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Christian Freedom and Entertainment ¹

The topic ¹ with which we are presently concerned is both timely and controversial. Timely, because many Christians today are gradually easing their way into acceptance of many modern forms of entertainment with an appeal to their "Christian freedom." Controversial, because many other Christians are becoming increasingly anxious about a growing permissiveness with respect to modern entertainment among their fellow Christians. The latter fear that what is presented under the claim of Christian liberty is more a matter of worldly licence.

The familiar trio

The changing, more permissive attitude with respect to "worldly amusements" is best illustrated by looking at some decisions made through the years by Synods of the Christian Reformed Church.² In 1926 the Synod decided to formulate certain principles which were to be emphasized "in this age of prevailing worldliness." The Synod did recognize that there is such a thing as Christian liberty, but stressed that this liberty is "limited in its exercise by the law of love, the law of self-preservation and the law of self-denial, which often requires the renunciation of things in themselves lawful." The Synod was especially concerned about the "increasing prevalence" among Church members of the "familiar trio": *theatre attendance, dancing, and card playing*. The Synod even went so far as to "remind consistories that in nominations for or appointments to positions of responsibility in our churches, careful attention should be paid to conduct in the matter of amusements . . ." It was not left unmentioned that where repeated admonitions were left unheeded, "to apply *discipline* as a last resort."

So in 1926 the Christian Reformed Church took a clear and a strong stand against movie-going, dancing, and card playing. While the

element of "Christian liberty" is maintained, the large part and the main thrust of the decision is to admonish severely against "the strong tide of worldliness."

In 1966, forty years later, the Synod again dealt with the matter of "questionable amusements" and adopted a series of (new) declarations. In these declarations the "cultural mandate" finds better expression, Christian liberty finds greater elaboration, and "the film arts as actualized in the cinema and television" find official legitimation. The emphasis now comes to lie on "a meaningful evaluation and a discriminate use" of the film arts, especially those emanating from secular or broadly Christian sources. Not only should the Church community "engage in a constructive critique of the film arts," it should also partake in "the production of film arts materials that bear the stamp of the regenerate heart and mind." While office-bearers are still instructed to warn against all movie and television products "which promote a philosophy of life and a way of thinking that is contrary to the Christian way of life," the element of applying *discipline* has completely disappeared.

Thus the first of the "familiar trio" was dealt with. In 1982 the Synod dealt with the second of this trio, namely, dancing. The main principles of 1966 were repeated and now applied to the area of dance. The Synod decided³ that "The Christian is not called to a rejection of the human capacity to dance, but is called to *redeem* this ability to a God-honouring use." Artistic dances (such as ballet) and folk dances (such as square dancing) are easily "redeemed," but "ballroom and social dances" present more difficulty, and therefore "Christians should not participate in them without the exercise of genuine Christian maturity." Contemporary dances such as disco should be "firmly rejected."

An element which surfaced al-

ready in 1966, that of "the *redemptive value* of our Christian witness in modern society," has now become very pronounced. Christians are called to *redeem* not only the film arts (1966) but also the dance forms (1982).

I am not aware of any subsequent synodical dealing with the last-remaining of the "familiar trio" (card playing, with related matters such as lotteries and other forms of gambling), but perhaps this is a matter for a future Synod. But the line is clear: from strong warnings against (in 1926) to careful acceptance of theatre and dance (in 1966 and 1982) is bridging a huge gap, not only in time but also in conviction. The attitude to "worldly amusements" has indeed changed! The growing emphasis on the Christian's cultural task and his office to redeem worldly things for Christ has made it possible to express more appreciation for secular forms of entertainment.

I use this trend in the Christian Reformed Church only to *illustrate*, not to condemn. It would be wrong of us to sit back, shake our wise heads over such pervasive permissiveness elsewhere, and not see the changing attitudes in similar matters among ourselves. We, too, have become more tolerant, e.g. of "social drinking" and extended holidaying. We have softened our stance with respect to secular media. Radio and television have become an incorporated part of our family entertainment. We have weathered attempts to have square dancing introduced at youth rallies and social dancing at weddings and parties. Many of our young couples (let alone our young people) feel free to attend movie theatres at their leisure and for their pleasure. There may have been no official *pronouncements* made at our Synods on these matters, but is our *practice* so utterly different? We might even say: at least the Christian Reformed Church is *dealing* with these matters openly,

while among us many of these things are being done discretely and are generally left unchallenged. I am not suggesting that our Synods *should* deal with these matters; I am only stating that in these areas we are not exactly “clean” ourselves and that we should view developments elsewhere with a correct measure of self-knowledge and humility.

Questions

The questions which led to this topic are in many ways the same questions which are alive in the Christian Reformed Church. There is obviously some “tension” between the first part of the topic — Christian freedom — and the second part — entertainment. It appears that we have a bit of a problem with respect to entertainment: What is allowed and what isn’t? Some of the questions put before me were: What freedoms do we as Christians have (i.e. especially with respect to entertainment)? Are certain things allowed (e.g. square or social dancing) as long as we keep them within our own Y.P. circles? How do we live out our “complete” lives, especially our social life? How are the “older” young people to give guidance and leadership to younger members in setting an example with respect to entertainment?

Related to the above questions is another, basic issue. To what extent, if at all, should *study societies* concern themselves with *organized entertainment*? After the introduction and the discussion comes the “social hour” and the entertainment, but the question remains: Who is going to entertain whom and with what? Should we not rather leave the whole matter of entertainment up to the private initiatives and tastes of individuals? Some would rather, out of sheer frustration with the dos and don’ts of entertainment, leave the entire element of recreation out of the study society. But is the matter itself solved therewith?

Of course, we should realize that questions are more easily asked than answered, especially when it comes to an appreciation of the exact extent and limitation of our “Christian liberty.” Prof. J. Douma has written, “It is not a capitulation to admit that the Scriptures do not have or give an answer to everything. For even then they still remain a lamp for our feet and a light for our path. The Scriptures are not an automatic answer-dispenser which, at the push of a button,

hands us the necessary texts for all our questions.”⁴ Yet it also is true that with the Scriptures in hand we can discover a specific line and formulate certain conclusions.

I propose first to make some remarks about “Christian freedom” and then to discuss “entertainment” and its value. Finally we will make some conclusions with respect to both.

Christian freedom

It is hard to pinpoint exactly when the term “Christian liberty” (Latin: *libertas christiana*) first emerged as a recognized *dogmatical* term. It is perhaps even more difficult to determine what those who first used this term really meant by it. When speaking about Christian liberty, scholars often point to a famous dictum of *Augustine*, “Love, and do what you want,”⁵ but this Augustinian expression is rather cryptic and controversial.

The roots of this expression are certainly Biblical, e.g. “our freedom which we have in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 2:4) as opposed to “bondage.” It is also clear, as we shall illustrate further, that the apostle Paul, in using such expressions, is especially taking a stand against *Judaism* which posed a constant threat to the (young) Christian Church.

The expression “Christian liberty” began to emerge forcefully during the time of the great Reformation in the sixteenth century. It was then used over against the extensive and mandatory rituals and regulations of the Roman Catholic Church which bound the consciences not to the Word of God but to the ordinances of men. Both Luther and Calvin used the term in this way.

In 1520 Luther published his famous *The Freedom of a Christian Man*⁶ in which he espoused two theses:

- 1) a Christian is a very free lord over all things, subject to no one;
- 2) a Christian is a very willing servant, subject to all.

Luther bases these two “seemingly contradictory statements” on the Bible itself, e.g. I Corinthians 9:19, “For though I am *free from all men*, I have made myself a *slave to all*, that I might win the more.” In the first thesis Luther proceeds to explain that the salvation of man is not based on laws or good works (especially not those prescribed by *man*), but that justification is solely a matter of faith and grace. In the second

he argues that this doctrine of justification does not make men “careless and profane” (compare Heidelberg Catechism, Lord’s Day 24) because a Christian lives “in Christ and for his neighbour” and is therefore heartily willing to serve God and his neighbour in all things.

In his *Institutes*, John Calvin also deals with Christian liberty.⁷ Calvin argued that “Christian liberty seems to me to consist of three parts.” The three parts can be stated as follows:

- 1) the consciences of believers, while seeking the assurance of their justification before God, must rise above the law, and think no more of obtaining justification by it;
- 2) consciences obey the law, not as if compelled by legal necessity, but being free from the yoke of the law itself, *voluntarily* obey the will of God;
- 3) we are not bound before God to any observance of external things which are in themselves indifferent (*adiaphora*), but we are now at *full liberty* either to use or omit them.

The reasoning is much the same as that of Martin Luther. Justification is by faith, not by works of the law, while obedience is not a matter of coercion (force) but of renewal of the will by the Spirit and the Word of God. Therefore the Christian is not bound by all kinds of rules and regulations by which the “observance of external things” is made obligatory.

The above does not mean that the Reformers were antinomians, i.e. in favour of having the Law abolished. Though they fought *legalism* and the doctrine of *justification by works*, they nevertheless maintained the Law of God “given from heaven to teach us a perfect righteousness,” and this “not merely in *outward* decency, but in *inward* spiritual righteousness.”⁸ Calvin upheld that the Law (containing the “original worship of the Lord”) is still in force, to convince us of our weaknesses (sin and misery), to curb our sinfulness, and to enable us daily to learn the will of God.⁹ Thus we can understand that besides emphasizing *doctrine* (as the *anima ecclesiae*, the soul of the Church), Calvin also championed *discipline* as vital to the life of the Church.¹⁰ In defending “Christian liberty,” Luther and Calvin certainly did not promote permissiveness and licentiousness, and those who defend

— Continued on next page.

EDUCATED FOR RESPONSIBLE CHRISTIAN ACTION₂

Home, Church, School

Our education at home, in Church, and at school is not always in one line. Many of you have attended, or are attending, public high schools. Quite a number of others may be attending Guido deBrès High School, Emmanuel Christian High School of Guelph, or may be able to follow the high school instruction to a certain level in parental Canadian Reformed schools.

It is good for us to take a look at

what moral education is at present and has been for the last decade, I would say, in the so-called public schools, for many of us have been in contact with these schools.

In the Outline I referred you to an article of Mr. Hans VanDooren, a teacher at Emmanuel Christian High School in Guelph, if I am not mistaken, about moral development in the public schools. In this article he signals a theory which is applied in these high schools as the *cognitive moral development model*.

Cognitive. You pass out information which can be taken up with our brain. Cognitive information; that is to say, cognitive *moral* information. It has to do with dos and don'ts, with a style of life. Cognitive moral *development* model. How can there be in the schools a model, a method to make the students develop morally, so that they grow and, having grown up, make right, ethical, moral decisions?

He refers to the fact that the teaching of religion has been re-

FREEDOM — *Cont'd.*

the same today should not immediately be classified as "libertarians."

The new morality

Sadly, however, in the course of the centuries the well-espoused Reformed cause for "Christian liberty" degenerated into a liberal campaign for a new and free morality. This, of course, followed in the wake of a modern theology obsessed with Scripture criticism. The prevailing theme today is not so much "Christian" freedom in the sense of the Reformation, but "freedom" in a humanistic sense: do as you please, as long as you don't *hurt* another. The concept "love" (in a very vague sense) has replaced the concrete commandments of the "law of liberty" (James 1:25; 2:12). It is no longer "freedom from self for service," but has become "freedom for self and others and God."¹ The "permissive society" is strongly defended in terms of "Christian freedom." Christians today are not to be bound by ancient laws contained in the Bible, but are to exercise their freedom in seeking new ways and forms for man.

Modern theologians will admit

that this seeking of new ways in the permissive society is not without danger and derailment. Accidents will happen, indeed. Positions will constantly have to be examined and redefined. But since "truth" is something which must yet be established, we should not be afraid to "experiment" and to forge ahead undaunted. We should see it, we are told, as a *process of growth* to maturity. We are only "adolescents," beginning to discover our potential and freedom and should not be afraid to step into the "unknown." Robinson has written, "... the permissive society, I believe, with all its risks and puerilities, is related to Christian freedom as adolescence is to adulthood. There is no guarantee that we shall succeed in moving forward to maturity. But we shall certainly not find it merely by deploring recent developments and going back."²

Today man has "rediscovered" his "freedom." Freedom from the Bible, for it contains only a documentation of the faith of people who lived ages ago under different circumstances. Freedom from the Law, for it is an outmoded code of conduct. We may be able to *learn* from the experiences of those people who lived

in Biblical times, but we are not *bound* to their statements. It is clear that we are here far removed from the manner in which, e.g., Luther and Calvin advocated and defended Christian freedom.

The word "freedom" has thus become the key to modern theology and ethics. We know of the "theology of liberation."³ and of "the ethics of freedom."⁴ The successor of Karl Barth, Dr. Jan Milic Lochman, has written a commentary on the Ten Commandments on the basis that the Law of God does not contain a lasting moral code but is only a "signpost" to freedom.⁵ Freedom has come to be emphasized at the cost of the decisive element "Christian." We do wise to keep ourselves informed of these trends.

(To be continued.)

CL STAM

¹Topic presented at the Leadership Day of the Canadian Reformed Young People's Societies of Ontario, in Lincoln, November 13, 1982.

²Quotes taken from: *Decisions of Doctrinal and Ethical Matters*, Board of publications of the Christian Reformed Church, Grand Rapids, 1976, pp. 36ff.

³Decisions previously printed in *Clarion*, Vol. 31 No. 17/18 in Press Review.

moved from the public schools. No more religious education. This created a vacuum. Realizing — according to VanDooren — that the removal of religious instruction would leave a vacuum, the report of the government, the MacKay Report, struggled to redefine morals. They hoped that a properly designed course in moral development would somehow cause certain moral values to emerge. What were these values? Respect for others, commitment to truth, honesty, and fairness. The basic problem with this line of thinking is that these people hope that values somehow magically emerge from the students themselves without any outside standards for instruction. So the author signals that an effort was made in the public schools towards moral development, but no standards were given. That cognitive brain information was of such a nature that it did not tell you any rules that you could go by, standards you could take your line of life from. No. It was a method which left the students free and merely placed before them life-size situations which they

had to figure out and for which they had to come up with an answer. Whether they were going to give the right answer or make the right decision did not matter, as long as they learned to reason effectively about life-size situations.

VanDooren gives an example of this:

A woman was near death from a special kind of cancer. There was only one kind of drug which the doctors thought might save her. It was a form of radium that a local druggist in the same town had recently discovered. The druggist paid \$200.00 for the radium and charged \$2000 for one dose of the drug. The sick woman's husband, wanting to do everything he could for his wife, went around to all his friends to borrow money. However, he could only get together \$1000. The husband pleaded with the druggist to give him the dose and save his dying wife. But the druggist refused, saying he had all the right to make money from his discovery. So the husband got desperate and broke into the man's store and stole the drug for his wife.

Should the husband have done that? Was it actually right or wrong? Why?

Now the students were not, and are not, expected to come up with a conclusive answer to that. Rather, by their own reasoning about it they are to develop into people who spontaneously, naturally, develop into people who can make decisions. No guidelines please; no structure please. Please not a teacher who presents absolutes, who comes, for instance, with the Bible. The result is that a generation has grown up — and it has not passed us by — which has lacked the pailful of education by which we receive the standards, the structure, which we need.

* * * * *

Rival Educational Theories

There is a book which appeared in 1980, which I have also placed on your list, and which I don't expect you to read or understand. Maybe you find it a bit strange that I put a book on there which I don't expect you to read or understand. It is an excellently organized book, but it is very weak in certain points. The book is geared to professional teachers and to parents who have a special interest in education. It is written for young men and young women who want to become teach-

ers, as well as for ministers, for educators. Although it is on quite a high level, it is a very important book, because it bites right into this situation of moral education and moral values. It places before us the question where the Christian finds his values and how one teaches these values. The author of the book is Dr. Nicholas Wolterstorff who teaches, and is head of the philosophy department, at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His book is titled, *Educating for Responsible Action*. It was published by Eerdmans Publishing House in cooperation with Christian Schools International.

Wolterstorff, like VanDooren, puts the finger on these (what he calls) rival educational systems in the public schools. He speaks about the *maturational* system. Now that hits really close to home. We all want to be mature. Right? (Mature; maturational.) The goal in school, then, is that the students become mature. Like VanDooren, Wolterstorff signals

⁴J. Douma, *Christian Morals and Ethics*, Premier Publishing, Winnipeg, 1982, p. 33 (original Dutch title: *Verantwoord Handelen*, Amsterdam, 1980, p. 55).

⁵"*Dilige, et fac quod vis*," e.g. quoted by H. Thielicke, *Theological Ethics*, Vol. I., A. & C. Black, London, 1968, p. xii.

⁶Martin Luther, *Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, available to me in the Dutch version ("De vrijheid van een Christen") in Luther's Werken, Boeket Reeks, Kok, Kampen, 1959, pp. 133ff.

⁷John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Vol. II, Eerdmans Edition, 1966, pp. 130ff.

⁸*Ibid*, Book I, p. 320.

⁹*Ibid*, pp. 299ff.

¹⁰For an excellent discourse on the relationship "doctrine-discipline" in Calvin's teachings, see: R. Hedtke, *Erziehung durch die Kirche bei Calvin*, Quelle & Meyer, Heidelberg, 1969.

¹¹J.A.T. Robinson, *Christian Freedom in a Permissive Society*, SCM Press Ltd., London, 1970, p. x.

¹²*Ibid*.

¹³For a survey of this theology, see: Joh. Francke, *De Jongste Theologie*, Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1975.

¹⁴Title of a book, *The Ethics of Freedom* by Jacques Ellul, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1976, written in the Barthian, though "not unconditionally Barthian" tradition.

¹⁵See also the title of his book *Wegweisung der Freiheit*, GTB, Siebenstern, 1977, p. 15.



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a system which holds before you the picture, "You could be mature," but which does not give you the structures so that you can become mature.

The Moral Agent

Over against that, Wolterstorff speaks about the *moral agent*. By "moral agent," he means a person who acts morally. Agent is related to the verb to act: a person who acts morally, who has been taught and now is able to use it; a person who has received Christian education, structured Christian education; a person who, when the apostle Paul is not present . . . ; a person, who when father and mother are not present . . . ; a person who when her boyfriend or his girlfriend is not present . . . *still* does the same thing he does and would do if the apostle were present or if the father, the mother, the boyfriend, the girlfriend were present. What he has on Sundays this person also has during the week. He does not have a Sunday face for the minister and a week-day face for his buddies. *All* his life is *one*. The moral agent is responsible. He has come to an age where he has received so much and he now uses it.

How do you teach young people in elementary school, in high school, at home, in catechism class? How do you teach them to develop such a lifestyle, such an attitude, so that they do everything from the heart, so that they do things voluntarily and also skillfully. Think of Christian moral living as a skill.

There is no such thing as a dumb successful farmer. There is no such thing as a dumb successful Christian either. There are farmers who are very simple and who run an operation which is not as sophisticated as their neighbor's. But they operate that simpler farm *well*, conscientiously, skillfully. The LORD gives to each different gifts. All Christians are not the same. But each Christian is to acquire the *skill* of Christian living before the LORD to be a Christian, morally acting person. How do you teach that!?

* * * * *

Tendency Learning

Now I am going to combine something from Wolterstorff with something which he does not men-

tion, but which may very well have been at the back of his mind. That is what the apostle Paul writes in Philippians 4:9. There the apostle Paul gives us a method of teaching. He lays the basis for a curriculum for acquiring the knowledge necessary to become mature Christians, so that you handle the Christian practice of life yourself, responsibly.

We are going to read that verse and mark the individual items.

"What you have learned" (Item No. 1),
"and received" (Item No. 2),
"and heard and seen in me" (Item No. 3),
"do" (Item No. 4),
"and the God of peace will be with you (Item No. 5).

In this framework Wolterstorff speaks of *tendency learning*. Therein he distinguishes the following items: *discipline*, *modeling*, and *internalizing tendencies*.

Discipline

We often think of discipline as the strap. That's not true. That is not where discipline begins; it is not the core of discipline either. That is actually censure, something which is needed when discipline is not accepted. Discipline simply means *making disciples* of people. It is teaching, giving them something to understand with their minds which they can follow and use.

The apostle Paul says, "What you have *learned*." Literally he uses there the verb for discipling. What you have learned means what you have been "discipled," what you have been taught. The ambassador for Christ teaches Christian knowledge which you can grasp with your brain. That's learning. That's discipline.

Now, he speaks also about "that which you have received." You learned something . . . You have been presented information: $2 \times 2 = 4$. You received that information and made it your own for the practice of life. The result is that when you come to the cashier and receive four quarters change instead of a dollar bill you aren't upset because you trust the information received: 2×2 quarters make 4 quarters which are equal to a one-dollar bill.

You take a car apart . . . You've never done it before, but you have a book and you read through that book about all the parts of a car. You took the car apart and now you are to as-

semble it again. In doing so you apply what you have learned. What you have learned you now either have received or not. If you have not received what you learned from that book, you will not get that engine purring. Some things will be missing, because you do not have the structured guidelines.

Dr. Lawrence Crabb, in his lectures on Biblical counselling which I attended, gave this example for what we call tendency learning: Dr. Crabb had a surgeon do corrective surgery on the inner bone structure of his nose. Before surgery, the surgeon outlined to Dr. Crabb how he would go about it. He used for that an enlarged lay-out of the nose, charted on the wall of the room. All the parts of this gigantic nose were numbered. Using the numbers, the surgeon outlined to his patient what he would be doing to the nose and in what order. "I will start removing some tissue at No. 1 Then I will proceed to No. 4 where I will chisel away some of the bone. From there I take No. 8" The good surgeon showed Dr. Crabb every step he would follow.

But now the actual surgery. Do you think that that surgeon stood there with that chart behind him, looking at it time and again with his tongue clenched tensely between his teeth: "First No. 1. What is next now . . . Oh yes, No. 4"? No! He had *received what he had learned*. It had become part of him. It was not just simple routine, mere habit; he was a surgeon through and through. It had become ingrained in him; he went from step to step in exact order because he had been structured; he had been disciplined. He had been taught, and he had received. "And now," says the apostle Paul, "do."

Modeling

In between that he says something else: Wolterstorff speaks broadly about *modeling*. By modeling he does not mean that you can see on occasion in some shopping centres: a fashion show where they model the latest fashions. Yet there is an element in this fashion modeling which we can use. For when the ladies have seen the dresses which have been modeled, they pattern themselves after what they have seen. And the world of fashion is structured according to what the

fashion houses turn out. A little fellow patterns himself after his older brother. And although many young people talk about "my old man," still they will take over the ways of "father."

Modeling . . . Paul says, "What you have heard and seen in me, do." You all remember the teachers whom you respected, the teachers who really had something to say to you and who helped you in the structuring of your life. You remember them. And, although you might not like to own up to it and you may not even consciously yourself realize it, you have modeled yourself after certain people. *Either* you have modeled yourself after people whom you really did not have respect for but whose brashness, whose boldness you admired. You were begoggled by their reckless style of life and you patterned, modeled, yourself after them. Or you *hear* and *see* the person whom you respect because it is a person with Biblical structure. You observe that he or she is a person who does not speak out of both corners of the mouth at the same time, not a person with double standards, with a week-day face and a Sunday face, and you respect him for it, and you have that urge: "I want to be like that!"

Now Wolterstorff says, it is tremendously important that educators are indeed people who have one single heart and are not double-hearted, who have one single mind and are not double-minded. It is important that educators, fathers, mothers, teachers, ministers, elders — you name them — *love* with all their heart; that they do not just have objects to whom they pass out factual information, but that they are involved in the lives of the people whom they teach and that they love them with all their hearts, in a genuine love and in a genuine, humble lifestyle. Educators must not hide that they themselves have their shortcomings and that they fell into sin, so that they can identify with the falling into sin of their children and of their students, but who do not condone that in themselves and therefore do not condone it in their children and students. They are to teach their students that integrity and ability to grow up morally, structured by the Word of God.

Internalizing Tendencies

Such teachers aim at *internalizing* tendencies. We saw that tendencies are more than routine, more than habit. When you learn to play a musical instrument, it takes quite a while before you really start liking it. There are some people who have a knack for playing, who enjoy it right from the start. But there are other people who really have to apply themselves to learn how to play. They start at point A and have to go through points B, C, D, and so on, for they really have to buckle down to learn to read notes and to find a true pitch. Yet, by persevering they also reach the point where they have internalized tendencies to play correctly, harmonically, to convey a message, and to enjoy it. So the people who have a bit more trouble with learning something — and we practically all have certain areas where we do not excel, where we really have to buckle down to make it our own — have to hang in there, so that we all arrive to the point where we do not just go through the motions of doing it, but that it becomes an internalized tendency, a part of us; doing it because we have learned to do it *skillfully*.

* * * * *

The Moral Law

Now the same goes for our moral Christian life. We all have in common that we have to go through the school of Christian living. In that school we all stumble and bumble time and again. It takes us a lifetime to learn to say to the LORD with our whole heart, "Yes, LORD, You are right; I am a sinner." It takes us a lifetime to learn what it means to have Christ in our heart by faith and to live that faith. The believer in Christ is to grow in the school of faith throughout his life. It is a growth that continues until you are eighty years old or older.

The life of a Christian, incidentally — do you realize it? — is a very exciting life! It is never boring; because you and I will not have grown up fully until we are on the New Heaven and the New Earth! All through this life we have the opportunity to grow. A Christian should never be bored. We're busy throughout our lives internalizing tendencies for Christian

moral living in order that we do things not because we fear the consequences if we don't, or because we know them from the Bible factually, but because it has become ingrained in us. I have become like that surgeon who does not need to consult the chart behind him, because I know what the structure for Christian living is. It is ingrained in me.

Educators . . . When you in turn become educators, as some of you are in the educating field already; when you become fathers and mothers; or when you become ministers or doctors or lawyers or printers, or the like, you will find that you have to internalize tendencies of Christian living.

Now, where do we get that from? Where is that structure, that standard? Where do we get that information? Wolterstorff refers to the moral law.

Wolterstorff and the Moral Law

Wolterstorff makes excellent remarks. He points out that the only real authoritative rule for our whole life is the Word of God. The only book of information, which can shape us in such a way that we can make decisions in all circumstances of life, is, according to Wolterstorff, indeed the Bible.

Unfortunately, he also makes statements where he weakens that reliability of the Bible. He says, for instance — let me paraphrase — that we get the structure for the life of the Christian (to live responsibly) centrally, mainly, from the Bible, but not only, not exclusively, from the Bible. What the other sources are from which we could get the information he unfortunately does not define. With such a statement, though, he makes us weaken in our expectation of finding our sure guide in the Word of God exclusively.

Jerusalem and the Moral Law

But Jerusalem and the moral Law, the Jerusalem teaching of Daniel and Paul, the Jerusalem teaching which you all have received — that drives you out to that dependable Word of God. That Word is able to structure your whole life, so that you can live in Babylon as citizen of the Jerusalem that is above.

(To be continued.)

J. VAN RIETSCHOTEN

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“Thus says the LORD: ‘As the wine is found in the cluster, and they say, “Do not destroy it, for there is a blessing in it,” so I will do for my servants’ sake, and not destroy them all.’” Isa. 65:8.

Wine in the Cluster

The LORD God uses a fitting image in this passage to describe His coming actions in the history of the dealings with His people. He has repeatedly called them to repentance and with many exhortations and appeals urged them to return to Him. But the LORD could not withhold His anger forever; His judgment had to come. Nevertheless, the LORD states that even in His judgment He will not completely destroy His people. Something withholds the full force of His mighty, righteous hand. Like the wine that comes out of a cluster of grapes, the LORD will bring forth a good thing out of that which presently appears very distasteful in His eyes.

The LORD uses an image that the ordinary Israelite could easily understand. In fact, some suggest that the words “Do not destroy” were part of a well-known melody used during the wine harvest, cf. Psalms 57, 58, 59, 75, psalms which, incidentally, all deal with the LORD’s sifting and cleansing work. Just as a whole cluster with both good and bad grapes was saved for the purposes of making wine, so the LORD’s cleansing and sifting work would spare the grapes in order to get the wine. In other words, He would not throw everything away. Before He threw out the worthless remains He would extract the good.

And what was the blessing in the wine which caused the LORD to withhold the full force of His punishing hand? He says that the blessing constitutes His faithful ones. For their sakes He will not wipe out the nation. These faithful ones, His servants, are those children of Israel who clung to the *promise* amidst struggle and exile. They held to the Word of the LORD and strove to be obedient to His will. In them the LORD sees the blessing. In them He sees something worth saving for a long time.

That blessing does not, of course, refer to anything of their own, as if they had some value for the LORD in themselves. No, the real blessing lies in the faithful offspring to be born out of the believing remnant, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the blessing that, as it were, miraculously springs forth from what is cursed. He is the “invisible” good that the LORD sees in all the bad. The spoiled cluster of His people is not destroyed for His sake and for the sake of His coming. Indeed, God could not destroy His people, for the Messiah had to come!

By looking at Christ, we can see the richness of this image that the LORD uses. Christ is the blessing through which many descendants would be born, v. 9. He is the reason why the remnant is saved, strengthened, and purified. He is the radiance of light that bursts forth from the scant ray of the contin-

uing line of the remnant. And in Him the blessings spread over all the earth. The world becomes a pasture for His servants, and through Him those who forget the LORD will be judged.

It is then no surprise to see the Lord Jesus, thoroughly schooled in the Scriptures, reaching out to the same image. “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch of Mine that bears no fruit, He takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit” John 15:1, 2. In Christ, the sifting, cleansing, and purifying work of the LORD still goes on. Still today, in the history of His Church, the LORD sends His chastisements, His judgments, along with His many appeals and exhortations, in order that we might believe in the blessing He has given, and rest fully in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Source of Life.

Not only did the Lord Jesus reach out to this image, He also visibly instituted the reality of it in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper. Through our believing participation in the holy sacrament, we may fully belong to Him, the great Blessing which the LORD longed for and was working towards in Isaiah’s time. In the bread and wine, we have true communion with the body and blood of Christ, and so are spared from the judgment coming over the world.

So the image also addresses us today. As Israel was sifted because of the blessing that was coming, we, today, are still being gathered from moment to moment because of a blessing that *has come*: the cross of Christ. In fully executing the implications of the work of His Son, the Father is still sifting, cleansing, and purifying. He is working to extract those who are sincerely faithful to Him; all others may be spared momentarily, but in the end will be destroyed.

And the sifting that now comes is the *final* one. For in Christ, the LORD has revealed the *fullness* of the blessing. When He who is the Blessing has fully extracted all His offspring, then all clusters remaining will be thrown into the great wine press of the wrath of God, Rev. 14:19. We can only escape this judgment if we are obedient to Christ, our Head. There is no true communion with Christ outside the sincere participation in the true administration of His body and blood. There is no life outside of the Vine. Let us then daily show the obedience and submission to our faithful Saviour which He asks. Only then will we sit at the marriage feast of the Lamb, Rev. 19:9. Then we will eat and drink in thankfulness and joy, forever.

J. DEJONG



News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.

WASHINGTON (RNS)

Congress has adopted a resolution asking President Reagan to designate 1983 the Year of the Bible.

Commemorative legislation such as this requires 30 signatures from the Senate and a majority, 218, from the House before it can be considered. The resolution affirms the Bible as the Word of God and its importance as an influence on civil government.

Quoting President Andrew Jackson's description of the Bible as "the rock on which our Republic rests," the resolution adds that "the history of our Nation clearly illustrates the value of voluntarily applying the teachings of the Scriptures in the lives of individuals, families and societies," and asserts that "renewing our knowledge of and faith in God through Holy Scripture can strengthen us as a Nation and a people." It then urges President Reagan to declare 1983 a national "Year of the Bible, in recognition of both the formative influence the Bible has been for our Nation, and our national need to study and apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures."

Sen. William Armstrong (R-Col), this year's chairman of the National Prayer Breakfast, sponsored the legislation. (CN)

* * *

NIAGARA FALLS, ONT. (CP)

The Anglican Church should refuse to marry couples who think the church is simply a "convenient and charming place for marriage," says Most Rev. Lewis Garnsworthy, Anglican archbishop of Ontario.

In an address to delegates attending the church's annual provin-

cial synod, Garnsworthy said the church should no longer act as a "cheap auxiliary to the state which escapes its responsibility to deal with civil marriage." (KWR)

* * *

GRONINGEN

If everything develops according to plan, the first "real" International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) will be held from September 3-13, 1985, in Edinburgh, Scotland. This was decided at the preparatory meeting of the ICRC in Groningen. As "convening Church" the Free Church of Scotland has been appointed. The Rev. M. VanBeveren was appointed as provisional secretary.

The deputies for relations with foreign Churches of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the equivalent committees of the Scottish Free Church and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland each will appoint a member for a provisional interim-committee.

On the condition that the synods and general assemblies of the respective Churches which took part in the preparatory meeting agree with it, these Churches will be considered member-Churches of the new organization. Each of these Churches will be asked to send to the provisional secretary a list of those Churches whose doctrine and actions are in accordance with the basis of the ICRC. These Churches will then be informed of it that they can apply for membership.

As far as the finances are concerned, the provisional interim-committee will have to come with proposals concerning this to the 1985 Conference. The Netherlands Churches take upon themselves to finance the printing and distribution of the documents of the preparatory conference. (ND)

* * *

SALT LAKE CITY (RNS)

The Laymen's National Bible Committee has awarded a "citation of merit" to the Mormon Church for its "outstanding service to the Bible cause" through publication of its own new edition of the Authorized King James Version of the Bible.

The citation said the new Bible edition features interpretive chapter headings, a simplified footnote system and linkage of references to all other Mormon scriptures — "thereby greatly enhancing the study of the Bible for its membership." (CN)

LUNTEREN, THE NETHERLANDS

(RES NE)

In November, 1979 the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (GKN) declared that homosexual (they prefer the term homophilial, for love is more than sex) persons should be fully accepted as members of the congregation and that neither their homophilial orientation nor practice should bar them from the Lord's Supper. The GKN made this declaration even though a study committee had reported that it could not reach agreement on the significance of the relevant Biblical data. It was sufficient for the GKN to consider that Christ has accepted such church members and we therefore may not condemn them.

The GKN also instructed its Commission on Church and Theology to study the relevant passages. On October 5, 1982, nearly three years later, the commission submitted its report for consideration by the synod.

The 1979 statement had caused consternation in a number of Reformed churches affiliated with the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. The main objections were that the decision was contrary to the Reformed biblical understanding of homosexuality and that the GKN adopted it without first giving it a biblical basis.

It should be added that there were conflicting voices from the GKN leadership whether their declaration had actually meant to condone homophilial *practice* or only the tendency. Thus uncertainty was added to the consternation.

The RES met in Nimes, France, in July, 1980 and asked the GKN to clarify its statement; the response came in November, 1980. In its clarifying statement the GKN emphasized the pastoral approach of its previous declaration and although it did make its stand clear, it did not put the fears to rest but rather increased them when it said in somewhat difficult language, "The pastoral design is based on the fact that in the fellowship with the homosexual neighbour within the congregation also the giving of bodily expression to the mutual feelings for each other as an aspect of living with the homosexual disposition enters into the picture." In other words, even practising homosexuals would be accepted.

Three delegates from the Christian Reformed Church attended the GKN session and made good use of the privilege to discuss the GKN re-

port. In fact, the discussion that followed the address of the Rev. Boomsma centered largely on his criticism of the report.

When the discussion was terminated, the GKN Synod adopted without change the recommendations of its advisory committee. It thereby maintained its previous position on homophilia and ignored the advice of the CRC delegates. The report of the Commission on Church and Theology will be offered to the churches as an aid in the consideration of the questions concerning homophilia. The report will also be sent to the member churches of the RES and will thus become an agenda item for the RES Chicago 1984.

* * *

AMSTERDAM, THE NETHERLANDS (RES NE)

A letter to the General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands from "Our Way," a foundation to help ex-homophiles, stated that Scripture condemns homosexuality and that it is wholesome to bow before God's Word. The members of "Our Way" do not say, "This is how we were created," but would rather appropriate to themselves the promise that in Christ Jesus they are a new creation, created after the will of God. "However difficult it may be, we want to love Him more than our homophilial feelings." The Synod paid little attention to the letter in its consideration of the biblical data on the homophilial neighbour. (see above).

* * *

AMERSFOORT, THE NETHERLANDS (RES NE)

The International Christian University (ICU) is scheduled to start in 1984 with two departments, economics and history, to which will be added as secondary subjects, biblical studies and philosophy. The instruction will be done initially by correspondence. The school will offer a five-year program leading to the doctoral examination (doctorandus). In addition to meeting the normal academic requirements, prospective students, before being admitted, must declare in writing that they agree with the confessional basis of the ICU. That implies, for example, that no Roman Catholic could be admitted, either as a lecturer or as a student. According to Drs. J.A. van Delden, faithfulness to Scripture in the instruction takes precedence over a high academic level.

The ICU is sponsored by and will

be an expansion of the present Evangelical College (Evangelische Hogeschool). The ICU's language of instruction will be English. Drs. J.A. van Delden, presently heading the Evangelical College, will also be the director of the ICU.

* * *

UTRECHT, THE NETHERLANDS (RES NE)

At a national gathering attended by one voting delegate from each congregation, the Netherlands Reformed Churches finally adopted a church order. The churches, which are the continuation of the former "Unaffiliated Reformed Churches," have been operating under a so-called "Agreement of Ecclesiastical Cooperation." The Preamble to the church order states that the unity of the churches lies first of all in their bond with Scripture and the confessions and that different views concerning the church order may not be a cause for schism. The next national gathering will be in October 1984.

* * *

BERLIN (RNS)

Billy Graham has drawn sharp criticism in the West German press over his visit to communist East Germany, where the evangelist was reported to be travelling in a government limousine with police protection, staying in expensive hotels and appearing on television with government officials.

The press criticism began during the synod of the Lutheran Church of Saxony, which Mr. Graham attended on October 18 in Dresden. The Evangelical Press Service, news service of the Protestant churches of West Germany, said Dietrich Mendt, an official of the Lutheran Church of Saxony, urged Mr. Graham to meet East German Christians on their terms rather than the government's.

The church official noted critically that Mr. Graham was travelling through the country in a big limousine, staying in expensive international hotels in which one can pay only with Western currency, and appearing on television talking to government representatives and not to ministers.

"Try, when you come to us, to come as one of us," Mr. Mendt said. Mr. Graham did not reply to the criticism, it was reported.

Apparently, Mr. Graham was sort of disappointed that only a third of the young people present raised their

hands after the sermon to indicate dedication or rededication to Christ.

Conversations with a group of the youth after the service revealed that their lack of response reflected a feeling they were already making a Christian witness for which they were paying a price.

"I was not admitted to university although I had straight A's and I am convinced it was because I refused to join the official youth movement, the free German youth," said a young electronics technician. A young woman declared: "My Baptist youth group goes out every week and witnesses for Christ in the streets. I'm disappointed there was no chance to follow up the youth who did raise their hands tonight."

This group of young people left the impression that they know what it means to witness for Christ under a government that often makes such witness cost something. It is the same government which ironically was treating Mr. Graham like a visiting dignitary. (CN)

* * *

NURSES in some San Francisco area hospitals are refusing to assist in second-trimester abortions, causing the hospital to put new limits on abortions. The nurses say it is too traumatic for them to work with fetuses the same size as babies they work to care for during child birth. Margaret Crosby, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney, views the refusal by hospitals to do late-term abortions as "yet another assault" on the right to abortion. (CT)

* * *

THE RECESSION's punch is hitting West Germany's Lutheran church

Church News

CALLED to Smithers, B.C.
REV. P.K.A. DEBOER
of Watford, Ontario.

OUR COVER

Winter Scene, photo courtesy Mr. Jack Pieterman, London, Ontario.

especially hard. Under the republic's state church system, all church members are obliged to pay a state church tax equal to 8 or 9 percent of their income, which is channelled back to the church. Those who are not members are officially leaving the church to save money, although some continue to attend services. Others find this an opportune time to depart as a way of protesting church policies, perceived as too liberal by many Germans. The majority still retains membership in the state churches (Lutheran and Roman Catholic), with 80 percent in the system overall, but membership is declining noticeably in the big northern cities — to 50 percent in Hamburg, for example. (CT)

* * *

A CENTRAL synagogue for Jerusalem was dedicated in August. Costing more than \$14 million, the Jerusalem Great Synagogue — not a temple — seats 1,700 men, plus 600 women in its balcony. Designed as a meeting place for all Jews, not just particular factions within Judaism, its opening was an important event in national life, even though it was overshadowed by the Lebanon invasion. (CT)

VO



GOD'S GIFT

Well Christmas time is almost here

*That extra-special time of year
Its spirit is of love and giving.*

Thanking God, that Christ is living.

With joyful hearts we look around.

At the kindness going 'round.

Each heart is full of Christmas cheer

A feeling that comes but once a year

Although the days may get quite snowy.

We'll sing unto His Praise and Glory

*To thank the Lord for this earth
and allowing for His Son's birth.*

Jesus' birth for us is given

A wonderful miracle sent from heaven.

*That He may substitute our place
Our gift from God; His gift of grace.*

WILMA VAN MIDDELKOOP



PARALIPOMENA

NO GENERATION GAP?

What is that "Gap"?

Since the Sixties this expression has become popular, although the situation it describes should be very impopular. If I am well-informed, the "gap" does not mean a gap in *age*. Such a gap has always existed and is quite natural. Old is not young and young is not old. There are several differences between old and young in strength (although: read Isaiah 40:28-31; that turns the difference upside down); in interest, in taste, in sex, etc.

No, the "gap" means: no communication between old and young, parents and children, grandparents and grandchildren. And if that is the case, it is indeed a wide and bad gap. It need not be. In other cultures, like the Chinese and also most Italians, the grandparents are the centre of the family and are honoured accordingly.

"Of course, in the 'world' there is such a gap, but not among us who live in the Covenant, which is strong on 'generations.'" Mark the quotation marks: I do not say that; I wish I could . . .

Let's look at the gap between grandparents and grandchildren.

From the grandparents' side

Not being a grandparent yet, I consider myself an "objective" (pooh!) onlooker. Living somewhere in the middle of Canada, I can look in two directions: East and West. Around here there are not that many grandparents. Okay then.

There was a time when there were no grandparents among the immigrants, that is. The grandchildren must have missed them. Now we have lots of them, senior citizens who (according to their own testimony) "never had it so good." Fine! But are they the centre of the family of three, or even four, generations?

Let's not generalize. But, from what I hear, in Ontario there is a growing number of grandparents who go "down south" in the winter half-year. In B.C. it may be the same, although it isn't that cold

there. For some or many of them there must be health reasons, and who shall judge that and them? But the fact is that half the time they are far away from the family circle, and thus, for that time, certainly not in the centre. Are they creating a generation gap?

But let those who don't have money, etc., to go down south, not boast.

Now that they are getting older, and possibly too old for living in their own home, they "creep" into "Senior Citizens Homes." Beautiful, isn't it? There were time when such homes did not exist here, and we worried: what if the first generation of immigrants gets old? But now we have them, even Christian, even Canadian Reformed homes. Beautiful! While our (poor?) parents must live in streets with a mixed population, the grandparents are safely tucked away in a Canadian Reformed street . . . Who dares to say even one bad word about that?

But we are asking: Do grandparents create or bridge a generation gap between grandparents and grandchildren? Again: from what I hear, such a "street" soon becomes a "*straatje*" or "*buurtje*" or "*hofje*." In no time English is no longer heard; it's all Dutch "*wat de klok slaat*." English was never their language anyway. But is there not the danger that they no longer understand English? They no longer understand their grandchildren nor can the kids understand them. Result? (No, I am not generalizing, just pointing to a danger) — all the accumulated experience and wisdom of old age become unattainable for the young kids. Though they now have grandparents, do they really still "have" them, although the latter are not yet in the cemetery? If that is true, what a gap . . .

But what about the *grandchildren*? This, then, is a paralipomenon, a leftover for next time.

CHRONICLER

news medley

Of only one couple I have learned that they celebrated their fortieth wedding anniversary. They are brother and sister J. Meerveld of Burlington, Ontario. Their date was November 12th. Of course, we are too late with our congratulations on behalf of the brotherhood, but are also certain that they will be accepted as yet, since it was through circumstances beyond our control that we learned about it so late. A reception was held to which the Burlington Church members were invited, and many will have made use of the opportunity to let the celebrating couple, their children and their grandchildren know that there is general rejoicing because of the blessings bestowed upon a few. Many wishes will have been uttered on that occasion, and we add ours that they all may be fulfilled.

The Burlington East Consistory received a proposal from their Home Mission Committee "to have a coffee hour after the morning service to begin with once a month as a trial. The purpose is to meet guests and brothers and sisters socially, to improve and hopefully enlarge the communion of saints. The consistory approves this initiative."

Although I think I understand the intention and meaning of what the committee wished to say, I am of the opinion that the wording is not completely correct. The communion of saints is not enlarged through coffee hours but only through the preaching of the Gospel by which faith is worked in the hearts. However, I do think that such a coffee hour can work well to enable the members and possible visitors to mingle socially, and there is indeed a very very strong social aspect to our living within the communion of saints, an aspect which should not be neglected. Thus I applaud the initiative.

As could be expected, the bulletin of the Burlington West Church is full of information concerning the institution of a new Church. Regarding the meeting place for the new congregation we read:

We have received word from the Aldershot Presbyterian Church that the congregation has wholeheartedly approved to have us share their building with them. Last week our committee met with their committee to discuss different aspects of the rental setup. Some details will have to be ironed out as yet. One of their main items was that we always leave the premises as we found it, by which I am sure they meant clean and neat. As this is always a problem in our church buildings, we could start practising for the next two months, to get into the right habit."

Something to remember.

In nearby Hamilton the growth of the congregation has compelled those responsible for babysitting to ask parents and others to bring carbeds and carseats or other seats in order to render it possible for the babies to sleep undisturbed during the hours of babysitting, or to keep them happy by having them sitting up and exploring their surroundings at leisure.

Whenever I have a chance, I peek into the nursery on Sundays before as well as after the services and am always happy when seeing how richly the Lord has blessed us in our little ones. May He continue to do so.

"The sidewalk at the back of the church has already been completed (we live in a constructive atmosphere here on the Canadian Reformed Acres)." This sidewalk, as our readers will remember, was constructed to provide a smooth pathway to the Old Age Home adjacent to the Church property. It is known that I am not so happy about complexes on "Canadian Reformed Acres." Concentration — to mention this alone — is never good for the Church.

"Recently, a colourful pamphlet was distributed through the mail," Rev. Werkman writes in *Lincoln's Vineyard*. It contained the offer of a year's free subscription to *The Plain Truth*, offered by Herbert W. Armstrong. Rev. Werkman seriously warned against accepting this offer. "It is a trick of the devil. Many years ago our churches lost some members to this sect, simply because they started reading this beautiful magazine and were later caught in the snare of Armstrongism. Everything is free and they never ask for money, but once they have you convinced of their teachings, you will start paying a lot of money to Mr. Armstrong and his 'church'; you will keep the Sabbath on Saturday and you will deny some very basic doctrines of the Bible."

We also received such a little pamphlet with our newspaper and I gladly pass the Rev. Werkman's warning on. He with another elder and I did have to visit some family in Edmonton, perhaps some twenty years ago; what we heard there was terrible, to say it in one word. At a certain moment the man uttered such blasphemous statements concerning our Saviour that we commanded, yes, commanded him to keep silent, even though we were in his own house. We could not stand it any longer. Thus I underline the warning: don't even start reading this magazine. Don't think that you are so strong that you can weather all attacks, however subtle they may be.

The same applies to discussions with Mormons and with the so-called Jehovah Witnesses. As we saw people fall away to the Armstrong movement, so we saw people get into the claws of the errors of the last-mentioned sect.

"Children, keep yourselves from the idols."

In Guelph the Consistory "decided that the 'Credo' will be sung in the church in place of the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed at such time as the minister chooses." Let me be naughty (not "nasty"): how can you sing the "Credo" *instead* of the Apostles' Creed? I thought that our "Credo" IS the Apostles' Creed. However, I see what you mean.

Good news about the organ. A contract has been signed for the addition to the organ. More than half the amount needed has already been collected.

Something which is of more than local interest should be passed on from the bulletin of the Guelph Church. Rev. Aasman writes the following:

Something which has come to my attention on several occasions is the dress code of our congregation. This really struck me last spring when I appeared in provincial court several times for jury selection. All prospective jurors were asked to appear in court with proper attire. Most men appeared in suits and most women in dresses. There was a genuine respect for the place and situation in which these people found themselves. Therefore it comes as a bit of a surprise that when brothers and sisters gather together in a worship service, we see casual T-shirts, slacks, jackets, lack of ties, etc. We should give some thought and consideration as to whether our dress shows due respect for the place and situation in which we find ourselves every Sunday. On the other hand, this is not to say we should stand in judgment over anyone who is not properly at-

tired. Nothing would please me more than to see someone in the worship service in blue jeans and T-shirt if that happens to be a person who has nothing else to wear but has come anyway to hear the preaching of the Word. In such a case common sense and thankfulness should prevail.

These words should be taken to heart in every congregation.

For visitors to Winnipeg the following may be of interest: The Sunday School teachers felt that they were somewhat rushed since the services in the morning start at 10:00 o'clock. They therefore came with the request to the Consistory to have the morning service start at 10:30 in order to give them more time. One cannot get the children out of their homes at 8:30 on Sunday mornings. Then you won't get one child, for the parents sleep in and may not appear before noon.

The Consistory apparently agreed, and, provided this would not constitute undue difficulties for anyone in the Congregation, the morning services were scheduled to start at 10:30, as of November 7, 1982.

Let us stop over in Edmonton for a minute, although I have not yet received the (always faithfully sent) *City Guides*. This time I wish to quote from a letter. Our readers will remember that I thought it to be a hard request to be fulfilled when the organizers of a picnic in Edmonton asked for washtubs. Now I was informed that "the very tall order given for washtubs for the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church was filled. Yes! We received two whole tubs. Needless to say, it also came in handy when the day became very hot and the children got to soak their heads." As you see, sometimes I worry too much.

However, the story is not at an end yet. In the same letter I received a tantalizing offer. I am sorry that we cannot accept it personally, for we shall have to hold five garage sales before we move, but I pass it on for the benefit of any one who might be interested. "If you become in need for washtubs, please contact me and I will try and see if the ladies will send their tubs C.O.D." I shall not mention the name of the sender, for I don't want her to be flooded with calls. If you need to know, contact me.

Yes, and now we move on to the Fraser Valley.

First I wish to add something to what I wrote the other time about separate bulletins. I did not mention that the cooperation between Houston and Smithers apparently is good in this respect too. They have their combined *Bulkley Valley Echo*. Honour to whom honour is due.

Do you have a picture?

As it is quite a while ago already that we published pictures of the various Church buildings in our midst, we are certain that our readers would be interested in seeing them again. However, some of the pictures previously published may no longer be up to date, due to changes in building and / or surroundings.

We therefore request anyone who has a good, black and white picture of their local Church building, to send this to Premier Printing with a description of it and, possibly, also with information about the year in which it was built and / or completed.

That we request black and white pictures is because it is our intention to use them for front covers if they are good enough for that.

It would be nice if, during 1984, we could present a different Church building on the front cover of every issue. There are enough buildings to make this possible for at least a whole year.

Here is the chance for amateur photographers to become famous! Don't delay.

VO

The Rest Home Society in the Fraser Valley was disappointed.

The application form to C.H.M.C. has been filed, but indications are that early funding is not there. However, officially we were not turned down. C.H.M.C. funding is not based on first come first served, but on urgent poor situations. According to them we were too "well off."

However disappointed the Board may have been by this, they are continuing their efforts and convened a general meeting to discuss the situation.

In one of the Consistory reports I found a little item which is well worth being passed on, also for the instruction of others. I do not recall ever having read a similar thing. "A thank-you letter was received from brother and sister A.B. for their Wedding Bible." This is a very accurate gesture and one which shows that the gift was appreciated.

Usually, married couples keep careful track of the number of presents they received at their wedding and also of who gave what. It may have happened before, but I do not recall having experienced it, that the Consistory was ever included in the list of addresses to which a Thank-you note was to be sent. Would our young couples not bear it in mind?

In The Netherlands it was oftentimes said, "The collection did not even cover the cost of the Wedding Bible," not to speak of the time of minister and attending elders. There, as you know, the solemnization of a marriage was done in a Church service, and thus office-bearers had to be present and, of course, one or two collections were to be held. With only the nearest relatives attending (some of whom sometimes had never seen a Church building from the inside) the collections oftentimes had a dismal yield.

Here weddings usually do not take place in an official worship service. Yet there are expenses which should be taken into account and there are obligations which should be fulfilled. The least that can be done is remunerate the cost of mileage and time. And do not forget the Consistory in your list of recipients of your Thank-You notes.

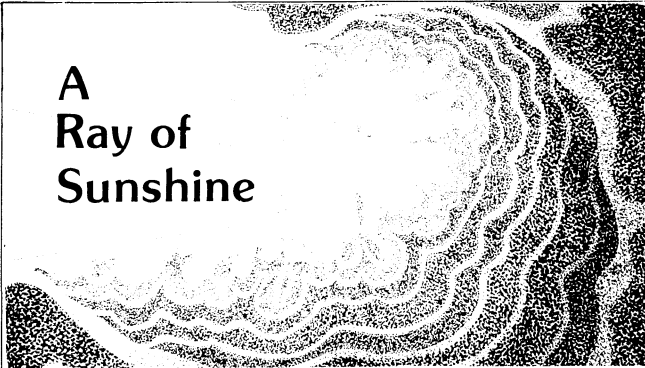
VO

P.S. May I, in this way, warn our ministers, deacons, and members living in Ontario against a young man who calls himself Land, asks whether you speak Dutch, claims that he lives in Sarnia, and is in need of money to travel home. He speaks with a Limburg accent, has been in Canada many years. A few years ago I brought him to the train station in Guelph, because he wanted to go to Sarnia, but when I was out of sight, he left the station again and — as I heard later on — located our High School in Guelph, where he told the same story. This week he had the audacity to phone me again and tried to come with the same story. I told him in no uncertain terms that he was a cheat and tried to obtain money under false pretenses and that, if he did not disappear from town, I was going to inform the police. From colleagues I heard that he tried to get money from them as well. He is on the go again. Sorry, but this was the only way in which I could sound a general warning.

P.S. I am sorry that I did not have time to go over the previous news medley after it was completed. If I had done so, I would most likely have caught my mistake of speaking of the "forthcoming Synod of Coaldale" instead of the forthcoming Synod of Cloverdale. My apologies.

VO

A Ray of Sunshine



"Therefore you have no excuse, O man, whoever you are, when you judge another; for in passing judgment upon him you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, are doing the very same thing."

Romans 2:1

Paul made this statement to the Christians in Rome, after he had given thanks to God for all of them. He had explained to them that he was not partial to whom he was preaching — intellectuals or uncivilized, Jews or Gentiles — but that the gospel was addressed to all men, and that, according to Christ's teaching, "He who through faith is righteous shall live." He told them that the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness SUPPRESS THE TRUTH.

When we read verses 20-29 of chapter 1, our reaction will probably be that this "luckily" does not apply to us. But, what about when we continue reading the following verses? Our minds may not be FILLED with wickedness, but do we never do those things mentioned in verses 29-32? Are we never full of envy? Do we never gossip or slander? Are we never insolent, haughty, boastful, foolish, heartless, or ruthless? Therefore, Paul wrote, "YOU have no excuse, whoever you are." "Do you suppose that when YOU judge those who do such things and yet do them yourself, you will escape judgment of God? Or do YOU presume upon the riches of His kindness and forbearance and patience? Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead YOU to repentance?" (2:3, 4).

It is through Christ's death on the cross, where He fulfilled for us all obedience and righteousness of the divine law, that we may be acquitted at the judgment seat of God. "While we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

In chapter 7 we read how the law was given to confront us with our sinful natures. "If it had not been for the law I should not have known sin," Paul wrote (verse 7). He used the example of a marriage contract. "A married woman is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives; but if her husband dies she is discharged from the law concerning her husband" (7:2). "Likewise, you have died to the law through the body of Christ, so that you may belong to another, to Him who has been raised from the dead in order that we may bear fruit for God" (7:4).

Paul showed to us in chapter 7 that we cannot attain to a new life by ourselves. It is Christ who makes this possible; He makes us heartily willing and ready to live unto Him. That is why Paul writes in chapter 8:10, "But if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness" (Christ's righteousness!). That is why he wrote to the Ephesian Christians in chapter 4, "... that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; they are darkened in their understanding,

alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to hardness of heart." And then followed the beautiful theme of chapter 4, "YOU did not so learn Christ!" "Put off your old nature, which belongs to your former manner of life (Romans 1), and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness." We are to mature, grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ. The sins of ignorance, as mentioned in Romans 1, and which were repeated in Ephesians 4:25-32, belong to the heathen. We have to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave us. We are urged to try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. We have to learn to do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3). We have to WORK OUT our OWN salvation with fear and trembling (Philippians 2:12). We have to learn to count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus our Lord (Philippians 4:4).

By nature we are prone to hate God and our neighbour, but by the preaching of the Word and by the use of the sacraments we are being strengthened in the faith that our righteousness is not our own, but has been given to us by Christ, who also gave us the assurance that He would work in our hearts the desire to fight against all sin and unbelief; and would make us partakers of all His riches, of life eternal, righteousness, and glory.

It is hard for us to describe the greatness of God's mercy. Paul described it with these words, "O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways."

In humility we should "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," and together with Paul, "know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

"Behold, the amazing gift of love
The father has bestowed
On us, the sinful sons of men
To call us sons of God."

Hymn 54:1
Book of Praise

* * * * *

In our mailbox we found the following thank you note:

Dear Mrs. T.K. Riemersma,

I would like to thank all the brothers and sisters from over Canada who sent me birthday cards. Thanks a lot.

Sincerely from:

MARY VANDE BURGT

2789 Mt. Lehman Road, RR 1, Abbotsford, B.C.

* * * * *

From (Mrs.) M.C. De Wit, Surrey, B.C. we also received this thank you note:

For Mary and Arlene I thank everyone who sent them a card. Both are doing fine. They both do rughooking and knitting. Mary came home for her birthday party. Arlene goes every day to the workshop, where she does all kinds of things. She is a good worker, and last year won a trophy for that.

Thank you, brothers and sisters!

* * * * *

May I again request that you send me updated information on our Calendar brothers and sisters, and perhaps also send a picture if one is available?

A year goes by very fast, doesn't it?

Send your requests to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma
380 St. Andrew St. E.,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1

Chilliwack Welcomes

Reverend and Mrs. C. Bouwman

The Canadian Reformed Church at Chilliwack, B.C., passed another milestone in its short history of less than thirteen years, when Rev. C. Bouwman was ordained as Minister of the Word on Reformation Day, October 31st, 1982. After a brief period of vacancy (only eleven months) since Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar's departure to Barrhead, Alta., the congregation of Chilliwack had the privilege of watching the ordination and installation as pastor and teacher of a candidate for the ministry who graduated from the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario.

The ordination took place in the morning service on October 31st. Rev. G.H. Visscher of Houston, B.C., Rev. Bouwman's brother-in-law, officiated at the ceremony, assisted by Rev. M. VanderWel of Abbotsford, pastor of the neighbouring church. Rev. Visscher chose as text for the sermon II Timothy 4:1, 2. He spoke on the theme: "The departing apostle (Paul)

charges young Timothy to be steadfast in preaching the Word of God." In his sermon he emphasized, first, the seriousness of this charge, and then the nature of this preaching. Both preacher and congregation were reminded of their responsibilities regarding the preaching of God's Word.

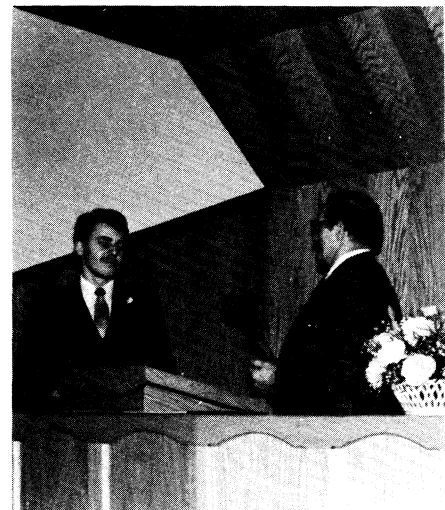
Rev. C. Bouwman preached his inaugural sermon in the afternoon service. He had chosen as text for the sermon II Corinthians 2:14-17, with the theme: "In His triumph march over the world, God is pleased to use the preaching of Christ by men." Rev. Bouwman expounded the following points:

1. God's triumph march manifested through the preaching,
2. God's ultimatum presented through the preaching,
3. God's divine authorization for the preaching.

It was emphasized in the sermon that it pleases the Lord to use sinful men to preach His Word. Indeed: "Who is

sufficient for these things?" Yet, let also the congregation be aware that to one the preaching of the Word is "a fragrance from death to death" and to the other "a fragrance from life to life."

The Bouwmans were welcomed



The (former) president of the consistory elder K.F. Huttema presents the gavel to Rev. C. Bouwman.



The Girls Society: "Together in Faith" singing a welcome song.

by the congregation in a special welcome evening in the church building, held on Wednesday, November 10, 1982. The meeting was opened by elder K.F. Huttema, president of the consistory. In his opening remarks brother Huttema expressed the gratitude of consistory and congregation that after a vacancy of eleven months, the Lord, in His goodness, has provided another shepherd and teacher.

Brother Huttema welcomed everyone to the meeting, in particular Rev. and Mrs. Bouwman and Rev. Bouwman's parents from Fergus, Ont., the invited representatives, and guests from the sister churches in the Fraser Valley. He addressed a word of thanks to the "Welcome Committee" consisting of br. I. Bredenhof, sr. J. Van Ellenberg, and sr. H. Kobes for the work



From left to right:
Mr. and Mrs. H. Bouwman of Fergus, Ontario and Mrs. and Rev. C. Bouwman.

done in preparation for this evening. On behalf of the consistory, Rev. Bouwman was officially welcomed by br. K.F. Huttema who then officially passed the gavel to the new minister who is now president of the consistory.

Two messages of congratulations were received. The first one was from our former pastor, Rev. E.J. Tigelaar of Barrhead, Alta., and the second letter was from the Church of Smithers.

Congratulatory words were spoken by representatives of the following neighbouring churches: Abbotsford (elder T. Van Laar), Cloverdale

(elder J. Hendricks), and Langley (Rev. D. VanderBoom who wore three hats because he also spoke on behalf of Classis Pacific and the ministers in the Fraser Valley, most of whom could not attend because of catechism classes, etc.).

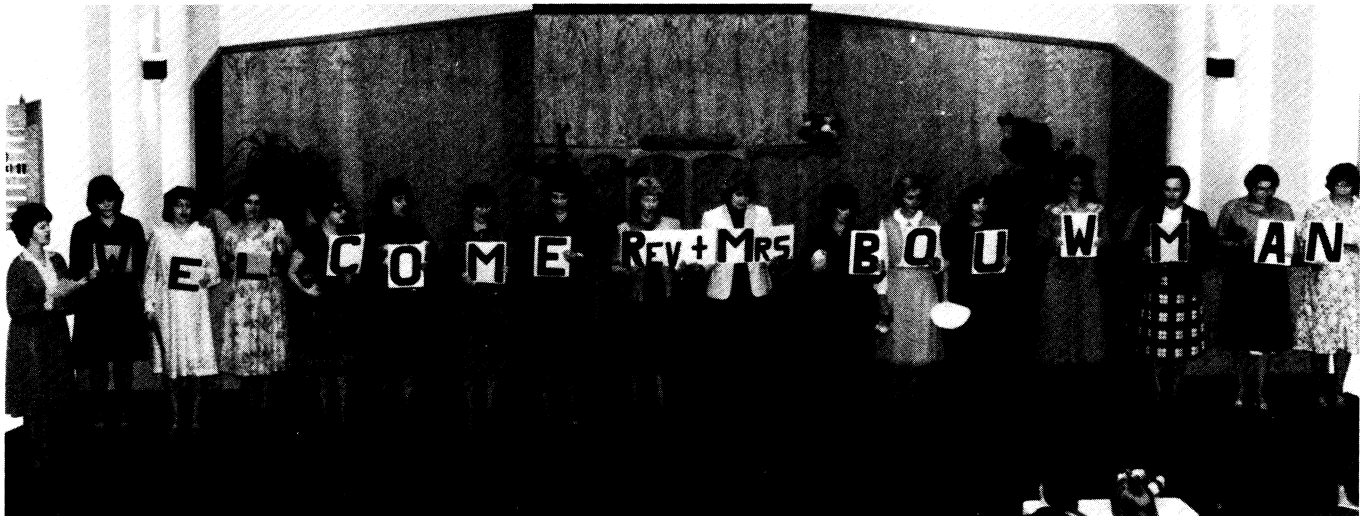
Brother H. Lodder conveyed the best wishes on behalf of the "House Congregation" in the Okanagan Valley. Since this group is under the official care of the church at Chilliwack, they will also benefit from the new minister.

Br. B. DeVos spoke on behalf of the School Society. Musical accompaniment for the congregation was

provided by organist Yvonne Byker who was supplemented by her father Dick Byker on the trombone and Roger Lengkeek on the trumpet for a rendition of Psalm 150. The choir "To the Praise of His Glory" sang: "The Church's One Foundation," "We Praise Thee, O God," and "The Spacious Firmament." It was a special joy to listen to the voices of John Calvin School's children choir, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed some pieces on the recorder by Maria Smith from Kelowna. The Young People's Societies greeted Rev. and Mrs. Bouwman by way of songs; other societies did it with a number of skits. The Boys' Society; "Teach Me Thy Paths," presented the Bouwmans with two annual passes to the "Minter Gardens," one of Chilliwack's famous tourist attractions. A belated wedding present was presented by br. W. VanderMolen on behalf of the congregation. The package contained a beautiful clock that was much appreciated by the Bouwmans.

At the end of the evening Rev. C. Bouwman spoke a word of thanks and closed with thanksgiving and prayer. After the meeting everyone went downstairs to enjoy the refreshments and to socialize. All in all, it was a meeting to be remembered. Many words were spoken, many songs were sung. Maybe we can sum it up this way: We do not know God's purpose in bringing together this minister and this congregation; we do not know what the future will bring. But we do know it is all in God's hand. Let us all work together faithfully, to the glory of God, to the edification of His Church, and to the coming of His Kingdom!

ART LENGKEEK



A skit by the Women's Society "The Lord Is Our Refuge."

school crossing

A. Curriculum Writing

During the summer of 1982, five teachers appointed by the CARE Committee (Curriculum Assistance to Reformed Education) met in Hamilton to carry out the following mandate:

- (a) to examine the evaluations made by local schools who field-tested the 1981 curriculum during the 1981-82 school year;
- (b) to revise the 1981 Church History curriculum, taking into consideration the criticisms and suggestions made by classroom teachers.

As a result, a comprehensive and improved Church History program for Grades 1 to 8 was produced. On August 26, the curriculum writers met with approximately thirty-five teachers from the various schools in Ontario, in order to distribute the new material, to explain the curriculum, and to provide the teachers with ideas about teaching the subject. Each local school is now asked to improve, amend, and work out the Church History curriculum.

The efforts of the curriculum writers are to be applauded! I question somewhat the need of working on a subject area where quite a number of guidelines are already in place. However, such a venture during the summer months could be the spark for future endeavours. The lack of a Christ-centered curriculum is a reminder that our schools cannot survive indefinitely as being "anti-public school" in perspective. The setting up of a curriculum is a tedious and difficult task. It is time-consuming, often frustrating, and quite often void of volunteers. However, work must be done in History as well as in Physical Education, in Science and also in Mathematics.

The following is gratefully noted: (CARE Newsletter, September, 1982)

CARE will still organize curriculum writing. For the summer of 1983 we have tentatively planned to work on Grade 7 and 8 Literature, with emphasis on the study of a novel. However, to also act as a support for local curriculum work, we will endeavor

to provide the following services:

(1) Evaluation tools

Next spring we will be sending copies of a possible "tool" to help you evaluate either the new Church History Curriculum or any existing curriculum in your school. The evaluation is intended to be both summative (keep it or throw it out) or formative (how do we change it). Again, local adaptation of the evaluation tool is encouraged.

(2) Resource centre

We are continuing our cooperation with the Teachers College in the development of a resource centre available to all teachers. On loan will be textbooks, textbook evaluations, and books on subject background and teaching techniques. Since we cannot get on the Book Plan, we are still having trouble adding new texts. More help from the schools is required. More textbooks are being ordered based on the usage or expressed needs of the schools. Further textbook evaluation forms will be sent out in October.

(3) Workshops

In the future we hope to work closely with the CRTA to plan workshops at the Conventions. These workshops can deal with general curriculum development such as using unit objectives to implement curriculum. The workshops can also allow teachers teaching the same curriculum to combine resources and collectively evaluate their work.

(4) Subject aims and objectives

Several schools have done a lot of work in this area. We are just starting to collect this information and will make it available in the Resource Centre.

(5) Coordinate local curriculum work

This is the most difficult task we face because of the amount of time and cooperation required. We feel that local curriculum work must be encouraged, while at the same time a sharing of existing and on-going work is also required. Our ultimate aim is to

have this material on file in the Resource Centre. This aim assumes that local schools will make an all-out effort to place in their own files an accurate written account of what is being taught in each subject and in each grade.

(6) School textbook lists

Because of the difficulty of updating this information, we will provide a list of textbooks being used by the schools on an "every-other-year" basis. The next one will be sent out in 1983.

In conclusion, we wish to express our appreciation to the continued cooperation that we receive from the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies. Not to be forgotten is the classroom teacher who faces the daily task of translating theoretical aims and ideals into suitable learning for the students. After all, the end goal of curriculum is not to satisfy the ego of the writers, but to more completely and effectively equip our students to enable them to function as children of the Covenant in today's society.

B. Today's Music

How many times have you, as parents, had to shout over the music to tell your son or daughter to turn that "garbage" down or off? How many times, as a young person, do you turn it off only to turn it back on again when your parents are out? The parents say today's music is noise. The young people think that it is good to listen to. So you have the common household battle of who controls the stereo. Such a battle is not new. Rock and roll has been around for thirty years. It has since evolved into rock, hard rock, heavy metal, acid rock, and punk rock.

Even though the battle is not new, it is surprising how little most parents know about the world of music their children are growing up in. Often parents complain about the music because it is played too loud and the beat gets on their nerves. Instead, their main concern should be directed toward what the lyrics say and what the singers do.

Music, in itself, is not bad. There is music with which we can praise and glorify God. There is music which we can listen to and relax. There is music which can be played for simple enjoyment. But there is also music which praises and glorifies Satan. There is music which consciously leads our youth away from God and the Church. Satan has indeed found an easy access to the minds of our young people.

Many feel that if they or their children listen to country music, instead of rock, it is better. The beat is not so powerful, but the lyrics can be just as bad as rock. The titles from a few popular country songs show this:

“Heaven’s Just a Sin Away.”

“It Don’t Feel Like Sinning to Me.”

“I Love That Woman Like the Devil Loves Sin.”

Songs in all types of music have always dealt with love as their topic. But now love means sex, and sex was never as open as today. Every intimate detail is explained to the teenage mind. Society’s perception of decency has altered. Songs like the following can be played without anyone thinking anything of it:

“I Want to Kiss You All Over.”

“Body Talk”

“Body Language”

Perhaps even more frightening than this perversion of sex, is the open blasphemy in some records and the worship of Satan. A now-popular group, AC-DC, openly admits to devil worship. The music of Black Sabbath is sometimes called “Satan Rock.” Their first album pictured the cross of Christ upside-down. Alice Cooper sings a song called “Alice Cooper Goes to Hell” in which he meets up with the devil who is characterized as “the greatest number one.” A glance at the record covers and song titles of many other records attests to the open worship of Satan and the ridicule of God. Truly, Satan is being glorified and is finding power in a medium which goes directly to our young.

Parents try to control what their children listen to. But how do you control it perfectly? You cannot be home all the time to hear what’s on the radio. You cannot go with your son or daughter to their friend’s house to see what they listen to. You cannot go shopping with them every time to see what records they pick up to look at. Our best defence is to educate ourselves and our children so that they can learn to discrimi-

nate between good and bad music. Educated children are more discriminating in their choice of music. And children are more willing to take advice from parents who know what they are talking about. Music is a part of young people’s lives. It has a strong influence. Let us help them to learn to choose their music so it will be a good influence.

Mrs. KAMPEN —
taken from

Home and School magazine,
Burlington, Ontario

C. Have You Enrolled Your Child in a Christian School for the Right Reasons?

The question might seem odd to you. After all, home, church, and school form the important triangle on which we base the nurture of our children. However, upon closer scrutiny, it can indeed be said that some parents do not really have a sound answer. The following is taken from a monthly newsletter called *Christian School Comment*. I am not suggesting that the reasons stated are in the right order, or that every one is sound. Please use them as a means to test your own knowledge and perception.

A strong conviction that children need Christ-centered instruction

A higher level of motivation is to enroll children in Christian schools out of a firm conviction that children need Christ-centered education. By definition, Christ-centered education is an educational process that puts the Bible at the center of the curriculum and asks the student and the teacher to evaluate all they see in the world through the eyes of God. It is total surrender to the authority of the Scriptures. The following are key distinctives of Christ-centered education:

- Christian school educators emphasize the worth of every child. Each child is a unique creation of God, and God has a special purpose and plan for each youngster.
- Christian school educators educate in Christ’s name. They openly share the love of Christ with students. They point students toward the Saviour of the world, not away from Him.
- The opposite of Christ-centered education is man-centered education or humanism — declaring man instead of God as the authority for truth. This is blasphemy and open rebellion against God. Christian school educators lift up

Christ and the Bible as the ultimate authority for truth.

- Christian school education recognizes the rightful place of the home in the life of children. Students are encouraged to respect their parents, to love them and obey them. Christian school education is not a divisive element between children and parents.
- Christian schools attempt to inspire loyalty to the church. Children are taught that ministers of the church are to be regarded highly and that the church is God’s House.
- Christian school educators attempt to inspire students to love their country and to have respect for civil government.
- Christian school education equips students with basic academic skills with which to effectively apply themselves to live lives that are useful and productive. ACSI Stanford Achievement test scores show our Christian school students are well ahead of the national norm.
- Christian school educators are themselves important role models for students. Someone has said, “Ninety percent of what students ultimately retain from their education is what they learn from watching the life of their teachers.” This concept is verified in the Bible — “a student . . . when fully trained will be like his teacher” (Luke 6:40).
- Christian schools are religious in nature. Were it not for the religious purpose of Christian schools, they would not exist.

Until next time, the Lord will-
ing.

NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School

607 Dynes Road
Burlington, Ontario L7N 2V4

P.S. We gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of many correspondents. Would it not be possible that this cooperation becomes general, and that *all* School bulletins etc. are sent to Mr. VanDooren’s address? No person can achieve anything without materials; thus the writer of “School Crossing” will need more than one road to make it a “Crossing.” This means that he needs more than just a few bulletins and newsletters to give us an overall picture of the work at our schools. Please note the above address.

We thank you all for your cooperation.

VO, Man. Ed.

Twenty-first Annual Convention of the League of Canadian Reformed Women's Societies in Ontario, 1982.

Maybe the residents of the town of Vineland, Ontario didn't know it, but on Wednesday, October 13, Vineland was the site of a very joyful occasion — the Twenty-first Annual Convention of the League of Canadian Reformed Women's Societies in Ontario. For the second time in two years we gathered as sisters from all over Southern Ontario at the Vineland Mennonite Brethren Church for our League Day. This time, however, it was the ladies of the Smithville Societies who greeted us with coffee and refreshments while we chatted and visited with old and new acquaintances.

Mrs. Riemersma, president of the League, opened the morning session and we sang from Psalm 96: "Sing to the LORD with exultation." This was our opening song, and indeed it was our theme for the whole day, as Mrs. Riemersma later pointed out. Scripture reading from I Chronicles 16 was followed by prayer.

Mrs. Riemersma heartily welcomed the gathering in front of her, with special mention of our organist Mrs. Vis of Wainfleet, Pastor Ediger of the church where we were, and also guests from out West and from Holland.

Theme for the day, Mrs. Riemersma announced, was I Chronicles 16:34: "O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!" — part of David's psalm of thanksgiving in which he urges God's people again and again to show forth His praise. This, the President said, should be the attitude of our lives too, as was to be shown in each of our sessions by the two related topics for that day. Concluding her opening remarks Mrs. Riemersma wished all the sisters a joyful day.

Pastor Ediger, too, welcomed all present and added his wishes for God's blessing in our day of fellowship. From Holland we received a letter from the Gereformeerde Vrou-

wenbond, also with good wishes for our League Day.

Mrs. Lynn van Delden, our new President elected at the delegates' meeting the previous evening, was introduced to the audience. It was also announced that the Societies had elected to have the proceeds of the League Day collection go to the Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped.

Following the treasurer's and secretary's reports, roll call was held. This time we numbered 335. In fitting conclusion to all the League business we sang our League song.

Mrs. J. W. Ten Brinke introduced the topic, "The Death of Christ, and the Redemption of Men Thereby," Canons of Dort, ch. 2. She outlined some of the history concerning the Remonstrants and the Synod of Dort, and explained how the Reformed church fathers refuted the Arminian doctrine on the cause of salvation. After the singing of several stanzas of Psalm 105 the discussion on the morning's topic was opened. Since old heresies are often repeated and the topic is always of current interest, several questions and their discussion held our interest.

We joined in singing Hymn 51, the paraphrase of I Corinthians 15, and the morning session was closed.

Sharing food and fellowship we enjoyed a delicious lunch served by the hosting Societies.

The afternoon session was opened by the singing of our national anthem. Because Mrs. Riemersma was retiring as President of the League, Mrs. H. Feenstra on behalf of the Smithville Societies presented her with a flowering plant in appreciation of her work as League President. Mrs. Ludwig, Vice-President of the League, spoke on behalf of all the sisters, thanking Mrs. Riemersma most heartily for all she had done for the League throughout her double term as President. As tangible, though small, token of our appreciation Mrs. Ludwig presented the retiring president with

a suitably engraved silver dish.

For our entertainment two sisters of the Smithville Societies presented a quiz on women of the Bible and in Church History.

To prepare for the afternoon's topic we read from Scripture, Revelation 21; and from the Belgic Confession, Art. 37. We sang several stanzas of Psalm 115, and then it was time for Rev. Stam's speech on the topic "Heaven and Hell." Rev. Stam was most obliging in making his speech available for printing so that it's not necessary to go into that here, save to say that it was very well received and prompted a very interesting and informative question period.

Since we had come to the end of our programme, Mrs. Riemersma thanked everyone who helped make our League Day such a success: Pastor Ediger for his kind words of welcome, Mrs. Vis for accompanying our singing, also the essayist and speaker, and, too, the hostess Societies who looked after us so well. And then Mrs. Riemersma herself had to say goodbye as League President. She expressed her appreciation of the cooperation she had experienced from fellow board members and also thanked all the sisters in the League. It was a moment of feeling, of awareness that the Lord makes us rich as we study His Word together and that He will also bless our endeavours in this respect by giving talent and opportunity to carry on this work to our edification and to His greater glory.

To conclude our afternoon session we sang Hymn 50:1, 2, 6, 7 and Rev. Stam led in closing prayer.

This was not quite the end of the matter, however, for as usual we shared coffee and snacks before leaving for home. Clearly it had been a refreshing, joyful day from which we would draw inspiration in the days to come and in the study season ahead.

PRESS RELEASE

of the Inter League Publication Board held Saturday, October 23, 1982, at Ingersol, Ontario.

Opening. As acting chairman Mr. C. Hoff opens the meeting with Bible reading and prayer.

Welcome. A cordial welcome was extended to all delegates of the various leagues. Mrs. F. Ludwig and Mrs. M.C. Vandergriendt of the Women's Societies, Mr. C. Hoff and Mr. L. VanZandwijk of the Men's Societies and Grace Holsappel and Jake Bouwman of the Young People's Societies.

Minutes. Minutes of the meeting held June 11, 1982, at Ingersol were read and after some corrections were made, were approved.

Matters arising from minutes. The mail box for the ILPB will remain the same, namely Vonkenberg Study Aids, Box 793, London, Ontario N6A 4Z3.

Incoming Mail. A letter was received from the Men's Society League, requesting more information on the activities of the ILPB. As a result a Press Release is to be published. A letter was received from our chairman, Rev. J. DeJong, who informed us of his resignation from the ILPB. From a boys' and girls' club of Chilliwack, B.C., who requested information on publication available. A reply will be sent.

Financial Report. A financial report was tabled and will be given to appointed auditors. Canada Savings Bonds will be bought for most of the money.

Progress Report. As could be seen from previous *Clarions* the publication *The Church* by Rev. I. de Wolff is already available. Further *Ruth* by Rev. S. Cnossen is ready to go to the printers and should be ready in the not too distant future. A publication on *Daniel* by Dr. R. Bremmer is presently ready to be typed before going to the printer.

Other publications in various degrees of progress either in the writing, translating or editing are the following: (not complete)

James, Luke, Messianic Motherhood, Minor Prophets, Numbers, Old Testament Ceremonies, Peter, Timothy.

A progress report form will be requested on a monthly basis from the writers, translators, editors, and typists.

Question Period. Since the ILPB has undergone changes since the

last constitution was drawn up the present one is to be revised and tabled at the next meeting. Tentative date for next meeting was set for Friday, November 19, 1982 in Burlington.

Mr. L. VanZandwijk closes the meeting in prayer.

On behalf of the ILPB,
JAKE BOUWMAN

PRESS RELEASE

of the Regional Synod Ontario, held at Lincoln, Ontario, on Wednesday, November 10, 1982.

1. On behalf of the convening church of Grand Rapids, Rev. P. Kingma opens the meeting. He asks the delegates to sing Psalm 126, reads Jeremiah 23:16-32 and Jeremiah 24. He leads in prayer and addresses the delegates, referring to the reformation of the church.

2. Rev. W.W.J. VanOene and elder C.J. Nobels examine the credentials and report that both classical regions are legitimately represented by their first delegates.

The following delegates are present:

From Classis South, *Ministers:* P. Kingma, Cl. Stam, J. VanRietschoten, M. Werkman; *Elders:* J. Bartels, J.G. Feenstra, G.Gritter, R.J. Oosterhoff. From Classis North, *Ministers:* R. Aasman, J. Mulder, W. Pouwelse, W.W.J. VanOene; *Elders:* E. Ludwig, C.J. Nobels, R. Terpstra, F. Westrik.

3. Rev. VanOene is chosen as chairman, Rev. Stam as clerk and Rev. Werkman as assessor.

4. Synod is constituted.

5. The agenda is adopted.

6. Reports.

a. the report of the treasurer, br. P.L. Schuller, is read and discussed.

b. the auditing report of the church of Lincoln is read. On the basis of this report br. Schuller is honourably discharged for the period of the last two years.

In answer to questions of the treasurer, travel compensation is set at 15 cents per km. The maximum compensation for delegates to General Synod is set at \$100 a day to a maximum of \$500 per week.

c. Synod reads the auditing report of the church of Brampton re the checking of the Regional Synodical Archives.

d. there is no written report of the deputies ad Art. 49 C.O. The dep-

uties are requested to forward a written report to the next Regional Synod.

7. An appeal is dealt with in closed session.

8. The following brothers are nominated as Governors of our Theological College: Rev. P. Kingma, Rev. J. Mulder, Rev. Cl. Stam and as alternates: Rev. J. DeJong, Rev. M. Werkman, Rev. J. VanRietschoten (in this order).

9. The following delegates to General Synod are chosen:

Ministers: P. Kingma, W. Pouwelse, Cl. Stam, W.W.J. VanOene; *alternates:* J. Mulder, M. Werkman, J. DeJong, J. Van Rietschoten; *elders:* E. Ludwig, J. Medemblik, R.J. Oosterhoff, M. Vandervelde; *alternates:* G. Lodder, J.G. Feenstra, L. Kampen, N. Torenvliet; (all in this order).

Synod expresses the desirability that the convening church for the General Synod sends the material for General Synod also to the alternate delegates. A letter will be sent to the convening church.

10. Synod appoints Rev. J. Mulder and Rev. W.W.J. VanOene as deputies ad Art. 49 C.O. for Classis Ontario South with Rev. W. Pouwelse as alternate and for Classis Ontario North Rev. W. Huizinga and Rev. Cl. Stam with Rev. M. Werkman as alternate.

11. Synod appoints br. P.L. Schuller as treasurer, the church of Lincoln as the church to audit the books of the treasurer, the church of Toronto as the archives keeping church, and the church of Brampton to check the archives.

12. Personal question period is held.

13. Convening church for the next Regional Synod: Burlington-West.

14. Question period ad Art. 43 C.O. is not necessary.

15. The Acts are read and adopted.

16. The press release is read and approved.

17. The chairman addresses the ladies and expresses great appreciation for the excellent meals they served.

18. The chairman expresses the wish that the Lord may bless all the decisions taken and wishes the delegates a safe journey home. Synod sings Psalm 89:1, the chairman leads in prayer and synod is adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

For the Regional Synod,
M. WERKMAN, assessor

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Not all birds fly south in fall, do they?

Winter can be a hungry time for the sparrows and blue jays and others that stay!

You can make these pine cone bird feeders to help those hungry birds on cold winter days.



TO FIND: 1. large open pine cones

2. sturdy string
3. suet (hard fat) or bacon drippings
4. bird seed (peanut butter and cracker crumbs may be used too)

TO DO: Tie a long string securely around each pine cone.

Pack the openings in the cones with a mixture of the suet or other fat and seed or crumbs.

Hang cones from the branches of nearby trees. Sit at your window and watch the fun!

Maybe you'll write and tell us about your success. We would love to hear!

* * *

Time for birthday wishes.

To all the Busy Beavers who have their birthday in December, we wish a very happy day and many happy returns, too!

Have a good time celebrating with your family and friends.

And may the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead.

DECEMBER

Debra Huttema	1	Linda Oostdijk	14
Bryan Jongbloed	2	Denise Van Amerongen	15
Martin Vander Wel	5	Elaine Bisschop	16
Yolanda Jongma	6	Helena Hamoen	17
Glenn Leffers	7	Case Hoff	20
Bernard Van Spronsen	7	Clarinda Meints	21
Gordon Van Egmond	8	Peter de Witt	23
Shirley Van Raalte	13		
John Bos	10	Chandra Meerstra	23
Joanne Flokstra	10	Jacky Nyenhuis	26
Edith Hofsink	10	David Nienhuis	29
Cynthia Oosterveld	10	Mirjam Vander Bruggen	29
Janice Scholtens	10	Miriam Bosma	30
Tania Werkman	11	Anko De Jong	31
Jasper Harlaar	12	Christina Oosterhoff	31

Busy Beaver *Rose Peters* sent in these two jokes for you. Thanks for sharing, Rose!

1. Fred: There's a man outside with a wooden leg named Martin!

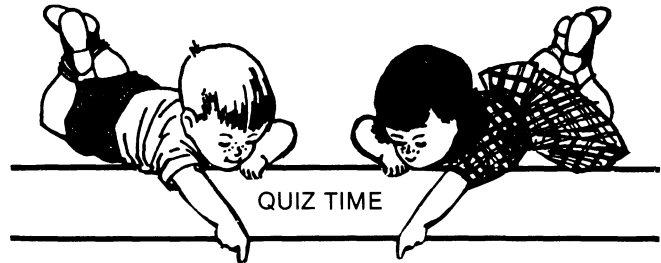
Ted: But what's the name of the other leg?

2. Teacher: What happened in 1809?

Student: Lincoln was born.

Teacher: Now what happened in 1812?

Student: He had a birthday!



Busy Beaver *Felicia Viersen* has this code quiz for you to do. Thanks, Felicia!

Code

1 - A	8 - L
2 - Y	9 - R
3 - T	10 - H
4 - O	11 - N
5 - S	12 - P
6 - E	13 - D
7 - I	

4 12 9 1 7 5 6

3 10 6 8 4 9 13

1 8 8 2 6

11 1 3 7 4 11 5

Here are the answers to the last time's owl quiz. Do You know?

1. Mt. Everest; 2. Nile; 3. Greenland; 4. Pacific; 5. Antartica; 6. Lake Superior.

Did you get them all right? Keep up the good work!

Here is a picture sent in by one of the Busy Beavers. Have fun colouring it!

Bye for now.

Love,
Aunt Betty



With thankfulness to the Lord, who brought us together, we wish to announce our engagement:

DINAH THALEN
and
BERT HUTTEN

October 29, 1982
R.R. #4,
Listowell, Ontario N4W 3G9
281 Chambers Crescent South,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 3E4

We thank and praise our Father, the Creator of life, who has blessed us with the birth of a healthy daughter:

CYNTHIA SHARON

Born: October 22, 1982
A sister for: *Dennis, Wally
Christy and Philip*
Albert and Sonja Vanleeuwen
(nee Van Grootheest)
R.R. #4
Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W5

With great joy and gratitude, we thank God for entrusting us with another one of His covenant children. Our third son was born on August 22, 1982.

We named him:

GREGORY YTSEN

A brother for:

*Jonathan and James
Ubbo and Marian Meinen
(nee Krikke)*

638 Chiddington Avenue
London, Ontario N6C 2W5

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, who brought us together, we announce our engagement:

MARIAN VAN DYK
and
BILL TAMMINGA

October 29, 1982
Box 1495
Taber, Alberta T0K 2G0

With thankfulness to the Lord who entrusted into our care another daughter, we announce the birth of

CHERYL DENISE

A sister for: *Trina*
Born: November 14, 1982
Luke and Jill Jelsma
(nee Van Yken)
2435 Second St., #308
Burlington, Ontario L7R 1E5

With thankfulness unto the Lord, the Creator of life, we are pleased to announce the birth of our first child, a son

JASON DEREK

Born: October 26, 1982
1st grandchild for:
Mr. and Mrs. J. Tenhage,
Brampton, Ontario
2nd grandchild for:
Mr. and Mrs. J.D. Hoeksema,
Burlington, Ontario
Great-grandchild for:
Mr. and Mrs. G. Tenhage,
Brampton, Ontario
Mr. and Mrs. A. Roodzant,
Shelburne, Ontario
Mr. and Mrs. K. Hoeksema,
Leens, Gron. Holland
Mr. G. Swaving,
Onnen, Gron. Holland
Keith and Nelly Hoeksema
(nee Tenhage)
R.R. #3
Arthur, Ontario N0G 1A0

"Thou dost show me the path of life; in Thy presence there is fullness of joy, in Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." Ps. 16:11

We thank the Lord who watches over us and brought our paths together. We would like to announce our engagement:

TERRY VAN DASSELAAR
and
LINDA MERTON

October 29, 1982
R.R. 2
Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0
General Delivery, Carman

With thanks to the Lord, who has again made everything well, we announce the birth of our daughter:

MARTINE

Born: November 5, 1982
A sister for: *Gerdine, Mirjam,
Krina, Irene*
Gerrit and Tjitske Bikker
3340 - 49 Street S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T3E 3Y3

We, along with our parents:

Mr. and Mrs. M. Van Grootheest
and
Mr. and Mrs. T. Van Laar

would like to announce our forthcoming marriage, which will take place, the Lord willing, on December 23, 1982, in the Canadian Reformed Church of Fergus, Ontario. The Rev. W.W.J. VanOene officiating.

YVONNE DIANNE
and
WULFERT JOHN

Future address:

37120 Wellsline Rd., R.R. #2, Abbotsford, B.C.

"Thou dost show me the path of life; in Thy presence there is fullness of joy, in Thy right hand are pleasures for evermore." (Ps. 16:11)

1957 — November 30 — 1982

We thank the Lord for all His blessings to our parents,

SIMON WILDEBOER
and

ELSIE WILDEBOER (nee Vandooren)

on their 25th Wedding Anniversary.

Their thankful children:

*Rob
Paul
Mike*

1947 — November 6 — 1982

1947 — November 23 — 1982

"Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who have pleasure in them."

With thanksgiving to the Lord we are pleased to announce the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

LUCAS and JANNY MOES
(nee Lommers)

November 23rd it will have been 35 years ago that Dad was installed as Minister of the Word in Blokzijk, The Netherlands.

Their thankful children:

Middelburg, Netherlands: Harold and Ella Moes
Langley, B.C.: Dick and Elsinia Moes
Langley, B.C.: Harry and Martha Moes
Langley, B.C.: Bert Moes and Wieke Nap
Heinkenszand, Neth.: Olga and Jan Houweling
Lunenburg 11, Vlissingen, The Netherlands

1947 — December 6 — 1982

Pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18

The Lord willing, on December 6, 1982 we will celebrate the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

JAN VISSCHER
and

KLAASJE VISSCHER (Kisteman)

Henk and Dorothy Visscher

Joanne, Kevin Marilyn, Lee
Graysville, Manitoba R0G 0T0

Psalm 111

We thank all brothers and sisters who in various ways have shown their being with us in celebrating our 45th anniversary.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Mr. and Mrs. W. Vanderpol

ATTENTION collectrices Women's Savings Action:

The new address to send your cheque or money order is:

Mrs. Lorraine Lindhout
148 St. Clair Crescent
London, Ontario N6J 3V2

(please mention the Church where the money is collected)

Amounts over \$15 for which a receipt is requested should be made out to the *Theological College*. These cheques should be sent directly to the college address. On the back of the cheque indicate "Savings Action," name and address of the donator and of home church.

Women's Savings Action
Yours truly,
Mrs. G.R. SELLES

1952 — December 10 — 1982

With great thankfulness to God, we hope to celebrate D.V. the 30th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

JOHANNES H.W. VANDERBRUGGHEN
and

JACOBA J. VANDERBRUGGHEN (nee Hortensius)
Hamilton, Hank and Harmina Vanderbrugghen

Ont.: Sarah, Adam
Irma and Louis Oosterhoff
Christopher
Annette and Andrew Ostermeier
Steven

John Vanderbrugghen
Smithville, Ont.: Esther Vanderbrugghen
R.R. #1, Smithville, Ontario L0R 2A0

"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints." Ps. 116:15

Suddenly, on November 1, 1982, our covenant God took home our beloved husband and father:

JOHANNES VAN ORIZANDE

at the age of 42.

Florentine Agnes van Orizande (nee Bakker)
Anthony, Edith, Annemarie and Marion

717 Westridge Place, Winterburn, Alberta T0E 2N0

June 9, 1907 — October 23, 1982

Romans 5:1-2

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God.

The Lord took unto Himself into His eternal glory our beloved wife, mother, and grandmother.

JANE FLOKSTRA (nee Linde)

Abbotsford, B.C.: Klaas Flokstra

Surrey, B.C.: Cory and Emma Flokstra
Emily and Henry
Clarence, Dan, Joanne

Dunnville, Ont.: Ken and Tina Linde

Jeannie, Tony, Lorraine
Liz, Cindy, Marian, John
Christine, Sheryl

Abbotsford, B.C.: John and Rita Flokstra
Elaine, Harold, Andrew
Sharan, Quinten

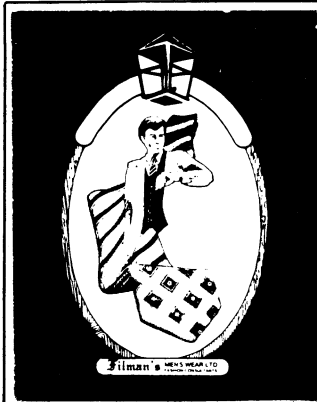
Surrey, B.C.: Bernie and Hilda Flokstra
Debbie, John, Andrea

Abbotsford, B.C.: Frank and Henny Flokstra
Darlene, Ken, Dennis, Karen
Diana, Christina

Delta, B.C.: Bill and Margaret Van Egmond
Michelle, Rob, Yolanda,
Yvonne

Aldergrove, B.C.: Casey and Cynthia Admiraal
Richard, Sylvia, Margaret
Andy

3060 Immel Road, Abbotsford, B.C.



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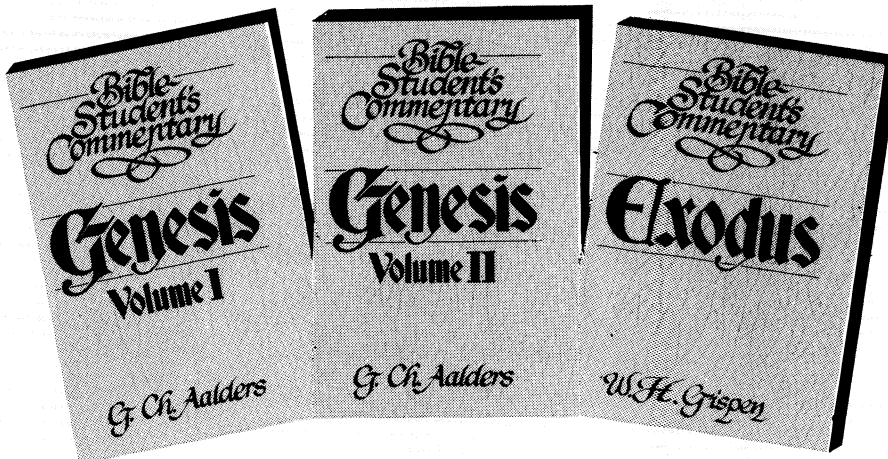
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