences of a mind not yet transformed completely to God's will.

The third hook mentioned in some ways may be the most difficult. Margy Tripp calls parents to live what they say they believe and to encourage their children to do the same. Children imitate parents' behaviours and priorities. As a result, we must always be modeling our understanding of the bigger picture and we must model evidence of a transformed mind. Tripp reminds us "there are no greater cynics of the Christian faith than children from homes where parents 'have a form of godliness but deny its power'" (2 Tim 3:5).

The final spiritual hook mentioned is prayer and thanksgiving. These are not the least of the spiritual "hooks" but are, in fact, essential for any form of success. Look at Paul's words in Philippians 4:4-9 where he speaks very bluntly about the need for presenting our requests to God in everything, especially with thanksgiving.

Read on as well to see the evidence of a transformed mind.

Putting principles into practice

Margy Tripp continues her article giving suggestions as to how to put all of this into practice. The suggestions are very simple, reasonable and essential.

They include:

- encouraging clear thinking and discernment,
- teaching children to communicate with teachers and use resources at their disposal,
- setting a good and realistic schedule, which helps rather than punishes the children. She also emphasizes that the schedule must take into account all the means of grace available to the children of God – place priorities on church functions, Bible studies, etc.

This article is a call to correct our view on work and especially school work. Tripp's statements and bases are reasonable and well-founded. She provides a very biblical perspective on her topic and her suggestions for success have a solid biblical basis as well.

Getting the school work done

I am fearful that we may consider Mrs. Tripp to have gone overboard in her analysis of the issue. Must we really consider homework to be such a serious matter? Consider then who it is that has given these tasks to you. What is the student's current occupation and calling? It is that of being a student. The work associated with being a student must take a priority because it is the calling the student has received from God at this point in his life. Part-time jobs, personal enjoyment activities and the like should not take priority over the current calling. They have their time and place in the schedule, but first and foremost, the focus must be on getting the school work done in a manner and with an attitude that pleases the Lord.

Education Matters continues to be sponsored by the Canadian Reformed Teachers Association—East (CRTA-East). Anyone wishing to respond may do so by contacting Clarion or the column editor by emailing bouwman@surepost.net.



Letter to the Editor

Dear Sirs:

When I read Dr. F. G. Oosterhoff's series of articles that reviewed the essays written by Prof. A.L.Th. de Bruijne, (*Hermeneutiek en metaforie*, a.o.), I had to think of the words of Psalm 92: "... *planted in the house of the LORD, they [the righteous] will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green ...*"

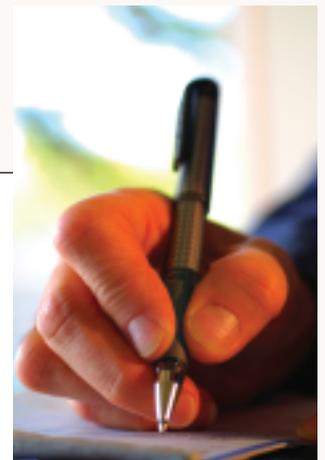
"Our" Dr. O. has done our church community a great service. Though she has been "retired" for many years, her mind is alert and active as ever. Hundreds of Reformed believers are no longer able to access important books or articles written in the Dutch language, and therefore, they cannot read the Dutch writers to make their own evaluation of criticism they hear about our churches in The Netherlands.

Dr. Oosterhoff's reviews are still "second hand" but at least they are done so thoroughly that your readers can

make up their own minds about the issues these articles address. Nothing is more damaging to good relations (also international ecclesiastical relations) than judgements and evaluations made on the basis of hearsay.

I know our church leaders are busy people, but I would like to challenge them to follow the example of Dr. Oosterhoff, who continues to serve our Reformed community with thinking and writing that will broaden and deepen our understanding of God's Word. Such thinking and writing is desperately needed to help the new generations of Reformed believers meet the challenges of a postmodern, post Christian world!

Pieter H. Torenvliet
Abbotsford, B.C.



Press Release for Classis Ontario West held September 8, 2004 in Glanbrook, Ontario

Rev. D.Vandeburgt, on behalf of the convening Church of Glanbrook, welcomed the brothers who had gathered and led the opening devotions. He welcomed all the guests, in particular br. and sr. John and Darlene Smith. The delegates from Glanbrook reported on the credentials. All churches were lawfully represented. The Churches of Ancaster and Chatham had instructions. Classis was constituted.

Officers were appointed: Rev. G. Ph. VanPopta (chairman), Rev. D.W. Vandeburgt (clerk) and Rev. J. Slaa (vice-chairman). The chairman noted a number of items for memorabilia. The agenda was established.

Br. John Smith of the Church at Hamilton presented himself to Classis to be examined with a view to being declared eligible for call. After it was determined that all the documents were in order, Classis proceeded to examine br. Smith. Br. Smith first delivered a sermon proposal on Matthew 13:24-30. After due discussion in closed session, Classis deemed the sermon proposal sufficient. Classis next examined br. Smith in Doctrine and Creeds ("Word and Sacraments" in the confessions), in Old Testament Exegesis (Psalm 21), and New Testament Exegesis (Romans 14). Once again, Classis deliberated in closed session and determined that the examination was sufficient. In open session, the chairman, with appropriate remarks, informed br. Smith of the joyful news and declared br. Smith candidate for the ministry and eligible for call. Rev. D.Vandeburgt led the assembly in thanksgiving prayer, after which opportunity was given to congratulate br. and sr. Smith.

Question Period according to Article 44 of the Church Order was held. All the churches answered positively to the first two questions asked. Regarding the third question, two churches requested

concurring advice regarding matters of discipline. Classis gave concurring advice.

The Church at London requested Classis to approve the acceptance of the call which was extended to Rev. R.E. Pot (cf. Art 5 CO). When it was determined that all the documents were in good order, and that the call process took place in a proper manner, Classis gave approbation.

The Church at Chatham, which administers the fund for Needy Students, received a request for support. It proposed that Classis approve an assessment to the churches of Classis Ontario West of \$12.50 per communicant member to be paid in the 2005 calendar year. The proposal carried.

The Church at Ancaster, which administers the Fund for Needy Churches, presented its report. The following decisions were made:

1. To thank the churches of Classis Niagara for the support received in the past years since Classis Ontario South was divided.
2. To split any possible surplus of the Fund at the conclusion of this calendar year with the Fund for Classis Niagara.
3. To deny the request of the Church at London to approach Classis Ontario North for assistance for the Fund.
4. Ask the churches of Classis Ontario West to inform their treasurers as to what figures are used for communicant membership.
5. Accept the request of support from the Fund by the Church at Grand Rapids and approve the assessment of \$41 per communicant member for 2005.

A report from the treasurer for Classis was presented. Classis decided on the recommendation to assess the churches \$4.00 per communicant member for the year 2005.

The Church at Hamilton sought concurring advice for the retirement of their minister, Rev. Cl. Stam, on account of illness. Classis concurred with the

reasons given. Deputies of Regional Synod, Rev. D. Agema and Rev. P. Feenstra, who were present, also concurred. The chairman spoke words of thankfulness to the Lord for all the blessings the churches have received in the labours of Rev. Stam. He further commended him and his wife to the grace of God. Rev. P. Feenstra also spoke appropriate words. Hymn 10:9, 10 was sung and the chairman led in thanksgiving prayer.

The convening church for the next classis is the Church of Grand Rapids. Suggested date is December 8, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. in a place yet to be determined. Alternate date: March 9, 2005. Suggested officers are: Rev. H. Versteeg (chairman), Rev. G. Ph. VanPopta (clerk) and Rev. D. Vandeburgt (vice-chairman). Delegated to Regional Synod in Ancaster, to be held November 10, 2004, D.V., are ministers: J. Slaa and G. Ph. VanPopta (alternates: D. Vandeburgt and H. Versteeg – in that order); elders: G. Bartels and A. Koster (alternates: F. Oostdyk and J. VanderWoude – in that order).

Personal Question Period was held.

Censure according to Article 34 of the Church Order was deemed not necessary. Acts and Press Release were adopted. Rev. J. Slaa led in closing devotions.

*J. Slaa
Vice-chairman at that time*

Press Release of Classis Northern Ontario held at Guelph on September 24, 2004

Opening

Rev. J. VanWoudenberg calls the meeting of delegates to order and requests the singing of Psalm 116:1-5. He reads 1 Timothy 1:1-17 and leads in prayer. He extends a word of welcome to all delegates. He informs them that Rev. R. Stienstra had been appointed to represent the United Reformed Churches (in the classical region Southern Ontario) at this Classis.

Memorabilia: The Church at Fergus has been divided into two congregations: Fergus North and Fergus South. Rev. J. Louwse has accepted the call extended to him from the Church at Neerlandia, Alberta.

Rev. VanWoudenberg expresses the hope that the work of Rev. Louwse at Fergus may bear much fruit. He also draws attention to the departure of Rev. R.E. Pot from and the calling of Rev. D. Agema to the Church of Orangeville. In connection with the need to fill the number of vacancies in our classical region, as well as those throughout our federation, he takes note with gratitude that four students graduated from the Theological College at Hamilton, that br. John Smith has been declared eligible for call into the ministry, and that Dr. A. J. de Visser was installed at the last held Convocation as the new professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconology at our Theological College.

Constitution of Classis

After the credentials were examined by the delegates from the church at Grand Valley and found to be in good order, Rev. VanWoudenberg declares Classis Northern Ontario of September 24, 2004, as constituted.

Appointment of officers

The following officers are appointed:
Chairman - Rev. J. Louwse
Vice-chairman - Rev. B.J. Berends
Clerk - Rev. P.G. Feenstra

The chairman thanks the convening Church at Guelph for preparing this Classis. He draws attention to the beautiful surroundings of the new church building and then expresses the wish that the work at this Classis may carry the blessing of the Lord.

Adoption of agenda

The provisional agenda is adopted after giving a place for the church visitation and committee reports. Before proceeding with the agenda the chairman extends a special welcome to Rev. Stienstra who joined Classis at this

junction, with the assurance that he will receive an opportunity to address the delegates.

Reports

a. The church visitation report to the Church at Brampton is read and its positive content received with gratitude. The chairman notes that it is encouraging to hear that two young members in this congregation have expressed their desire to pursue the study of theology with a view to the ministry of the gospel.

b. The Church at Orangeville has inspected the classical archives and found them to be in good order

c. The treasurer, br. F. Hoekstra, reports that there is a balance of \$1997.47. He also reported that there are still some churches in this classical region which have not paid their assessment of \$2.00 pcc. At this time no further assessments need to be made.

d. The Church at Owen Sound checked the books of the treasurer and found them to be in good order.

e. The Church at Guelph reports on the Fund for Needy Students. There is a balance of \$5257.99. In view of the fact that no requests have been made no further funds are required at this time.

f. The Church at Fergus has inspected the books of the fund for financial aid to students for the ministry and found them to be in good order.

g. The Committee for Needy Churches reports that the fund has a balance of 12844.00 No further funds are required at this time.

h. The Church at Fergus has inspected the books of the fund for Needy Churches and found them to be in good order.

Question period according to art 44 of the Church Order

The chairman asks the delegates as representatives of their respective churches in this classical resort whether the ministry of the officebearers is being continued, whether decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured,

and whether there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgement and help of Classis. The first two questions are answered in the affirmative. There is one church which seeks advice on a matter of discipline. Classis enters closed session and after some discussion advises this church to proceed with the next step of discipline. The chairman wishes this church the blessing of the Lord and expresses the hope that this discipline may have the required results.

Correspondence received

The Church at Orangeville requests and receives pulpit supply, beginning January, 2005, possibly every third Lord's Day of the month in view of the celebration of the Lord's Supper every second month on that day. A schedule is made up to accommodate this request.

Address by and response to Rev. R. Stienstra

The chairman gives Rev. Stienstra the opportunity to address the delegates of Classis. Rev. Stienstra brings fraternal greetings from the last held URC Classis Southern Ontario. He expresses his joy that the second phase in our relationship has allowed us to get to know each other. Especially the pulpit exchanges are considered helpful to get to know each other's preaching. "Our people are happy to hear your ministers." During this last summer Rev. Stienstra himself had many requests to preach in one of the Canadian Reformed churches. He counted as many as twenty-two. As a member of the Church Order committee he also suggested that a first draft for a common Church Order would be presented to our respective churches in the near future. In short, even though there is room for improvement, it cannot be denied that "Phase II" is working well. He wishes the blessing of the Lord on our mutual work of service as members and office bearers of Christ's churches in our respective classical regions in Ontario.

The chairman, Rev. Louwerse, responds in kind. He assures Rev. Stienstra that it is also our prayer that the unity between our respective federations of churches may grow and become a complete reality. We also look for opportunities to get to know each other at the local level. There is growth in understanding each other, although it cannot be denied that the contacts between us are better in some areas than in others. There is indeed room for improvement. The chairman closes his remarks by requesting Rev. Stienstra to pass on our fraternal greetings to the delegates of the next URC Classis Southern Ontario.

Appointments

Convening church for the next Classis is the Church at Orangeville. It is tentatively scheduled for Friday, December 17, 2004, at 9.00 a.m. The suggested officers for the next Classis are J. VanWoudenberg, as chairman; Rev. P. G. Feenstra, as vice-chairman, and Rev. J. Louwerse as clerk.

All the appointments as per article 7 of the classical regulations are made. The convening Church of Orangeville is appointed to send a representative to the next URC Classis Southern Ontario, i.e., when invited, and to send a notice of and invitation to the classical meeting scheduled for Friday, December 17.

As delegates to the Regional Synod East, November 7, 2001, are appointed:

The Revs. B. J. Berends and J. Louwerse.

As alternates the Revs. C. Vermeulen and P. G. Feenstra (in that order),

Elders: the brs. K. Hutchinson and C. J. Nobels.

As alternates the brs. G. Van Woudenberg and F. Westrik (in that order)

Personal Question Period

The delegates from Owen Sound take this opportunity to stress the great need to have all the churches support the Church of Owen Sound financially in its work among the Reformed Church of

Quebec (ERQ), and specifically in its financial support of Rev. P. Bedard.

Censure according to art 34 CO

Censure is not required.

Adoption of the Acts and Press release

The Acts of Classis are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved.

Closing

After delegates sing Psalm 122:2,3, the chairman requests Rev. Feenstra to lead in a word of thanksgiving and prayer, where after he closes the meeting.

For Classis,

B. J. Berends, clerk e.t.

Press Release of Classis Pacific West held in Langley, B.C. on September 28, 2004

On behalf of the convening church, the Church at Langley, the Rev. J. Visscher opened the meeting. He invited the brothers to sing Psalm 95:1, 2, read from Revelation 1 and led in prayer. He welcomed the brothers and commented on the fact that since the last classis the Church at Cloverdale had extended two calls, namely to the Revs. R. Pot and D. Poppe, and that both had declined. In the meantime they have extended another call to candidate John Smith. The Church at Langley extended a call to candidate I. Wildeboer but he declined. The Church at Surrey (Maranatha) called the Rev. J. P. VanVliet of Lincoln, Ontario, and he accepted. The Rev. J. P. VanVliet was present and welcomed.

The delegates from the Church at Houston examined the credentials and found them to be in good order. Classis was constituted and the followed officers took up their duties:

Chairman – Rev. D. Poppe

Vice-chairman – Rev. J. Visscher

Clerk – Rev. E. Kampen

The agenda was adopted. After it was read, the Rev. J. P. VanVliet signed the classical Form of Subscription.

A letter was received from Classis Pacific East, June 10, 2004, regarding preaching in vacant churches, in which it agreed to help Classis Pacific West in supplying its vacancies. In view of the changing circumstances in both classes, Classis Pacific West decided not to request Classis Pacific East for assistance.

The Committee on Financial Aid to Needy Churches informed the Classis that no request had been received for assistance. A brief report was given on a special church visitation the Church at Cloverdale. Rev. E. Kampen reported on his visit to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church – Presbytery of the Northwest.

Question Period ad Article 44 CO was held.

The Church at Smithers was appointed the convening church for the next Classis to meet on Dec. 7, 2004 and/or March 15, 2005. The suggested officers are: Rev. J. Visscher as chairman, Rev. E. Kampen as vice-chairman, and Rev. J. VanSpronsen as clerk.

Delegated to the forthcoming Regional Synod: the Revs. E. Kampen and D. Poppe, with the Rev. J. VanSpronsen and J. Visscher as alternates (in that order) and the Elders R. deHaan and A. Meints, with the Elders P. deBoer and L. Stam as alternates (in that order).

It was decided to grant the Church at Cloverdale classical preaching supply for two services every three weeks. It was also decided to appoint the Rev. J. P. VanVliet as the examiner in church history.

The Question Period was held and it was decided to appoint the Churches at Smithers and Willoughby Heights to study the possibility of video conferencing. The frequency of church visitation was also raised.

Censure ad Art. 34 of the Church Order was deemed to be unnecessary.

The Acts of Classis were adopted and the Press Release was approved. The Rev. D. Poppe proposed that Hymn 40:1, 4, 5 be sung and led in prayer. Classis was closed.

For the Classis,
J. Visscher



Our Little Magazine



Dear Busy Beavers

I hope you are all doing well. It's amazing how fast time goes, or don't you think so? I guess if you are waiting for your birthday to come it might seem to be going slowly. Summer has gone and there are signs of Autumn all around us. Unless you live in Australia, then you are seeing signs of spring. What is your favourite season? I enjoy them all. God has made each one special in its own way so that there is always something to look forward to. What new things are you learning at school or keeping busy with at home? Maybe you can tell me by writing me a letter about it. Take care.

Love,
Aunt Betty

Puzzles

Name Changes

Sometimes people in the Bible did not keep the names they were given as babies.

After each name below, write the Bible character's other name.

1. Hadassah _____ (Esther 2:7)
2. Sarai _____ (Genesis 17:15)
3. Belteshazzar _____ (Daniel 1:7)
4. Jacob _____ (Genesis 32:28)
5. Saul _____ (Acts 13:9)
6. Mara _____ (Ruth 1:20)
7. Abram _____ (Genesis 17:1)
8. Simon _____ (Matthew 4:18)
9. Zaphnath-paaneah _____ (Genesis 41:45)
10. Azariah _____ (Daniel 1:7)

Brothers and Sisters

Match the correct persons.

1. Jacob _____ Abel (Gen. 4:1-2)
2. Mary _____ Esau (Gen. 25:24-26)
3. Joseph _____ Leah (Gen. 29:16)
4. Abraham _____ John (Matt. 10:2)
5. Cain _____ Miriam (Num. 26:59)
6. Peter _____ Benjamin (Gen. 42:36)
7. Rachel _____ Ishmael (Gen. 25:9)
8. Moses _____ Martha (John 11:19)
9. James _____ Nahor (Gen. 11:26)
10. Isaac _____ Andrew (Matt. 10:2)

Places Jesus Visited

Search across, up, down, backward, forward and diagonally to find the words

GETHEMANE	JORDAN	BETHLEHEM
EGYPT	SAMARIA	NAZARETH
GOGOTHA	BETHANY	SIDON
JERUSALEM	TYRE	CAPERNAUM
GALILEE	CANA	OLIVES (MOUNT OF)

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

Aunt Betty

c/o Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5
Email: clarion@premier.mb.ca

