



**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 36, No. 22

November 6, 1987

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# The task of government today: some introductory remarks<sup>1\*</sup>

The present times provoke many questions about the task and role of government. These questions are prompted especially by moral issues. When there are matters that need to be resolved, a government seems virtually paralyzed, and when it eventually moves, the state generally grants even wider freedoms in the name of toleration and equal rights. As a result we see a steady erosion of values which our country has traditionally enjoyed. Abortions are becoming more and more readily available in an indiscriminate manner, often even in violation of the law. Governments are not eager to enter the fray. Legislation designed to protect the Sunday as a day of rest and worship is either ignored or challenged in the courts, and governments are very reluctant to get too involved. What can or what must the state do in these and related issues? What is the proper role of government?

In this introduction, let us look in a preliminary way, first of all, at Art. 36 of our Belgic Confession, secondly at toleration, then at some Biblical principles, and finally at two current examples followed by some concluding remarks.

## Art. 36 of the Belgic Confession

In Art. 36 of the Belgic Confession we confess what we believe concerning the civil government. The first paragraph reads as follows:

We believe that, because of the depravity of mankind, our gracious God has ordained kings, princes, and civil officers. He wants the world to be governed by laws and policies, in order that the licentiousness of men be restrained and that everything be conducted among them in good order. For that purpose He has placed the sword in the hand of the government to punish wrongdoers and to protect those who do what is good. Their task of restraining and sustaining is not limited to the public order but includes the protection of the Church and its ministry in order that [all idolatry and false worship may be removed and prevented, the kingdom of antichrist may be destroyed] the kingdom of Christ may come, the Word of the gospel may be preached everywhere, and God may be honoured and served by everyone, as He requires in His Word.

The words I have placed in brackets were deleted by the General Synod 1905 of the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland as not belonging to the task of government.

It is not my intention (nor would it be possible) to enter now into all the aspects of the controversy that has surrounded the elimination of these words. It is, however, important that we understand why the words were removed from the text so that we can better appreciate some of the issues involved.<sup>1</sup>

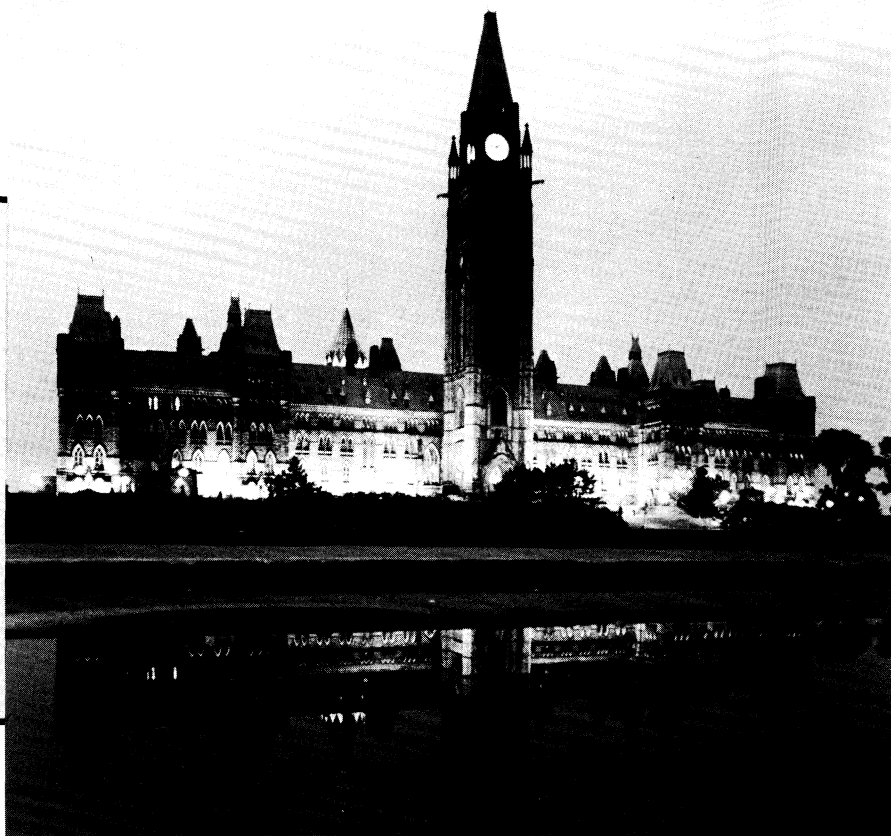
Art. 36 as written by Guido de Brès must be seen against the background of its times. First written in 1561, this confession originated at a time when all of society in Western Europe was considered Christian and there was no clear demarcation between the duties of the state and the church (the so-called *Corpus Christianum*). Such a situation prevailed for over a thousand years and was considered normal. One result of this state

of affairs was that there was wide agreement in considering one of the most important tasks of the state to be the maintenance of true religion and the Church of Christ. Indeed, F. Wendel, in his well-known work, *Calvin: The Origin and Development of his Religious Thought*, can write with some justification that "Calvin was convinced and all the Reformers shared this conviction, that it was the duty of a Christian magistrate to put to death blasphemers who kill the soul, just as they punished murderers who kill the body" (p. 97). Calvin's active involvement for the execution of the heretic Servetus is a well-known example of how Calvin was a child of his times in this respect. In a treatise written after the execution, he vigorously defended that it was just to put heretics and blasphemers to death since God required it.<sup>2</sup> Although Calvin himself never included the magistrate's duty of eradicating false religion in his confessional formulations, other Reformed confessions did. The Scottish Confession of Faith (1560) speaks of the civil magistrate in chapter 24: ". . . Moreover, we state that the preservation and purification of religion is particularly the duty of kings, princes, rulers and magistrates. They are not only appointed for civil government but also to maintain true religion and to suppress all idolatry and superstition. This may be seen in David, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah and others highly recommended for their zeal in that cause."<sup>3</sup> In the Second Helvetic Confession of 1566, we read in Art. 30 about the magistrate that he "roots out lies and all superstition, together with all impiety and idolatry and defends the Church of God," and, referring to the sword of Romans 13:4, says later in the same article: ". . . let him draw this sword of God against all malefactors, seditious persons, thieves, murderers, oppressors, blasphemers, perjured persons, and all those whom God has commanded him to punish and even to execute. Let him suppress stubborn heretics . . ."<sup>4</sup> In this light, Art. 36 of our Belgic Confession must also be understood when de Brès wrote that "their [civil government's — CVD] task of restraining and sustaining is not limited to the public order but includes the protection of the sacred ministry in order that all idolatry and false worship may be removed and prevented, the kingdom of the anti-Christ may be destroyed and the Kingdom of Christ may come . . ."

How was this task of the government justified? Can it be justified? As can be seen from the Scottish Confession of Faith just quoted, this task of the civil authorities was derived from the Old Testament. This was also the case in the Belgic Confession. In the text of Dordrecht 1619<sup>5</sup> the Scripture passages referred to in Art. 36 refer, among others, to I Kings 15:12 (Asa's removal of male cult prostitutes and idols from the land) and II Kings 23 (Josiah's reforms including the slaying of the priests of the high places in Samaria).

There are, however, great difficulties with this approach, for one cannot equate the special position of Israel's theocratic kings with rulers of our present age. This equation obliterates the vast differences between Israel's identity as church and state at one and the same time and the justified separation of what is church and civil government in the present dispensation. Today no nation can be identified as the special peo-

**“What is the proper role of government?”**



ple of God, His Church. No ruler today therefore stands in the same position as the Davidic kings who could be actively involved in the worship of God by Israel and its reformation. (David, e.g., was instrumental in liturgical matters, I Chron. 23-25; helped prepare for the building of the temple, I Chron. 29, which was built and dedicated by Solomon, II Chron. 3-6; think also of the reformation under, e.g., Josiah, II Kings 23.) The office of the Davidic kings spoke of and pointed to the great King Jesus Christ (cf., e.g., Ps. 2; also how Solomon sat on the LORD's throne; I Chron. 28:5, 29:23). Whereas in Israel, church and state were one, so that church discipline was at the same time a civil matter involving even the use of the death penalty (e.g., for dishonouring parents, Deut. 21:20ff., or adultery, Lev. 20:10), today the civil authorities have no Biblically justifiable right to take life as part of the process of church discipline. The spiritual discipline of the church by the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God (Eph. 6:17; Heb. 4:12-13; II Cor. 10:4) is to be distinguished from civil punishment which can involve the taking of human life for capital offences (Rom. 13:4).

Besides appealing to the Old Testament and equating the situation then with the present age, Calvin and others also sought justification from the New Testament. Such they found in Luke 14:23. In the parable of the great banquet the master tells the servant to “go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.” Calvin agreed with Augustine's exegesis that this passage proves “that godly princes may lawfully issue edicts, for compelling obstinate and rebellious persons to worship the true God and to maintain the unity of the faith . . .”<sup>6</sup> This parable, however, indicates that when those who had first been invited did not want to come, then they were not forced. Rather, others were invited from the streets and lanes of the city. And when there was still room, then the servant had to go out to the highways and hedges in order that those people, who lived there unsheltered, be urged, compelled, to come, because they would not dare to come since they considered themselves unworthy of such an honour. No use of outward force is referred to here. References to the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts

2) and the delivery of Hymenaeus and Alexander to Satan (I Tim. 1:20) are not convincing either for justifying government prosecution of heretics.

Indeed, it can be argued that there are indications in the New Testament arguing against such a use of the sword. For example, to Pontius Pilate the Lord Jesus said: “My kingdom is not of this world; if my kingdom were of this world, my servants would fight, that I might not be handed over to the Jews; but my kingdom is not of this world.” (John 18:36; also see, e.g., Luke 9:51-55.) The power of the kingdom of God is the gospel (cf. Rom. 1:16). Faith overcomes the world, not the sword (I John 5:4; cf. Zec. 4:6).

The deletion of the phrase “all idolatry and false worship may be removed and prevented, the kingdom of antichrist may be destroyed” (as belonging to the task of government) was thus justified. However, where does this leave us with respect to the task of government over against the church? Does this imply that the state can tolerate what the church can not? These questions can be multiplied. It may be instructive to consider some Biblical data in this connection and to look first at the matter of toleration.

— *To be continued*  
C. VAN DAM

\*First orally presented at public meetings in Burlington and Hamilton on September 8 and 18, 1987.

<sup>1</sup>For this reason, I will be making use of the *Advies inzake het gravamen tegen artikel 36 der Nederlandse Geloofsbelijdenis* which served the General Synod of 1905. It is also found in A. Janse, *De verhouding van Christelijke politiek tot de wereldsche* (1933) as Appendix A.

<sup>2</sup>See P. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (1910), VIII, 791; cf. Calvin, *Institutes*, IV, xx, 3, 9.

<sup>3</sup>A.C. Cochrane, ed., *Reformed Confessions of the Sixteenth Century* (1966) 183.

<sup>4</sup>Cochrane, *op.cit.*, 300.

<sup>5</sup>As found in J.N. Bakhuizen-Van den Brink, *De Nederlandse Belijdenis-geschriften* (2nd ed. 1976) 142.

<sup>6</sup>Calvin, *Harmony of the Evangelists*, ad loc.

# Visit to Scotland

## Goal

While staying in the Netherlands during the summer of 1987, I visited the Free Church of Scotland from June 10 to June 18, 1987. The visit took place on behalf, and on the request, of the *Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad* of the Canadian Reformed Churches. It had a twofold purpose:

a. To serve the *Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad* with my impressions of the Free Church of Scotland, and my recommendations on how to proceed further with them;

b. To contact the other members of the Missions Committee of the ICRC, Prof. A.C. Boyd and Prof. C. Graham, in order to prepare a report for the next conference of the ICRC in the Vancouver area in June 1989.

## Meetings

I arrived at the Edinburgh Airport the morning of June 10. Prof. Boyd was so kind as to pick me up from the airport and to take me to Prof. Graham's place, who was my host during most of my visit. For a short time I was also the guest of Dr. A.C. Fraser and of the Rev. A.G. Ross. Dr. Fraser is involved in the mission work

in Peru, and Rev. Ross is one of the ministers at Edinburgh. Besides attending a congregational meeting, two payer meetings, and two worship services, I took part in three meetings, of the *Missions Committee of the ICRC*, of the *Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations*, and of the *Foreign Overseas and Jewish Missions Board*. It just happened during these days that the several committees of the General Assembly held their meetings in the Theological College of the Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, according to their schedule. So I met quite a number of professors, ministers and elders of the Free Church, also from the Highlands and the Islands.

## ICRC

As far as the work of the *Missions Committee of the ICRC* is concerned, already in 1986 I had written two letters to the convenor, Prof. A.C. Boyd, but it turned out to be useful to discuss several points orally. The results of the discussions are to be summarized as follows:

a. The convenor will send a letter to all the member churches according to the mandate of the committee;

b. After having received the request-

ed information before the 15th of September, 1987, the committee will submit a report for the next meeting of the 1989 conference;

c. The undersigned hopes to deliver a paper on the topic of *Contextualisation* for the next conference in 1989 and he will send a copy of his speech to the other members of the committee before the conference.

## FCS

As far as the Free Church of Scotland itself is concerned, I would like to underline what is written in the report of the *Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad* to General Synod Burlington-West (Appendix III, Acts Burlington-West, p. 193), "that if meaningful bridges are to be built from our churches to the Presbyterian churches in the ICRC, the key might well be the Free Church of Scotland."

The FCS is indeed, I think, the key to the whole Presbyterian world and the history of this church shows the severe struggle, throughout the ages, to be and to remain faithful to her Reformed heritage.

## Standards

The standards of the FCS are the Westminster Confession of faith, the larger and shorter catechisms, and the Scottish Confession of Faith, 1560. Although the last one is placed more or less in the background, the brethren stressed time and again that the history of the FCS did not start in the 17th century, but that the roots of the FCS are to be found in the reformation of John Knox. They thus consider themselves to be the legitimate continuation of the church of the Reformation. See in this respect also Appendix III of the Acts of Burlington-West. I point also to some books which I received from Prof. C. Graham and which I presented to the library of the Theological College in Hamilton.

I presented to the library of the Theological College of Edinburgh a copy of the *Book of Praise*, of the book *Decently and in Good Order*, some copies of *Mission News*, and some publications about *Redemptive-Historical Preaching*.

They assured me that the standards of the FCS are not mere standards but



City of Edinburgh

that there is also a good maintenance of them in the churches.

### Marks of the church

What about the marks of the true church? I have the same experience as what is said in the Committee Report concerning preaching in the FCS (Cf. p. 192). The sermons which I have heard were really Scriptural and Reformed. In the morning worship service of June 14, I heard a sermon of the Rev. A.G. Ross about Heb. 1:10-12, and in the evening I heard a sermon of the Rev. D. Lamont about Matt. 26:41. They are not used to giving the theme of the sermon, but only a short title or the text as such. I must say that they delivered a good division, also good exegesis, christology, appropriation, and conclusion. The same is to be said of several written sermons (cf. some examples in Appendix II).

As for the sacraments, the children of the communicant members are baptized and there is a good attendance of the Lord's Supper. There are also quite some "adherents," who did not make their confession of faith yet. This is an old problem, as Prof. Emeritus Collins assured me. The problem originated already in the times of the disruption of 1843. (Prof. Collins told me a lot about the history of the FCS, especially during the trip from Edinburgh to St. Andrews on Friday, the 12th of June.) The number of adherents is diminishing, but there are still a couple of thousands of them.

On the matter of church discipline, I want to underline what is said in the report of *The Committee on Correspondence with Churches Abroad* (at Burlington-West 1986, p. 192) "The impression was very strong that the FCS defends and promotes the holiness of the Lord in the lives of its churches and members."

The whole history of the FCS shows the maintenance of church discipline, and several discussions with ministers and elders of the church affirmed that to me.

### Worship services

As far as the worship services are concerned, the liturgy is quite simple. In the centre of the service they are also used to the other main elements of liturgy, such as the reading of the Scripture, public prayers, collection and Psalm singing. They do not have organs in the church, but a precentor leads the congregation in singing. It is to be stated that these matters are still under discussion, for the General Assembly appointed a "Psalmody Committee," which is drafting a symposium concerning: a. Christ in the Psalms, b. instrumental accompaniment of praise in public worship, and c. exegesis of stated Biblical passages relating to praise.

There are some differences in liturgical respect, but they are not essential.

### Other differences

It is well-known that there are differences between the Westminster Standards and the Standards of the Reformed Churches, e.g., the matter of the visible and invisible church, and the relation between God's covenant and election, it would be good to keep discussing these matters. On the other hand, we have to bear in mind that sometimes the Westminster Confession is even clearer than the Belgic Confession, e.g., in the matter of the testimony of the Holy Spirit concerning the holy Scripture. In the second place there are also differences in respect of Church Polity, especially concerning the authority of the "major assemblies." Their presbyteries, for instance, have more authority than our classes. But it must be said also that the influence of "Kirk Sessions" is growing over against the authority of the presbyteries. It is also advisable to keep discussing these differences.

In the third place there are differences in respect of ethics. The Presbyterians have strong objections against smoking and drinking. More than many Reformed people. It struck me, however, that several ministers of the FCS assured me that their churches never made a Shibboleth of these points.

### Mission

I attended one of the meetings of the *Foreign Overseas and Jewish Missions'*

*Board*. There are many activities in respect of mission in Peru and in India. They gave me quite some details concerning these activities and also in the annual missionary review *From the Frontiers* much can be read concerning these activities. The meeting was very much interested in the new mission review initiated by the Rev. Joosse of Groningen, who visited Scotland some months before. I gave some details about the mission activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

### Ecumenical relations

In one of the meetings of the *Committee on Assembly Arrangements and Ecumenical Relations*, I reminded the brethren that according to the proposal of the committee concerned, the General Assembly 1982 decided already to offer a relationship to the Canadian Reformed Churches. The members of the current committee were not able to explain why this had not been done. But anyway, the committee were pleased with the fact that now mutual relations were growing. They were very much interested in the history and the struggle of the Canadian Reformed Churches and they understood very well why we never participated in the RES. In 1981 the General Assembly of the FCS finally decided to leave the RES, especially because of developments in the Synodical Churches of the Netherlands. They asked several questions and I had the impression that they would surely accept an invitation from Canada to attend a General Synod.



Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.  
Winnipeg, MB

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#### ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION  
41 Amberly Boulevard  
Ancaster, ON, Canada L9G 3R9

#### ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.  
One Beghin Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5  
Phone: (204) 663-9000

SUBSCRIPTION RATES		Regular	Air
FOR 1987		Mail	Mail
Canada		\$24.00	\$42.00
U.S.A.	U.S. Funds	\$25.75	\$40.00
International		\$34.50	\$57.50
Advertisements: \$5.00 per column inch			
Second class mail registration number 1025			
ISSN 0383-0438			

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We concluded that there is no problem as far as the language is concerned; e.g., an exchange of Acts of Synods and General Assemblies and also visits of Synods could quite easily be arranged. There is still one point, namely, that the rules of relationship are not exactly the same, but this point is being discussed at the moment in the churches.

### Varia

a. I was invited to preach in the church of the Rev. A.G. Ross and also in the church of the Rev. D. Lamont, but I explained that it was not right in this situation to accept one of these invitations. I also had the idea that it would be wise not to speak an edifying word, because the difference is not always clear to many

people. Therefore I only spoke in public in the congregational meeting on Sunday night after the worship service in the church of the Rev. Ross.

b. With Prof. Collins, and the Rev. D. Lamont I visited St. Andrews and also Anstruther and I saw many historical places on this trip, while the caretaker of the Theological College, Mr. Anderson, showed me many historical places in the city of Edinburgh.

c. More than once I was told that it was very regrettable that the schools were given over to the state in the 19th century. The consequence of this fact is that the young people of the church are not educated enough in the Reformed way. The church is trying to compensate for this as much as possible.

d. Maybe the fact that there are no

Reformed schools is also the reason why there is sometimes a problem with those young people who withdraw themselves from the church.

e. Let me give some statistical data: The FCS has about 140 congregations, all together about 170 ministers (5 full-time professors and also the retired ministers included); there are 11 presbyteries, 4 Synods and 1 yearly General Assembly at Edinburgh. There are almost 6,000 communicant members and 9,000 baptized members (the "adherents" included), so together about 15,000.

In conclusion, I may look back to a pleasant and useful visit to a church that has the same struggle in many respects as we have on this side of the ocean!

K. DEDDENS

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## Reformation and mission<sub>4</sub>

In the series *Reformation and mission* we now print the last article. The previous articles were printed in issues Volume 36 No. 13, 14, 15 and 16.

### Propagation of the gospel

We discovered that — in spite of all kinds of criticism — Calvin strongly promoted the work of mission, also in practical respects. He also encouraged others to propagate the gospel, and he was very grateful when he discovered that the propagation of the gospel met with success.

He wrote his dedicatory epistle to the first edition of the second part of his commentary on the *Acts of the Apostles* "to the most serene King-elect of Denmark and Norway, Frederick" and said at the end of it, "I shall touch on one thing which is appropriate for a royal personage. When the power of the whole world was in opposition, and all the men who had control of affairs then, were in arms to crush the gospel, a few men, obscure, unarmed and contemptible, relying on the support of the truth and the Spirit alone, laboured so strenuously in spreading the faith of Christ, avoided no toil of dangers, remained unbroken against all attacks, until at last they emerged victors. Accordingly, for Christian princes, distinguished as they are by a certain authority, since God has provided them with the sword for the defence of the Kingdom of His Son, there is no excuse for not being at least just as spirited and faithful in the discharge of

such an honourable task." Under the pressure of the Lutherans, Frederick refused this dedication of the 1554 edition. So Calvin dedicated the second edition of 1560 to Nicolas Radzivil, "duke in Olika, palatine of Vilna." But that does not diminish the well-meant words of the first edition with regard to the propagation and defense of the gospel.

It is also known that Calvin called Luther "an apostle," elected by God Himself.

In 1549 Calvin wrote a letter to King Sigismund of Poland wherein he expresses his joy about the progress of the gospel in Poland.

In the same letter he mentioned the name of *Johannes à Lasco*, a Polish nobleman, who later on played an important role in London and also in Germany. Calvin said, "I foresee that he will transfer the torch of the gospel also to other nations."

In 1561 Calvin wrote in a letter to the Scottish Reformer *John Knox*, "I rejoice exceedingly, as you may easily suppose, that the gospel has made such rapid and happy progress among you."

Finally, in the same year, Calvin wrote a letter to *Bullinger* about the progress of the gospel and the request for more preachers of God's Word: "It is incredible with what fervent zeal our brethren are urging forward greater progress. Pastors are everywhere asked for from among us with as much eagerness as the priestly functions are made the object of ambition

among the Papists. Those who are in quest of them besiege my doors, and pay their court to me as if I held a levee. They vie with one another in pious rivalry, as if the condition of Christ's Kingdom were in a state of undisturbed tranquility. On our part, we desire as much as it lies in our power to comply with their wishes, but our stock of preachers is almost exhausted. We have even been obliged to sweep the workshops of the working classes to find individuals with some tincture of letters and pious doctrine to supply this necessity."

Calvin wrote this letter just three years before his death. One can say, this has to do with the ministry in the congregations, but we may also say: this has to do with the propagation and the progress of the gospel. Calvin was very concerned about that. It is, therefore, absolutely wrong to state that Calvin lacked the idea of apostolate!

### Martin Bucer

Calvin was closely connected with *Martin Bucer*, especially in his Strasbourg years, in 1538-1541. It is interesting to know Bucer's ideas about mission. We may say that he expressed himself very clearly about the task of mission. More than Luther and Calvin, Bucer stressed very much that the apostles only made a beginning of the work of mission in their times. He stated that the apostles had indeed received a special calling for the propagation of the gospel in the whole

world. But speaking about the apostle Paul, Bucer said that "the apostolic fire was present in him in great measure as an example also for the times to come." He also stressed that the apostles had received extraordinary gifts: prophecy, healing, tongues. But therein, Bucer said, is an indication that "just as the beginning, also later on all the power would be delivered to the church to gather the church of God out of the whole human race." For although these extraordinary gifts were limited to the apostolic era, yet the church would also later on be able to fulfil the calling of Jesus Christ without the miracles of the beginning of the Christian church. Already in his book, dated from 1523 *Instruction of Christian Love*, Bucer said, "The believer, like a perpetual spring, must pour out the goodness which God imparts to him through Christ by furthering the welfare of all men" (facsimile edition, Ann Arbor, Michigan, U.S.A./London, England 1980, p. 49).

Starting with these ideas, Bucer reproached the rulers that they neglected mission. He said, it is true that desire for expansion drove them into the world, but at the same time they had no desire to

win the people for the church and for Christ. The Spaniards hurt the native population in a terrible way and tortured them. "Is that, then, what they call the propagation of Christianity?" he asked. Bucer also paid special attention to the Jews. He wrote, "Exactly through the sinful neglect of mission work among the Jews, now the Jews became usurers in the midst of Christianity." In this respect Bucer also made a comparison with the Turks. He said, "In the same way we can say that the Turkish became violent oppressors of the Christians, and also that newly discovered islands and nations have become a source of much misery for the Christian peoples."

As we saw before, Luther stressed that mission work is the work of God Himself. Bucer agreed with that, but he stressed at the same time that this does not exclude that we as God's people have also a task. As he put it, "There is also a human element in the proclamation of the gospel."

Very important is this statement of Bucer: "*Omnis ecclesia Christi debet esse evangelisatrix*": each and every church of Christ has to be a mission church, a church that evangelizes.

## Conclusion

There is more to be said about Reformation and Mission. But I think it is very clear now that it is impossible to describe the Reformation times while leaving out the word *mission*. On the contrary: we may discover great powers which were already present in Reformation times in the hearts of men like Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Martin Bucer. Later generations took these powers over and would develop them in obedience to the great commission, given by the King of the church to the church of all ages!

K. DEDDENS

N.B. Besides the works of the Reformers themselves and the books quoted in this series, the following articles are also to be mentioned:

W.F. Dankbaar — *Het Apostolaat bij Calvijn*, in: *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* IV, Veenman, Wageningen, 1949/50, p. 177ff.

D. Dekker — *Reformatoren-kooplieden-predikanten*, in: *De Civitate* XXV, Amersfoort, 1975, no. 5, p. 5ff.

J. van der Linde — *Calvijn en de Zending*, in: *De Reformatie* XVII, Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1936/37, no. 46, p. 376ff.

# Pliny's punishment of the Christians

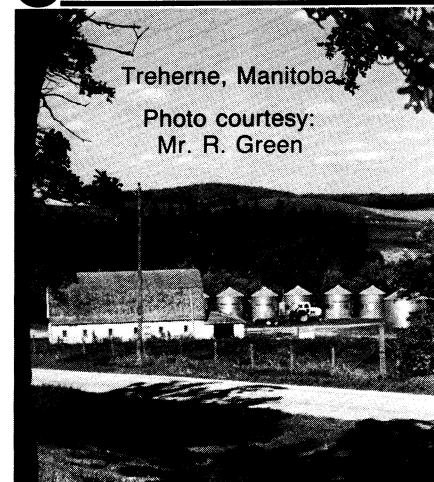
One of the letters of Pliny the Younger (born Gaius Plinius Caecilius in A.D. 61) contains the first secular evidence for the condition of the Christian church in the early years of its existence. The letter, probably written in A.D. 110, is addressed to the Roman emperor Trajan and concerns the interrogation of Christians in Bithynia-Pontus, the province to which Pliny was legate (a governor sent by the emperor). It is worthwhile to examine the letter in detail, since Pliny's depiction of the Christians' behaviour, the report of his treatment of the prosecuted, and the attitude he displays towards the "perverse and immoderate superstition" provide insight into the relationship between the Roman government and the early Christian church.

Pontus (an area directly South of the Black Sea) and Bithynia (today North-West Turkey) were affluent regions, but on account of petty intrigues among local officials corruption and mismanagement troubled the province's towns. In 110, as *legatus Augusti* (governor), Pliny entered Bithynia-Pontus to correct the abuses and settle disputes; in so doing he gained the reputation for being a prudent administrator.

One of the more challenging judicial cases for Pliny was caused by friction between the Christian community and the Greek and Roman citizens of the towns throughout the province. Though the evidence for Roman attitudes towards Christianity at the turn of the first century is scanty, it is possible to make some generalizations. The Roman populace

was accustomed to a range of deities, and tolerated the practice of foreign cults (provided social behaviour was not contravened); but the monotheism of the Christians was annoying. And since the great fire of Rome in 64, citizens in the city often falsely accused the Christians (and the Jews, with whom they were sometimes identified) of causing disturbances and inciting riots among the lower classes. Indeed, rumour had it that the Christians conducted bizarre rites and cannibalistic feasts. It is not surprising, therefore, that unofficial informers reported instances of 'social misconduct' among those practicing a foreign cult (such as the Egyptian Isis worship and eastern Bacchanalism), which would then be banned.<sup>1</sup> Thus it became customary among private individuals, magistrates, and civic priests, to accuse Christians of immoral behaviour. And the stubborn refusal of the Christians to pay divine homage to the emperor provoked many local officials to charge them with *contumacia*, that is, persistent exclusiveness and denial of Roman social and religious custom. Cases of this and similar nature form the subject of Pliny's letter (X, 96) to the emperor Trajan.

## OUR COVER



Treherne, Manitoba

Photo courtesy:  
Mr. R. Green

Pliny's reason for writing the emperor is clearly stated: "I have never presided over a trial of the Christians, and therefore do not know what the procedure of the investigation should be and the extent of the punishment (1)." He expresses other doubts: should he make distinction between the old and young, the weak and healthy? And should he pardon those who had renounced Christianity? More importantly, Pliny asks if he ought to punish those who are charged merely with "being a member of the Christian sect" (*nomen ipsum*, 2), or only those Christians who had committed a crime or some anti-social act (*flagitia cohaerentia nomini*). And Pliny is uncertain as to what he should do with those who once were believers, but have since abandoned the faith. Trajan is requested to approve of Pliny's method in dealing with the accused.

Pliny then outlines his treatment of those who were brought before him by private prosecutors. The legate first asked whether the arraigned was a Christian. The question seems obvious enough, but it was necessary to ascertain the religious membership of the accused. It was not the *nomen ipsum* per se which resulted in punishment, but the repeated affirmation. For Pliny asks a second and third time, threatening punishment, whether the accused admits to being a Christian. (This procedure is not unlike that followed by Pontius Pilate in Matt. 27:11-15). He who persisted was summarily executed. Pliny's reason: "For I am convinced that — whatever the confession — stubborn and unbending obstinacy ought to be punished (3)." Only Roman citizens (the majority of the accused were foreigners and slaves) were not immediately decapitated but detained, to be sent to Rome. Such was Pliny's treatment of the believers. It seems that just the admission of being a Christian was sufficient to earn the penalty of death.

Those who denied the allegation Pliny treated in this way: in the governor's presence the accused called upon the Roman gods and offered sacrifices of wine and incense before a statue of Trajan. In addition, the accused were asked to curse Jesus Christ (*male dicerent Christo*, 5). This test is sound, writes Pliny, because one who is a true Christian refuses to comply with his request. The same test he applied to those who confessed to having been Christians in the past, but who now renounced their faith. All these were permitted to depart with impunity, since they committed no particular crime besides belonging to the sect.

From these lapsed Christians Pliny received information regarding the nature of the services held by the early church. It was the custom of the believers to meet

before dawn, to sing antiphonal songs in praise of the Lord Jesus Christ (*carmenque Christo quasi deo dicere secum invicem*, 7). Furthermore they professed an oath to refrain from stealing, robbery, and adultery, to pay creditors, etc.<sup>2</sup> Pliny also mentions having heard of the Agape, or banquet, which he describes as a "common and harmless feast (7)." Apparently, the believers congregated to partake of a meal (*coeundi ad capiendum cibum* 7). Upon Pliny's edict banning societies and political clubs, the banquets were halted. But Christianity was spreading fast, for "not only the towns, but even the villages and countrysides were pervaded by that contagious superstition (9)." Though Pliny is here undoubtedly reporting exaggerated accounts of local magistrates, it is likely that Christianity was taking root in Pontus and Bithynia. And in the eyes of a Roman governor who made no distinction between Christianity and other sects, the belief was but a fad. Indeed, he concludes the letter by stating that he has hope that, given the opportunity to repent, the wrongdoers will amend their ways.

The emperor Trajan wrote a brief reply to Pliny (X, 97). In it he gives the terse command "not to seek out" the Christians (*conquirendi non sunt*, 1). However, those who are shown to be believers "are to be punished (2)." Those who demonstrated that they no longer believed (by sacrificing to the Roman gods) were to be dismissed. And, Trajan writes, anonymous accusations were not to be considered. For "that would set a terrible precedent, and is not in keeping with the spirit of the times (2)." But, one may ask, what about the innocent Christians who were executed simply for their confession?

All readers of the New Testament will realize the importance of letter X, 96. In addition to providing insight into the attitude of the Roman government toward the Christians, and depicting the services of the early church, Pliny's correspondence contributes to an understanding of the plight of the believers. The First Letter of Peter, for example, was written to churches in the same area; Peter mentions Pontus and Bithynia (see 1 Peter 1:1). The catalogue of misdeeds mentioned in ch. 4:15 resembles Pliny's report of the oaths undertaken by the believers (96, 7). And at several points the apostle exhorts his readers to remain steadfast in the face of accusations and maltreatment. 1 Peter 3:15, 16 are noteworthy: "Always be prepared to make a defense to anyone who calls you to account for the hope that is in you, yet do it with gentleness and reverence; and keep your conscience clear, so that, when you are abused, those who revile your good behaviour in Christ may be put to shame." (See also 1

Peter 1:13-17) And for the believers in Pontus and Bithynia, Peter's exhortation in chapter 4:16 must have been as relevant as it is for persecuted Christians today: "... yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God."

R. A. FABER

<sup>1</sup>See T.D. Barnes' "Legislation against the Christians," *Journal of Roman Studies* 1968, vol. 58, p. 32-50, for an accurate report of the Roman laws regarding Christianity. Cf. also G. de Ste Croix, "Why were the Early Christians Persecuted?", *Past and Present* 1963, vol. 26, p. 6-38.

<sup>2</sup>Interpretations regarding this passage (7) vary; some have argued that Pliny refers to a profession of a baptismal or communal vow; others that he refers to the ten commandments. Cf. A. Sherwin-White's discussion in *The Letters of Pliny* (Oxford, 1966), p. 702; and C. Kraemer, "Pliny and the Early Church Service", *American Journal of Philology*, 1934, vol. 29, p. 293-300.

## CHURCH NEWS



### NEW ADDRESS:

REV. G. PH. VAN POPTA  
1023 Dynes Road  
Ottawa, ON K2C 0H2

\* \* \*

### NEW ADDRESS:

Clerk of the American Reformed  
Church at Lynden, WA  
JOHN BISSCHOP  
1000 Garden Drive  
Lynden, WA 98264  
Phone: (206) 354-2868

\* \* \*

CALLED to Eindhoven, Emmen,  
Berkum, the Netherlands,

REV. A. DE JAGER

\* \* \*

ACCEPTED to Berkum, the Netherlands,

REV. A. DE JAGER

of Neerlandia, AB

\* \* \*

CALLED to Chilliwack, BC,

REV. E. KAMPEN

of Houston, BC



# Sphere sovereignty<sup>2</sup>

In the last issue, I gave a short exposition of Kuyper's concept of sphere sovereignty. A serious objection to this theory was brought forward by Schilder in his earlier-mentioned articles. Schilder had objections to the fact that each sphere had its own Sovereign. In the sphere of thought, logic was Sovereign. In the area of faith, the individual person was Sovereign. In this way, God is not always recognized as the absolute Sovereign, according to Schilder. At least He shares his sovereignty with creatures, such as logic and the individual person. These creatures are no longer subject to God's moral law. Said Schilder:

He who says, "Knowledge, truth, thinking, logic is sovereign in science," will with alarm hear his *student* assert: in sexual life, sexuality is Sovereign; then come aboard with the seventh commandment. You're simply ridiculed and your reproach is too late.<sup>1</sup>

Meulink also objected that it can easily be forgotten that every man is subject to the expressed moral law of God in every sphere of life.<sup>2</sup> Church and state are being separated. God's moral law is being limited to one particular sphere: the church. Thus, according to Wiskerke, the separate spheres are like "monads" without windows for the Light of the world.<sup>3</sup>

It is true that the relations between the various spheres did not always receive sufficient attention from Kuyper. The separation of religion, the church, or morality<sup>4</sup> from the other spheres of life may cause a fragmentation of life. But such fragmentation can certainly not be found with Kuyper himself. He realized that religion had its justifiable place in all of life. The very basis of his sphere sovereignty illustrates this: Christ as sovereign King over all of life. In his speech "Maranatha" at the meeting of deputies of the Anti-Revolutionary Party (ARP) in Utrecht (1891), Kuyper attacked conservatives, liberals, radicals and socialists alike since "they refused to recognize Jesus' royal authority in politics; and to them religion and politics are separate."<sup>5</sup> Elsewhere he argued over against Roman Catholicism, where religion "is excluded from science and its authority from the domain of public life. . .,"<sup>6</sup> that religion should play a role in all of life:

And because God has fully ordained such laws and ordinances for all of life, therefore the Calvinist demands that

all life be consecrated to His service, in strict obedience. A religion confined to the closet, the cell or the church, therefore, Calvin abhors.<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, Kuyper denied that faith and science were to be separated: "Not faith and science, therefore, but two scientific systems if you choose, two scientific elaborations, are opposed to each other, each having its own faith."<sup>8</sup>

This line of thought contradicts the earlier noted view of faith as a separate sphere. It is, however, not this earlier-mentioned opinion which prevails. Therefore it is incorrect to suggest that Kuyper ignores the bearing of the preaching of the Word on daily life.<sup>9</sup> In addition, Kuyper's emphasis on the meaning of religion for all spheres of life was part of his theory of the antithesis between belief and unbelief. In the above-quoted statement, this antithesis was already evident: science was split into two scientific systems, each based on its own religious assumptions. Christian science, according to Kuyper, is the opposite of worldly science:

Does that Rabbi of Nazareth declare that his science marries that of early wise men? Do his apostles tell you that studying in Jerusalem or in Athens will gradually and automatically lead you to his higher knowledge? No, rather the opposite: that Rabbi keeps telling you that his treasure of wisdom is hidden from wise and knowledgeable people and is revealed to little children.<sup>10</sup>

Another example which may illustrate that religion is not stashed away into a corner is found in his ideas on the relationship between church and state. True, Kuyper insisted that political and ecclesiastical unity should not coincide. He strongly condemned religious coercion. About the death of Servetus (1553), Kuyper remarked, "I not only deplore that one stake, but I unconditionally disapprove of it."<sup>11</sup> Kuyper's strict separation of church and state is probably most clearly illustrated with his expressed disagreement with part of Art. 36 of the Belgic Confession. Nevertheless, his theory of sphere sovereignty did not lead to a neutral state. In fact, Kuyper has been compared to and feared as a second Cromwell. Kuyper's opposition to the Enlightened principles of the French Revolution consisted of an ardent hope that the Netherlands would return from modernism and again become a Christian nation:

For me, one goal controls my being,  
One higher urge controls my soul,  
And I would rather die and perish  
Ere I would lose that holy goal.

'Tis to restore God's holy order,  
In home and church, in school and state,  
In spite of all the world's resistance,  
To all our nation's benefit.<sup>12</sup>

Kuyper's ideal in this respect was the United States, which had days of prayer, Christian public education, and a Congress which opened with prayer.<sup>13</sup> Kuyper thought that these aspects could be known from God's natural revelation on which the state had to base itself.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the state had authority in its own sovereign sphere under Christ's rule.

Regardless of what one may think of Kuyper's distinction between two different kinds of science and of his rejection of a neutral state, these examples make clear that it is incorrect to regard his remarks about a separate religious sphere as his main line of thought. For Kuyper, Christ was King. Life was religion.

HANS BOERSMA

<sup>1</sup>Schilder 171.

<sup>2</sup>J. Meulink, "Sovereiniteit in eigen kring." In *Referatenbundel van het Amersfoorts Congres* (Kampen, 1948) 18.

<sup>3</sup>Wiskerke 195 in a reference to the philosophy of G.W. Von Leibniz (1646-1716). Kuyper himself emphatically stated that "in the walls of this church there are wide open windows, and through these spacious windows the light of the Eternal has to radiate over the whole world" (LOC 53).

<sup>4</sup>These are interchangeable for Kuyper. In a section on "The religious Sphere," for example, he speaks about the church. AS I 269ff.

<sup>5</sup>Quoted from P.D. 't Hart, *Abraham Kuyper* (Haarlem: Gottmer, 1970), 9.

<sup>6</sup>LOC 50.

<sup>7</sup>LOC 53.

<sup>8</sup>LOC 133.

<sup>9</sup>As against Wiskerke 216.

<sup>10</sup>*Siek* 27. Cf. A. Kuyper, *Principles of Sacred Theology*. Princeton, 1889; rpt. Trans. J. Hendrik De Vries (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1980), 155-76.

<sup>11</sup>LOC 100.

<sup>12</sup>Kuyper quoted the *Réveil* poet Isaac da Costa in *De Standaard* at the 25th anniversary of his editorship (1897); quoted from L. Praamsma, *Let Christ Be King; Reflections on the Life and Times of Abraham Kuyper* (Jordan Station: Paideia Press, 1985), 172.

<sup>13</sup>AS I 456.

<sup>14</sup>OP 74ff.



Did you miss the newsmedley a few times? From more than one side I heard that *Clarion* just did not seem complete without one. Thank you for this.

Even though one allegedly is retired, time is still a precious commodity which is not in ample supply. This time, however, the newsmedley has precedence over all other things.

The difficulty is: where shall we start?

Perhaps the best place to start with is Elora.

On September 6, we had the privilege of attending the institution of this Church. The service was held in the Elora Presbyterian Church, a beautiful building with a nice organ. Although the Elora congregation is not all that large, yet the churchbuilding was almost filled to capacity.

The service was held under the auspices of the Fergus Consistory — which made it necessary for the office-bearers to go to Church three times that Sunday! — and one of the first acts during that service was the ordination of the office-bearers, three elders and two deacons.

As there will, no doubt, be an official report we shall refrain from giving further particulars in our medley. However, seeing our long connection with the brotherhood in the Fergus and Elora area, it will be understood that we could not let this event go unnoticed in our column.

It was also a great pleasure to conduct the first services in the autonomous Elora Church and to baptize the first baby to receive this sacrament in that Church.

There appears to be an excellent cooperation between the Elora and Fergus Churches, which may become evident from, among other things, the desire of the Home Mission Committee: "We thought we will keep the Home Mission Committee with Elora."

Another decision which causes much joy is the decision by the Elora consistory: "The consistory will propose to the Fergus consistory to publish a combined *Church Herald*." For the time being this will be done till the end of the year, but I have good hopes that the brothers will continue this good practice, also in order to prevent a growing apart. Not only are there family-ties, there are also bonds of friendship and of common experiences which make the brothers and sisters to be and remain interested in each other's wellbeing and development.

From the one "young" Church to the other is a logical step.

I also received the bulletins which have been issued by the Church at Grand Valley. Apparently the brothers and sisters there are not thinking of continuing to have their news included in the Orangeville bulletin.

From this bulletin we mention that "a brother and sister donated a tablecloth for the Lord's Supper table." This was greatly appreciated.

Various names were suggested for the bulletin, but so far I have not read of any decision.

What was generally received very favourably was the serving of coffee. "As you will have noticed and enjoyed, coffee has been served in the afternoon. As most people seem to like this, we will continue to do it for a while."

Having coffee together as a congregation is very good for the strengthening of the bond among the membership. Oftentimes the members do not see each other during the week except at meetings and an occasional finding themselves together while shopping or walking. During the coffee hours after the service all sorts of information can be exchanged and the possibility is there to talk with members who usually are not spoiled by receiving many visits.

The increase in the number of Churches in Ontario prompted the London consistory to come with suggestions to rearrange the classical division. London proposes "to organize the churches in Ontario into three classical regions."

The Burlington-South bulletin contains more concrete information as to how this division is to be arranged.

"They propose the following groupings:

"*Classis Ontario West* (8 churches): Chatham, Elora, Fergus, Grand Rapids, Grand Valley, Guelph, London, Watford.

"*Classis Ontario South* (8 churches): Ancaster, Attercliffe, Blue Bell, Burlington South, Hamilton, Laurel, Lincoln, Smithville.

"*Classis Ontario East* (7 churches): Brampton, Burlington East, Burlington West, Orangeville, Ottawa, Sackville, Toronto."

We just pass this on and refrain from comment except for the remark that in some respects the proposed division seems to be not very logical or practical. We wish the brothers wisdom with their deliberation of and decision on this proposal.

It is good not to let our assemblies become too bulky and something will have to be done. We'll keep you posted.

The Brampton consistory decided that "the delegates will ask classis to consider splitting up classis into smaller parts."

I assume that a concrete proposal had already been submitted for that classis, for this is too important a matter to be discussed and decided upon as a result of a request made at the classis by brothers from one of the Churches. See art. 30 C.O.!

As our readers will be interested in the weal and woe (more weal than woe, we are happy to state!) of the Sackville congregation, we pass on what Rev. D. DeJong wrote in the Burlington-East bulletin.

He passes on part of a letter received from that Church.

"We ask that you remember our small congregation in your prayers as we work, DEO VOLENTE, to establish a viable Reformed Church in the Halifax area. The Hungarian refugee family that began attending in May, has requested to become members. A second Hungarian refugee family has recently started to attend and contact has been made with a third. Outreach continues on several other fronts as well. This month will see the resumption of regular monthly neighbourhood outreach. A Reformed Bible Study led by members from Covenant will start again in September at Dalhousie University. Contact also continues with several people who have expressed an interest in the Gospel."

Rev. Mulder reminds us in the Burlington West bulletin of the institution of a Church in Mangellum in Irian Jaya, and we gladly mention this fact also in our medley. It is a reason for joy that this point could be reached after many years of missionary work. This is encouraging for the workers in the mission field as well.

Burlington West also reports that "The committee appointed to look into the possibility of a *combined church directory* of the three Burlington Churches reports that they are still working on this project but due to holiday season did not make much progress."

Funny, but I cannot see that much time is needed to come to the conclusion whether it is feasible or not. All you have to do is print the information in one booklet. That's what is done here in the Fraser Valley and everybody is happy with it, as they are with a combined *Church News* for the six Valley Churches, plus Vernon.

A last item from Burlington West: the "morning Women's

Society" reports that "The response was very favourable as the wheels were set into motion."

The Toronto consistory decided to support the work of a "minister-at-large" as envisaged by the Grand Rapids consistory, with the sum of two thousand dollars per year.

The same consistory also decided that from now on the couples that get married will receive a New International Version. I express the wish that the binding may be better and sturdier than of the copy which I have and which I repaired for our College already after it had been used a few times.

Speaking of Grand Rapids, the bulletin tells us that a potluck supper was to be held in honour of the Rev. A.B. Roukema who remembered that he was ordained as a minister of the Gospel fifty years ago. Also from this place we may offer our brother our heartfelt congratulations on this occasion. We did it personally when we were in Ontario, but do it now on behalf of the whole brotherhood. It is our sincere wish that the Lord may continue to grant you His favour and fulfil to you all the promises which you were allowed to impress upon His people for so many years.

At the same time we extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Rev. M. VanBeveren as well. He was allowed to celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of his ordination. We are a little late with our contribution to the joy and gratitude accompanying this celebration but are certain that our small addition is still welcome.

There was one item in the Grand Rapids bulletin which caused some concern.

The consistory reported that they had received a communication from "The Orthodox Reformed Church which was formerly the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church."

No, brothers, that is not true.

I know that the so-called "Orthodox Reformed Church" wishes to present itself as the continuation of the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, but this claim lacks any solid ground. They are a group of persons who have broken with the Immanuel Church and organized themselves into a new body. Whatever they call themselves, they definitely are not "formerly the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church of Edmonton."

The Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church is still in existence in Edmonton and things are improving gradually in that congregation. Do not fail them by denying them their proper and rightful name!

While informing you that the Lincoln Church is going to have a wheelchair lift installed to the tune of some \$ 37,000, we hastily leave Ontario and stop over in Carman.

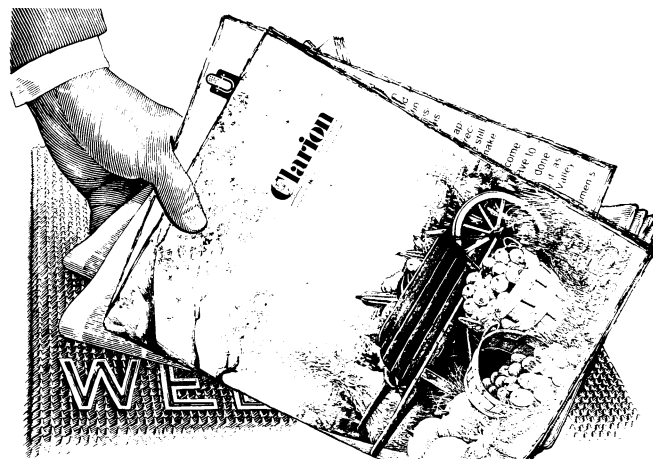
"In the previous *Church News* a message from A.R.P.A. indicated that Carman Safeway intended to open its doors on Sundays. Everyone was encouraged to send or write a letter to the head office in Winnipeg. We are thankful that this was not without effect. After being open for only one Sunday, it was decided that the Carman Safeway will remain closed on Sundays."

See what can be achieved when we open our mouth.

"You may be interested to know that matters concerning the new Church property have progressed very well," the Houston bulletin tells us. We certainly are! Well, then, here it comes.

"Town Council dealt with our rezoning request promptly. At the public hearing there were no objections which could hold things back. The Department of Highways also gave speedy approval. Town Council gave final reading and approval to the rezoning on Aug. 4. Now it is just a matter of time while all the signatures are attached and the money is transferred, and the deal will be complete."

As for the futher plans: "Now we can start thinking about what to do with the property and how to develop it to the glory



and honour of our God and the promotion of His Kingdom."

Usually bulletins mention only more serious cases of illness or injury, and it does not happen all that often that there is a whole list of them to be mentioned.

I was struck by the list of "minor" injuries found in the Smithers part of the *Bulkley Valley Echo*.

"There were quite a few accidents in the last two weeks. Br. A. hurt his back because of a fall out of a tree; br. B. had two of his toes broken when a heavy piece of machinery fell down on his foot; br. C. received a cut in his face when a person drove into his automobile because of driving through a red light; br. D. fell off a stationary truck and banged his head; br. E., visiting us from down south, broke his thumb and lost two of his nails in a motorcycle accident."

Let no one think that Smithers is the only place where such things happen.

Cloverdale reports that "As we looked around our congregation last Sunday, we could see a bevy of casts. Mrs. A. broke her wrist at the Church picnic; B. has a cast on both legs so that the tendons may be stretched; C. fell from a window to the sidewalk, 14 feet (4.3 m.) below and suffered a cracked skull and broken arm and, last but not least, D. has a cast on his foot due to a broken toe."

On the brighter side, Langley "decided to begin the singing of the Credo in the afternoon worship services as of Nov. 1, 1987." Please sing it correctly right from the start, as it is written in our *Book of Praise*.

At the Lynden consistory meeting "The building committee entered the meeting to present a proposal for a church building, including both plans and financial aspects."

Some items for a new building have already been promised. The consistory tells us that they received "From the church of Edmonton (Providence), a letter informing us of their donation of lights, previously used in their church."

Rev. VanDelden writes about this: "We may express our gratitude to the church of Edmonton (Providence). They were so kind as to donate six clusters of lights. These fixtures had been in their building, and the undersigned sat beneath them for some years. They would look most appropriate in the church-building which now exists only as a plan on paper. This will save us a great deal of money, for the building committee found that such fixtures are very costly. Many thanks, Edmonton!"

Let us conclude our medley with some news from our Australian brotherhood.

The Kelmscott consistory decided "to write to the forthcoming Synod to advise them of the plans to institute the Free Reformed Church of Bedfordale on Dec. 1, 1987."

In case someone is wondering why they write to a synod about this, it should be remembered that our Australian sister-Churches have only one broader assembly: their number is still too small to form classical areas. Thus their only broader assembly, held every two years, is at the same time classis, regional and general synod. It is called "synod."

The Church at Albany WA is the Church which takes care of the mission work in Papua New Guinea.

Several times they tried to get a minister for this work, but until now all calls were declined. Recently they called our brother R. Schouten, who decided to follow up the call by the Church at Calgary.

Albany writes in the *Papua New Guinea Mission Courier*, among other things, the following.

"One may wonder whether it is wise to send a candidate to Port Moresby. In the previous *Courier* brother A. wrote that 'it was felt from the beginning that it was best for a minister, who had ministered for some time, to undertake this responsibility. Such a person could then draw upon the experience of his work. It is for this reason that to date no candidates have been called.' Why then do we call a candidate?" The answer to this question is that, although it is not an ideal solution, "yet, in view of the difficulties to obtain a minister, and in view of the urgency of the situation, the Consistory of the calling Church followed the recommendation of the PNG Mission Committee to include candidates in its field of enquiry."

It will be known that I wholeheartedly agree with the reasoning of the Albany Church, that it is to be preferred that a minister be sent to conduct mission work.

There are exceptions, but there is the general danger that a candidate who is sent to the mission field cannot dedicate sufficient time to study and thus becomes more or less shallow in his sermons. I recall from my teenage years that, whenever a missionary conducted a service, we could definitely hear the difference between his sermons and the sermons of the ministers who served in a Church in the mother country.

The latter were more under "supervision," so to speak, of the congregation and the consistory and were thereby pressed to dedicate sufficient time to study for their sermons and for their whole task in the midst of the Churches. They would hear it in one way or another if it became evident that not sufficient time had been given to study for the sermons.

Especially when one begins the ministry, it is very important that thorough study of God's Word and careful and thorough exegesis become an integral part of one's life and sermon preparation.

Oftentimes sermons by missionaries gave the impression that they were lacking seriously in this respect. I heard sermons by missionaries which were no more than stories for which the chosen text served as illustration.

Do not take the above as a reflection on any of the brothers you know.

I speak from my own experience and mention it to support the conviction expressed in the above quotation from Albany's *Courier*.

It will, besides, be very difficult to build up a sound and solid church-life in the mission field if one has not learned by practical experience on the homefront how things are and are to be conducted in the life of a Church.

The need is certainly there to remember our mission workers in our prayers without ceasing. They definitely need it.

This is it for this time.

Meet you again another time, the Lord willing.

Yours as always.

VO

## 24th Annual League Day Fraser Valley Women Societies

This year we held our League Day on the twenty-third day of June 1987 in Abbotsford.

At 9:30 a.m. the doors were already wide open. They let in the sunshine and about 220 ladies from all over the Valley and from the State of Washington. There the day was off to a good start with coffee, conversation and fellowship.

A little after 10 o'clock all were gathered in the auditorium of the Abbotsford Church. Mrs. Marian Nienhuis opened the morning session. We sang Psalm 96:1, 8 accompanied on the organ by Mrs. Adria Schutte. The chairlady read with us from Matthew 13 and Lord's Day 48. She spoke a hearty welcome to all present. A letter was received from the League of Canadian Reformed Women Societies in Ontario. It contained congratulations as well as an invitation to their League Day to be held D.V., in October. Also the desire was expressed that "East" and "West" may come to a closer co-operation in their work. The opening part was concluded, after which we sang Hymn 35:1, 3, 5.

The theme for this League Day was "Thy Kingdom Come." The essay had been prepared by Mrs. Janet DeLeeuw and was read by Mrs. Jenny Janzen. We



Mrs. Marian Nienhuis and Mrs. Janet DeLeeuw (r) occupied the pulpit of Abbotsford for a big part of the morning

learned a lot from this well-prepared and thoroughly studied essay. "The Kingdom" means three things.

1. It is the place where all believers are united in heavenly peace, the place prepared for us, since the beginning of the world.
2. It is *in* us, if it is not, we will never enter the Kingdom.
3. It is an expected inheritance. Therefore the church has to pray until the end of time: "Thy Kingdom Come."

On earth there is still the antithesis. We are reminded to subject ourselves to God, because we are still disobedient and sinful. The tools of Christ's church gathering work are the Word and the Spirit. The church is not the Kingdom, but it is the fighting army of the Kingdom. "Therefore, we should keep our church services pure, our families intact, our Christian marriages pure, and maintain what the Bible teaches."

After the essay we sang Psalm 145:4 "Thy Kingdom shall continue without end . . . ."

The discussion that followed was lengthy, lively and controversial. It centered on one point: "Is the kingdom here already or does it lie in the future?"

- Christ says "The Kingdom is among you."
- The parable of the mustard seed suggests that the Kingdom is here and growing.

However Mrs. Janet DeLeeuw kept pointing out that the realization of the Kingdom is a future event.

- Satan still roams on the earth.
- The Bible speaks of the Kingdom being NEAR, not HERE.



An abundance of food was the centre of attention at lunchtime

- Christ is working on the coming of His Kingdom.
- While the Kingdom is said to be within us, it still has to be manifest and that is a mandate to make it come.
- Yes, we are citizens of the Kingdom, but our King is in heaven. When He returns His Kingdom comes and *all* of God's original creation will serve Him again.

With the realization that we can do a lot more studying yet on this topic, the discussion was closed.

The Ladies of the Bible Club of Lynden were given the floor. They surprised us with the singing of some beautiful arrangements about God's Kingdom.

The morning session was concluded with the singing of the League Song. We were then sent off to the Church Annex. There a delicious lunch awaited us, prepared by the ladies of Abbotsford under the capable leadership of Mrs. Jenny Janzen. Everyone had their fill of buns, a variety of salads, meatballs, potato salads, a ricedish (the recipe of which was later requested to be printed in *Clarion*), and a variety of deserts.

Following a short break for some needed exercise, we once again assembled in the church.

Mrs. Greta Wildeboer of Langley was privileged to host the afternoon session. She asked us to sing Psalm 116:1, 2, 3 and proceeded to generously give the floor to Mrs. Ginny Vanderhorst. "Prayer," the topic for the afternoon conformed to the theme of the day.

She pointed out to us that prayer is our obligation. God requires us to call upon Him. He reproaches His people Israel: "Yet you did not call upon me . . . ." When we pray, He hears us at all times.



Mrs. Greta Wildeboer and Mrs. Ginny Vanderhorst (r) sharing the pulpit in the afternoon

He demands however not just our words, but above all, our hearts. We may pray for *all* God has promised us. But we should *not* pray for things that are not promised us, (e.g. faith-healing). When we pray, God always hears our prayers but not always in the way we expect, "for God has a wider scope of why we pray our petitions. But the fruit of prayer is always peace."

Once again the topic was given into discussion. Again the ladies did not always agree. Prayer is powerful, it can cause the Lord to reconsider if His people pray and repent of their sins. Prayer is also important in cases of sickness. God should always be the centre and object of our prayers. Then "the prayer of a righteous man has great power" (James 5:16).

The last point on the day's agenda was entertainment. Everyone relaxed, except for some Chilliwack ladies "who had come together to discuss the pro's and con's of having running water in the township." Not all agreed there either, but it certainly was entertaining and relaxing to those who watched the "proceedings." The ladies received an appreciative applause.

The general business was carried out. It was decided that the secretary for the League should send a reply and invitation for our Twenty-fifth Anniversary D.V., in 1988, to the ladies in Ontario. Then we were reminded to sign the cards for the missionary wives in Brazil.

With the singing of Hymn 47:10 and a prayer of thanksgiving to our heavenly Father who granted us another day in freedom and peace, the Twenty-fourth League Day had come to an end.

On behalf of the League,  
TINEKE DEVRIES



The ladies of Chilliwack in discussion about running water in Rosedale — Mrs. Van Ellenburg, Mrs. Krabbendam and Mrs. Hoeksema

# Manggalum — Irian Jaya

It was a day of great joy and thankfulness to the Lord when on September 27, 1987, six elders were ordained in the congregation at Manggalum. The Lord richly blessed the work of His faithful servants, first Rev. H. Knigge and after his departure from Irian Jaya it was Rev. H. Versteeg and br. B. Vegter who continued the work in Manggalum.

For a number of years there had already been a provisional consistory of "candidate elders," who together with Rev. Versteeg governed the congregation, which now numbers thirty-three communicant members and forty-three members by baptism. Gradually more responsibilities were put on the shoulders of the "candidate elders" and they are now able to act as overseers of the congregation. For the time being the elders also take care of the duties normally assigned to deacons.

The church building in Manggalum was filled to capacity. Many had come from other congregations and as special guests there were Rev. and Mrs. Knigge from Daarlerveen, the Netherlands, who had been invited by the Church of Toronto. The cooperating churches of Classis Ontario North were represented by br. and sr. J. Boot.

As his text Rev. Versteeg had chosen I Peter 5:1-5 with the theme "Tend the flock of God that is your charge." The sermon was delivered in the Indonesian language and after the customary questions were put to the elders it was moving to hear their response, in Indonesian, "I promise with all my heart." After the service congratulations were offered on behalf of classis by br. Abraham Besagi, the evangelist of Kawagit. Congratulatory letters from Toronto and Brampton were read in Indonesian translation.

With Rev. Versteeg translating, br. J. Boot spoke on behalf of the Church of Toronto and cooperating churches. He expressed the thankfulness of the churches in Canada that the Lord through the proclamation of His Word had guided the congregation of Manggalum to this day on which elders could be ordained to take charge of the flock. It is all the Lord's doing and also in Canada prayers will not cease to ask our heavenly Father to grant wisdom and Biblical insight to the elders in Manggalum so that this church may grow in faith and knowledge.



*Institution of the Church at Manggalum — Irian Jaya*

On behalf of the churches in Canada br. Boot presented a set of dishes for Holy Supper and baptism, made of stainless steel. A Bible was given for use by the consistory.

Rev. H. Knigge then addressed the congregation in the Indonesian language and donated to the newly instituted church

a children's Bible and a set of collection bags.

Two of the ordained elders are evangelists who followed courses at the Theological School in Boma, namely, br. Isai Dombon and br. Buto Yaluwo. Br. Isai Dombon finished his schooling in Boma and is now completing five years of practical work. His ordination as minister is still a few years away. Br. Buto Yaluwo has not yet completed all the courses at the Theological School. Most of the worship services are conducted by the evangelists; Rev. Versteeg leads the services when sacraments are administered.

The Church at Manggalum belongs to Classis Digul/Kao, to which the instituted Churches of Butiptiri and Kouh also belong. Other congregations in this classis are Getentiri, Kaisah and Merauke, mission posts of the Church at Middelburg, further Kawagit and Sentani (Spakenburg) and finally Tirop (Kouh). The total number of members in this classis is about 1400, including 400 communicant members. In addition to Classis Digul/Kao there are Classis Mapi/Mangguno and Classis Sua/Ndeiram, each with about 650 members. Together they form the Gereja-Gereja Reformasi Di Indonesia (Irian Jaya).

## *I Peter 5: 2,3*

*Tend the flock of God  
that is your charge,  
not by constraint but  
willingly, not for  
shameful gain but  
eagerly, not as  
domineering over  
those in your charge  
but being examples to  
the flock.*

J. BOOT

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Several sessions are dedicated to the matter of a possible merger. Finally on August 23, Synod accepts a letter drafted by a committee, which letter is to accompany three decisions made by Synod regarding a possible merger.

Let us listen to part of the letter.

"Thus it is, beloved Brethren, that fully aware of our high responsibility towards God and His Holy Church, we not only have noted with joy the effort to come to a union which you as a Synod now propose to us, but have also taken it into serious consideration. And even though now also at our meeting serious objections were raised, no one stood up who with even one word attacked the need for and obligation towards the union. Your proposal to appoint deputies in order to negotiate about a union and, if possible, to draw up an Act of Merger was even accepted unanimously.

"However, Synod could not herewith completely put itself on the basis of semi-official discussions conducted earlier with Messrs. Docents of the Theological School, taken over by you and suggested as supposition and starting point for the meetings of the new mutually appointed deputies.

"In this basis, namely, also the complete rescinding and abolition of the Regulation of 1869 was included and pre-determined without further argumentation. And although at present also within our own circles very serious objections to the contents of the Regulation do exist, Synod did not consider it proper now already to decide in principle to rescind it.

"Further, at Synod two other matters which are of utmost importance for a union were raised by delegates, namely, 1. the relation in which the Netherlands Reformed Churches consider themselves to stand towards the local Congregation of the Netherlands Reformed Denomination and towards all members who did not go along with the Reformation, and 2. the relation which ought to exist between the Church and that Institution to which it entrusts the training of its ministers. Upon lengthy consultation Synod took three decisions in this matter, which we hereby bring to your attention in an Appendix and which will be given along with the Deputies to the meeting with your delegates as being the judgment of Synod."

Concerning the decisions made by Synod and referred to above, it will be good to read them as well.

"First decision.

"The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, although it does not want to defend the Regulation of 1869, against the contents of which serious objections exist also within our own circle;

"Considering that there are various objections why it cannot give up off hand the recognition of the Christian Reformed Church as one body of Churches;

"Instructs deputies to be appointed to discuss these objections with the deputies of the Provisional Synod of Utrecht, and to try to come to an agreement, in order that a future Synod may judge it further.

"Second decision.

"Considering that the Netherlands Reformed Churches wholly concur with us in Confession, Church Order and Liturgy, we are fully prepared to unite with these Churches when, as far as this first point to be dealt with is concerned, they only declare the following.

"1. That they (the Doleerenden), in obedience to the Word of the Lord and in accordance with Art. 27-29 of our Confession, have broken completely with the Netherlands Reformed Denomination as it has existed since 1816 with its organization, boards, and regulations.

"2. That they recognize the secession from the aforementioned denomination, as it took place in 1834, as having been done in obedience to and in accordance with God's Word, and (that they recognize) thereby also the local congregation of the Christian Reformed Church as legitimate manifestation of the body of Christ.

"3. That they register no one in their membership records except such as express agreement with the Reformed doctrine and have promised to submit themselves to the ecclesiastical discipline.

"4. That they neither give nor receive attestations except to and from recognized Churches which have broken with the Synodical hierarchy.

"5. That they do not organize any new congregations where a Christian Reformed congregation is already in existence, unless the local Consistory and Congregation crosses from the Synodical to the Reformed terrain.

"Third decision.

"Synod judges that under no conditions the principle be abandoned that the Church has its own institution for the training for the ministry."

The question was raised, whether Synod should be closed, so that a new Synod was to be convened to deal with the expected report of deputies, or this Synod should be adjourned, to be called together again as soon as the report was ready.

It was realized that adjournment would be something new and would constitute a dangerous precedent. Some advised Synod to have the proper procedure followed: that deputies report to the Churches so that in the normal way the next Synod could deal with it and come to a conclusion.

In spite of warnings, Synod decided to adjourn and to have the next sessions in Kampen instead of in Assen.

### *Deputies Meet*

The Christian Reformed deputies met in Utrecht on Wednesday, Nov. 21, 1888 to discuss the questions around their contact with the Doleerende deputies.

They expected that at the meeting the next day both groups of deputies would explain why they had been unable to accept the basis for union as proposed by the other party. Further discussion would then show whether and, if so, in what manner a union could be brought about. Together they would then draw up a Draft-Act of Union or Merger.

What a miscalculation!

Thursday, November 22, 1888 the two committees met.

According to Kuyper, as a result of the Assen decisions a common basis for further negotiations did not exist. Thus this meeting could not have an official character. Doleerende deputies would gladly receive some more information about those decisions.

Further he tells the brothers that they had already an "Argumented advice in the form of a Draft-Act of Merger. Since they had received sufficient information via the press, the deputies had arrived at this Draft-Act and wished to take this draft as basis for very concrete discussions."

Is it a wonder that the Christian Reformed brothers are totally perplexed, dumbfounded, and deeply hurt when Kuyper produces an already printed Draft-Act and hands a copy to each of the deputies?

This high-handed act made some of the Christian Reformed deputies object to continuing and trying to come to a combined advice regarding this document. They met separately for a while, and finally concluded that they should not refrain from giving their judgment.

The whole Draft-Act bears the mark of the Doleantie and of Kuyper's theories. Some changes were made in it in accordance with the wish of the Christian Reformed deputies, but as a whole it was in a line which was contrary to the decisions of the Synod of Assen.

In order to be as complete as possible, we shall read this Draft-Act as it was presented to both Synods.

#### *Draft-Act of Union*

The Reformed Churches of these countries, gathered in both Synodical assemblies which had their sessions this year in the months of June and August in Utrecht and Assen: the one known as "the General Synod of the Christian Reformed Church" and the one at Utrecht as "Provisional Synod of the Netherlands (Nederduitsch) Reformed Churches," mutually having given and received assurance that they aim at nothing but being bound to God's Holy Word, to abide by the Forms of Unity, the Liturgy and the Church Order as these were fixed last by the Reformed Churches of these countries at their Synod of Dordrecht, held in the years 1618/19;

Firm in the conviction that Churches which in this way (and such by virtue of common historical roots) agree in Confession, Liturgy and Church Order (as well as in language), are called upon by the Lord to manifest their unity which is in Christ Jesus, their glorious Head, by acting together in the world, by showing Christian love in taking heed of each other and by bearing one another's burdens;

Judging that a separated existence of Churches which belong together weakens the healthy development of both, causes strength to be wasted, brings along all kinds of spiritual damage, breaks the influence of these Churches upon State and Society, and so easily becomes an occasion to blaspheme the name of the Lord;

And thus assured that all reunion of these Churches, as demanded by God's Word, must flow from the Intercession of the Mediator, and have as its aim a closer union with the Lord our God;

Have consulted together in order with God's help to put an end to their separate existence by preparing for a coming together in combined major assemblies.

To this end they declare:

1. Either one did not have nor has any other goal than according to God's Word to manifest the Reformed Churches of these countries which, by the sins of our fathers and our own fault had gradually been deprived of their shine and become adulterated;

2. They mutually agree that in the restoration of the Reformed Churches, insofar as this was a fruit of the well-known events in the years 1834 and 1886 — in spite of our own guilt and sin and in spite of much that was defective mixed with it by human hand — solely the mercy, the power and the faithfulness of our God is to be glorified. On the basis of this, thanking God for the grace shown to the Churches of our fathers both in 1834 and in 1886, they do not hesitate mutually to recognize the Church-Reformations as they now came into being as a result of both these spiritual revivals, and are in existence as Reformed Churches under their Consistories, as legitimate manifestations of the body of Jesus Christ in these countries;

3. In obedience to God's Word and in order to comply with the demand of Art. 27 ff. of our Confession, they both have broken once and for all and thus totally the bond between themselves and the Netherlands Reformed Denomination as this has appeared since 1816 and continues to exist in its organization by its boards and regulations;

4. Although they both come forth from the Reformed Churches of our fathers and both have broken unconditionally with the Netherlands Reformed Denomination, and both have the same conviction concerning Confession, Liturgy and Church Order, yet there exists an unmistakable difference in the manner in which they came to Reformation of the adulterated Churches. This difference comes mainly from the different course of the historical events in 1834 and 1886, but certainly also from a different view regarding the best ways of proceeding towards a Reformation when the condition of the Church has sunk to such a low. They do not wish to gloss over this difference but state it clearly. They add, however, that mutually as far as the essence of the matter is concerned, they state that breaking with the above-mentioned Denomination both in 1834 and in 1886 was done in obedience to the Word of God. In any case, they judge that the divergent views of both concerning the *modus quo* are to be counted with those things which have to be borne with each other and will never provide the liberty of either breaking the unity of the Churches or preventing their merging again.

It is in adherence to this declaration — which they make without reserve and in sincerity as before the countenance of Him who knows the hearts — that they wish to try to come to unity in the following manner:

1. Each of both Synods shall appoint three Deputies and authorize them, together with three equally authorized deputies of the other Synod, to revise the combination of the Churches in Classes as it has been mutually in force until now, in this manner that with the next Classical gatherings mutually the same division can be observed.

— *To be continued*



# Annual Rally 1987

## Canadian Reformed Women's Society, Alberta

The Annual Women's Rally of Alberta was held this year in Calgary on June 17, 1987.

Because everyone except the Calgary ladies got lost in Calgary just a little bit trying to find the Trinity United Church where our rally was held, the meeting started a little later than planned.

The rally which this year was hosted by the Coaldale ladies was opened by the chairman of the day, Mrs. Jackie Leffers. We sang Psalm 139:1 & 10, then the chairman led in prayer, after which she read Romans 5. Everyone was welcomed, 45 ladies were present, a rather disappointing low number. Each one of the societies was then welcomed individually: Calgary, Edmonton Immanuel, Edmonton Providence and Coaldale. Unfortunately no Neerlandia and Barrhead ladies were present. Besides these we could also welcome a sister from one of the B.C. congregations who was here to visit her daughter, at the same time taking in our rally.

The guest speaker, Mrs. Corrie Meliefste was then introduced who spoke to us on the topic "Women in Church History." She traced the roles of women throughout the history of the church beginning with the Early Age, then the Middle Age, onto the present time. In the early times, woman's role was to look after husband and children, but had no say or education. Towards the Middle Age the ideal woman was considered to be a virgin, therefore there were more women in nunneries than there were men in monasteries. Women seemed to be more religious than men. In the present age women want to have equal rights with man, want to be considered equal. Mrs. Meliefste stressed that whether we are married or single we have to serve God as taught in His Word. For married women in the first place have to look after husband and family. If she works outside the home, it should not be detrimental to them. Can women be deacons? In the discussion on this, it came out that a deacon's wife could be of great assistance to her husband, even quietly behind the scenes so to speak, and therein fulfill her role. Women as a whole can help the needy, lonely and sick. Since it was close to lunchtime after a good discussion on a number of questions, the discussion was closed. Mrs. Meliefste

was thanked for her introduction, then we sang "Oh Canada." We all went downstairs to enjoy a delicious lunch of cold meats and a good variety of salads, prepared by the Calgary ladies. Mrs. Lemien Deemter was in charge of leading during the lunch hour. After this, there was yet time to take a stroll in the sunny outdoors, most of us participated in this activity.

The afternoon session was reopened with the singing of The League Song. The Coaldale ladies gave a short presentation "Women in Church History." The narrator, Jane Leffers had a short summary of the lives of a number of church leaders' wives and how each one was a help to her husband. As each name was mentioned one of the Coaldale ladies portraying the particular woman stepped forward in appropriate apparel. Amongst the women mentioned were Idelette Van Buren — Calvin's wife, and Catherine von Bora — Luther's wife. This presentation had been given before but because of a number of requests it was repeated at this rally. It was very suitable, since it corresponded (in a way) to the introduction of the morning. Linda Lubbers then read a poem entitled "I cannot Tithe." A Bible Quiz given by Harriet Van Raalte and Linda Lubbers was next on the program. The Question Period followed. The Coaldale ladies were thanked by the various societies for the work done for this rally. The question was then raised — How can we attract more ladies to come to our Annual Rallies? A

discussion followed. It was noted that there were many school outings in the month of June, outings where mothers often accompanied their children. After a few suggestions, it was decided to change the date to the end of May or beginning of June, depending on the date of the May long weekend. The date for the 1988 Rally has been set for June the first. (*Alberta ladies please note this*) Edmonton Providence (Lydia) will host this one in Edmonton. They will send out information about this Rally to the societies sometime in the beginning of 1988. It was indeed a very enjoyable day where we could meet family members, friends and make new friends. It was educational, learning more about God, and our tasks as women of His Church. It was also a relaxing day. At about 3:30 p.m. our rally was coming to a close, many of us had a few hours drive ahead yet. The chairman thanked everyone involved for the work done. The Calgary ladies were especially thanked for their cooperation with Coaldale. Everyone was wished a safe journey home with God's guidance, and may we meet again next year, the Lord willing. Together we sang Hymn 46:1 and 2, Mrs. Meliefste led in prayer, and the meeting was closed.

Coaldale Rally Committee,  
MARY KOK  
JACKIE LEFFERS  
LINDA LUBBERS

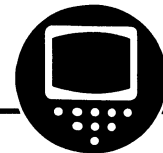
### SING GOD'S GLORY

We bring God our adoration, we the women of God's church,  
For the wonders of salvation, and redemption of sin's curse.  
Gratefully we make confession, of God's kindness and compassion,  
While we all the glory bring, to our mighty God and King.

One in faith and one in spirit, one in Christ and one in God,  
Do we search God's Word and merit, the eternal truth He brought.  
For His Word is our foundation, and our daily meditation;  
Our salvation is secured, for God's faithful Word is sure.

Therefore do we vow alliance, to our God, though we are frail,  
For in Christ is our reliance, we will go the steepest trail;  
We give Him our life completely, we bow for His greatness deeply,  
And with heart and soul always, sing God's glory and God's praise.

*The League Song*



## Classis Ontario North, Friday, September 18, 1987, Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington-West

1. On behalf of the covering Church at Guelph, the Rev. P. Feenstra calls the meeting to order. It begins by the singing of Psalm 105:3, after which the chairman reads Genesis 22:1-19, and leads in prayer. He welcomes all the brothers present, especially the delegates of the new Churches at Elora and Grand Valley, as well as Cand. G. VanPopta, minister-elect of the Church at Ottawa. Several words of welcome are also addressed to the wife and the mother of the candidate, as well as to the delegates of Regional Synod, who are also present for the examination.

2. The credentials are examined and found in good order. There are instructions from the Churches at Elora, Grand Valley and Ottawa. Classis is constituted, and the moderamen is as follows: chairman: Rev. R. Gleason; clerk: Rev. P. Feenstra; assessor: Rev. J. De Jong.

3. The agenda is adopted after some additions.

4. Classis proceeds to the pre-emptory examination of Cand. G. VanPopta. The necessary documents are present and in good order. Cand. VanPopta reads a sermon proposal on Hebrews 6:13-20. There are no objections to continuing with the examination. The candidate is then examined on Judges 9:1-25 and Psalm 16 in Old Testament exegesis, and on Romans 11 and James 1 in New Testament exegesis. Rev. M. Werkman then examines the candidate on the knowledge of Holy Scripture, after which the meeting breaks for lunch.

After lunch, the examination proceeds with inquiry on the knowledge of the doctrine of the Church. Mr. VanPopta is then examined in the disciplines of Church History, Ethics, Church Polity and Diaconology. All examinations are found satisfactory, and the way is declared open for Cand. G. VanPopta to be ordained in the Church at Ottawa. Upon approbation of the call of the Church at Ottawa, Cand. G. VanPopta is congratulated, and the chairman expresses the wish that he may have a fruitful and upbuilding ministry amidst the Churches. Congratulatory words are also addressed to the candidate's mother, recalling the work of his father, the late Rev. J.T. VanPopta, as well as to the candidate's wife who was present to witness this day. After the singing of Hymn 41:1, 2, Classis pauses in order to shake hands with Cand. VanPopta and his relatives.

Rev. J. Mulder is appointed by Classis to represent Classis at the ordination of Cand. G. VanPopta on D.V., Sunday, October 11, 1987.

5. The following *reports* are dealt with:

a. Both the report of the treasurer of Classis and the report of the Church for auditing the books of the treasurer are scheduled to be submitted to the March Classis.

b. The report of the Church at Guelph re financial aid to students for the ministry is read. There were no requests for financial aid for this academic year.

c. The Church to audit this account (in b.), the Church at Fergus, has no report at this Classis.

d. A report is read from the auditors appointed to examine the books of the Fund for Needy Churches. The books have been examined and found in good order.

e. Reports are read concerning Church visitations to the Churches at Fergus and Ottawa. These reports are thankfully received and noted.

f. A report from the Church at Toronto re possible early retirement of the Rev. C. Olij is read and discussed in closed session.

6. *Article 44 Church Order*: The Church at Ottawa asks and receives advice in a matter of discipline.

7. The following *instructions* are dealt with:

a. The Church at Elora asks for pulpit supply once per month. The request is granted, and the following schedule is adopted: Rev. R. Gleason — Oct. 25; Rev. J. Mulder — Nov. 22; Rev. Cl. Stam — Dec. 27; Rev. M. Werkman — Jan. 31; Rev. P. Feenstra — Feb. 21; Rev. G. Nederveen — Mar. 27.

Rev. Cl. Stam is also appointed as counsellor to the Church upon its own request.

b. The Church at Grand Valley requests Classis to appoint the Rev. M. Werkman as counsellor. The request is granted.

8. Classis receives a letter from the Church at Ottawa requesting support for their minister-elect, Cand. G. VanPopta, beginning in October, 1987. The request is approved.

9. The following appointments are made:

a. The next Classis will be held D.V., Friday, December 11, 1987, in the Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington-West, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Proposed moderamen: Rev. J. Mulder, chairman; Rev. R. Gleason, clerk; Rev. P. Feenstra, assessor.

b. Committees and deputies:

i. Rev. P. Feenstra is appointed as the examiner in the knowledge of Holy Scriptures. All other appointments remain unchanged.

ii. Church visitors are appointed as follows: Brampton — J. De Jong and J. Mulder; Burlington-East — G. Nederveen and Cl. Stam; Burlington-South — D. DeJong and Cl. Stam; Burlington-West — D. DeJong and M. Werkman; Elora — P. Feenstra and Cl. Stam; Grand Valley — Cl. Stam and M. Werkman; Guelph — Cl. Stam and M. Werkman; Orangeville — J. De Jong and J. Mulder; Ottawa — J. De Jong and R.N. Gleason; Lower Sackville: D. DeJong and P. Feenstra; Toronto — D. DeJong and G. Nederveen.

iii. All other committees and deputies are reappointed as *per* September 86 Classis.

c. The following delegates are elected to Regional Synod to be convened D.V., October 15, at Lincoln: Ministers: *primi*: D. DeJong, J. Mulder, Cl. Stam, M. Werkman; *secundi*: J. de Jong, R. Gleason, P. Feenstra, G. Nederveen, in that order. Elders: *primi*: H. Bouwman, H. Faber, M. Kampen, P. VanderSchaaf; *secundi*: W. Oostdyk, H. Meerveld, L. Jagt, W. Horsman, in that order.

10. In the Question Period, Rev. G. Nederveen notes that the Churches at Elora, Grand Valley and Lower Sackville have yet to be incorporated into the Classis Regulations. Some other personal questions are answered.

11. Censure ad. Article 44 is not necessary.

12. The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved.

13. The chairman asks those present to sing Psalm 105:4, and leads in prayer, after which the meeting is closed. The ladies are also thanked for their willing service at Classis.

On behalf of Classis,  
J. DE JONG, assessor, e.t.

## “Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, September 18, 1987

The chairman br. J. Witten opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer, and then welcomed the members present, especially the two new members: Mrs. T. Lodder from Fergus and Mr. A. Van Overbeeke from Orangeville.

Daryl Kooiman, the Anchor Home director delivered his report — his last because he is resigning from his position. Bep Hoogland, who has been a Board member for many years, had been hired

to replace him and to continue the excellent work he started. Because Renie Beijes had resigned earlier, two young ladies were hired to help at the Anchor Home during the summer months; Harriet Gelsms and Elaine VandenBos. In the fall they will continue to work at the Home on a part-time basis. A full-time counsellor, Geraldine DeBoer, has also been hired and has already started her duties at the Home.

Although we are continuing to receive requests for more tapes of past combined choir concert, we are unable to comply at present, because we are re-editing the master tape due to the unsatisfactory quality of the first consignment. When the re-editing is done and new tapes are made we will make them available to everyone.

The Public Relations committee with the Building committee is organizing an open house at the Anchor Home, to acquaint the neighbours with the Home and the work being done there. We hope that this open house will facilitate getting the zoning change we are applying for.

The treasurer reported that so far the contributions for this year are coming in very slowly. The local committees, therefore, are being urged to ask their congregations to improve their support of Anchor.

The meeting then was closed with prayer.

K.J. SPITHOFF  
Correspondence Secretary

### **Classis Alberta/Manitoba, September 29 and 30, 1987**

1. *Opening:* On behalf of the convening Church at Coaldale, the Rev. J.D. Wielenga calls the meeting to order at 8 p.m. He requests the singing of Ps. 87:1 and 5, reads Eph. 4:1-16 and leads in prayer. He welcomes all the delegates; deputies of Regional Synod (Art. 48 C.O.), the Revs. M. VanderWel and J. Visscher; as well as Cand. R. Schouten. In his opening words he mentions that the representative of OPC could not attend due to personal circumstances. Congratulations are extended to the Revs. DenHollander and DeJager with regards to their calls.

2. *Credentials:* The credentials are examined by the delegates of the convening Church and all the Churches are found to be properly represented. The Church at Winnipeg is represented by the alternate br. J. Kuik.

Classis is constituted. The moderamen consists of: Rev. A. DeJager, chairman; Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, vice-chairman; Rev. M. VanBeveren, clerk. Rev. DeJager congratulates Calgary with regards to the acceptance of the call of Cand. Schouten.

3. *Agenda:* Classis adopts the agenda to the end of the examination of Cand. Schouten.

4. *Peremptory Examination of Cand.*

*R. Schouten and Approbation of Call:*

a. Credentials of Cand. R. Schouten are checked and found to be in good order.

b. Cand. Schouten presents his sermon on Matt. 20:1-16. After the delegates with deputies met in closed session to discuss the sermon, Cand. Schouten was informed that the examination could continue.

c. The examination continues as follows: Rev. M. VanBeveren examines in Exegesis O.T. on Gen. 6:1-8 and Ps. 132. Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer examines in Exegesis N.T. on Eph. 1.

5. *Adjournment:* Meeting is adjourned after the singing of Ps. 115:1, 6 and prayer.

6. *Reopening:* The chairman opens the meeting at 9 a.m. of the following day, requests the singing of Ps. 98:1, 2, reads Isa. 12 and leads in prayer. Roll call is held.

a. Cand. Schouten is examined in Knowledge of Scriptures by Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer; Doctrine and Creeds by Rev. J.D. Wielenga; Church History by Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar; Ethics by Rev. A. DeJager; Church Polity by Rev. J.D. Wielenga; and Diaconology by Rev. W. DenHollander.

b. Classis meets in closed session to evaluate the examination. They find the outcome favourable. The deputies of Regional Synod express their agreement. The call is approbated. Cand. Schouten is informed of the decision and asked to sign the Subscription Form. He does this willingly. A declaration, stating that the examination has been made, the call approved and admittance to the ministry given, is presented to br. Schouten. Congratulations are extended.

7. *Agenda:* Classis adopts the remainder of the agenda after some late matters are inserted.

8. *Reports:*

a. Report is given on the Inspection of the Books of the Treasurer by the Providence Church at Edmonton. The books are in good order.

b. The treasurer for Classis, br. A. Nauta, submits the 1986 statement. This is received for information. Thanked.

c. Report is given on the Inspection of the Archives of Classis by the Immanuel Church at Edmonton. Archives are in good order. Thanked.

d. Financial report is submitted by Committee for Needy Students (Art. 20 C.O.). Report that no aid is required. Thanked. They also submit a letter of request. This will be complied with.

e. *Closed Session:* The Church Visitors (re. Art. 46 C.O.) the Revs. A. DeJager and M. VanBeveren, submit reports on visits made to the Immanuel Church at Edmonton on June 9, 1987 and the Barrhead Church on June 16, 1987. These are received for information. Thanked.

f. Report is submitted by the Committee for Needy Churches indicating that financial support is requested by the Immanuel Church at Edmonton as well as the Calgary Church. (Classis had already promised support at a previous Classis for the Church at Calgary.) Report is received for information.

*Requests for Financial Assistance:* Classis deals with the requests from the two Churches.

Request from the Church at Calgary for the amount of \$19,874 is granted.

Request from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton. Classis decides to support Immanuel according to the following motion:

"1. Classis decides that in view of the fact that the Immanuel Church desires and needs a minister of their own, but due to a debt load are presently unable to responsibly support a minister, to advise Immanuel Church that Classis will give necessary financial support.

2. To advise the Immanuel Church that if necessary it should come to next Classis with request for support through the Committee for Needy Churches.

3. To authorize the Committee for Needy Churches to levy from the Churches and pay to the Immanuel Church, if upon calling and receiving a minister, financial support becomes necessary in the period before next Classis."

g. Report of Observer to Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, the Rev. A. DeJager, is submitted. This report is received with attachments for information and in appreciation. This will be made available to the Churches of Classis as well as to the Committee for Contact with the OPC and to the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC.

Letters are received from the OPC with regards to delegation.

9. *Instruction:* Instruction is received from the Church at Coaldale dealing with the matter of receiving credentials at Classis. Classis judges: "that the delegates of the convening Church for Classis Oct. 7, 1986, when reporting on the examination of the credentials, erred when they made the observation that the credential of the delegates from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton contained 'an oversight' (Acts, Art. 2), as it made no reference to the Three Forms of Unity as standard to which the delegating Church bound itself and its delegates, but only to the Word of God and the Church Order."

10. *Proposals:*

a. Proposal from the Church at Coaldale to replace Art. 7, B.4 of the Regulations from Classis, with a rule which states: "During the discussion of a motion delegates may give notice of their intention to move a different motion. The intended motion shall be read immediately, but not admitted for discussion, duly seconded,

until the motion which is under discussion on the floor of Classis is either withdrawn by the movers or voted down by the meeting, in due process." This is adopted by Classis.

b. Proposal from the Church at Barrhead to remove Art. 7, B.4 is not dealt with because of the above.

11. *Pulpit Supply*: Request from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton for pulpit supply two times per month is granted.

12. *Appointments*:

a. The Immanuel Church at Edmonton will be the convening Church for the next Classis meeting.

b. Suggested moderamen: Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, chairman; Rev. A. DeJager, vice-chairman; Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, clerk.

c. Date for next Classis is set for December 8, 1987. If no business for December then Classis is set for March 15, 1988.

d. All individuals, committees and Churches, under Article 8 of the Regulations for Classis are reappointed to their tasks. The only change is that in the future Rev. R. Schouten is appointed peremptory examiner for "Knowledge of Scripture" in place of Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer.

13. *Personal Question Period*.

14. *Question Period Ad Art. 44 C.O.*

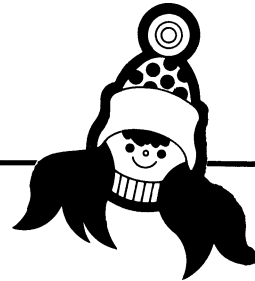
15. *Censure Ad Art. 44 C.O.*

16. *Adoption of Acts and Press Release*: Acts are adopted and press release approved.

17. *Closing*: Chairman expresses thankfulness for the good meeting. Ladies are thanked for their work. Providence is thanked for arrangements and use of the building. He requests singing of Hymn 59:1, 3. The vice-chairman, Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar closes in prayer. The meeting is declared closed.

On behalf of Classis Alberta/Manitoba,  
E.J. TIGGELAAR, vice-chairman e.t.

## OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



### Hello Busy Beavers,

Busy Beaver *Aimee Jagt* has a story for you about

### *The First Day of School*

It was the first day of school, and I had this unusual feeling. Instead of going to the old familiar building of John Calvin School, I was heading in an opposite direction to a new school, Covenant Christian School in Flamboro. In the previous weeks, I had bought my school supplies, arranged them neatly so I would be prepared for this day of fun. And now I felt unsure of myself. I had heard of all the work done for this school, and I myself helped clean up. But I was worried that everything would be as messy as when I was there before. I jumped off the bus and glanced down the hall. To my relief I saw a clear, clean hall! The classrooms were all carpeted, and the desks were neatly in rows. In the drizzling rain, I walked outside with my friends to the front of the school for the opening ceremony. The chairman of the school board, a boardmember, the mayor, the minister, and the principal said some words of welcome. The youngest and oldest student cut the ribbon, the two Grade 8 boys raised the flag, and each student let go a balloon. Everyone went inside to admire the classrooms, and refreshments were served. Now I felt good. Everyone seemed to be a part of it. It was a very memorable day, and I'll never forget it!



Keep a picture in your pocket,  
And a poem in your head,  
And you'll never feel lonely  
at night when you're in bed!

from Busy Beaver *Karissa Veldman*

### JOKES

from Busy Beaver *Wendy Beijes*

*Dog catcher*: "Does your dog have a license?"

*Dog owner*: "No he isn't old enough to drive."

*Nick*: "Yippee! The teacher said we would have a test rain or shine."

*Cheri*: "Then why are you so happy?"

*Nick*: "Because its snowing."

*Kristen*: "Did you answer the door, Shelly?"

*Shelly*: "No, I didn't even hear its question."



Picture by Busy Beaver *Will VanOene*

Can you think of a good title for this picture?



## From the Mailbox

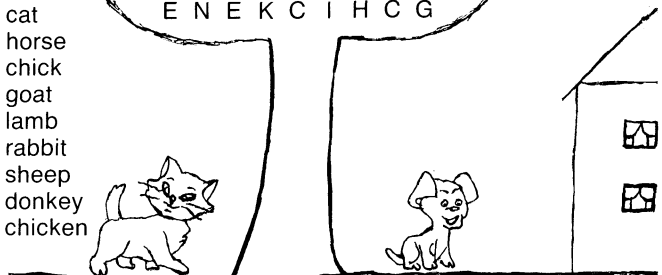
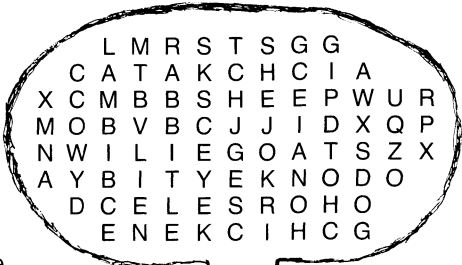
Would you like to join the Busy Beaver Club, Mark Timmerman? Of course you are welcome! You send me your birthday and maybe you'll tell us something about yourself and your family? How is your calligraphy coming along, Esther Leyenhorst? How will you share a sample with us sometime? And how do you and your sister enjoy Grade One, Esther? Hello, Anna De Vries. Thank you for the picture! It was so nice to hear from you and I see you've been very busy. Thanks for the puzzle, too, Anna. Bye for now. You really mean to keep the Busy Beavers busy, too, Debbie Jagt. How are you doing? Are you going to the new school, too? Why don't you let us know? Write again soon. Thanks for the two pictures Peter Barendregt. It's a beautiful calf, Peter. What do you call it? Did you show it at the fair? Thanks for the puzzle, Peter. Bye for now. Are you all used to your new school now, Aimee Jagt? I can see you enjoyed the opening ceremonies! Is the school a long ride from home? Thanks for the story, Aimee. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will like it!

# Quiz Time!

## WORDSEARCH

from Busy Beaver Joanne DeBoer

- Find
- pig
  - dog
  - cow
  - cat
  - horse
  - chick
  - goat
  - lamb
  - rabbit
  - sheep
  - donkey
  - chicken



## IDENTIFICATION PARADE

Do you know who is meant in each of these quotes from the Bible?

1. "Now he was ruddy, and had beautiful eyes, and was handsome." \_\_\_\_\_

2. "Behold an Israelite indeed in whom is no guile." \_\_\_\_\_
3. "... from his shoulders upward he was taller than any of the people." \_\_\_\_\_
4. "... the son of Nebat, which made Israel to sin." \_\_\_\_\_
5. "And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord do not hold this sin against them.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep." \_\_\_\_\_
6. "He was driven from among men, and ate grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven till his hair grew as long as eagles' feathers, and his nails were like birds' claws." \_\_\_\_\_
7. "There was a man in the land of Uz . . . and that man was blameless and upright, one who feared God, and turned away from evil." \_\_\_\_\_
8. "You will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things come to pass, because you did not believe my words. . . ." \_\_\_\_\_
9. Her eyes were "weak." \_\_\_\_\_
10. "A centurion of what was known as the Italian Cohort, a devout man who feared God with all his household, gave alms liberally to the people, and prayed constantly to God." \_\_\_\_\_

(See answers)

## CODE QUIZ

by Busy Beaver Shannon Hoogstra

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
H	C	Y	G	O	K	L	E	R	F	J	I	S

14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
W	X	N	M	A	Z	D	B	P	T	V	U	Q

21	25	23	1	8	20	12	20	16	5	23
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13	22	18	9	8	1	12	13	5	14	16	14	8	7	7
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21	8	7	5	24	8	20	13	5	16
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Answers:

Identification Parade: 8. Zacharias 9. Leah 10. Cornelius  
 4. Jereboam 5. Stephen 6. Nebuchadnezzar 7. Job  
 1. David 2. Nathanael 3. Saul

I hope you enjoyed all the "goodies" sent in by the Busy Beavers!

Do you have something to share, too?

Bye for now!

Love,  
Aunt Betty

*Yes, the LORD will give what is good.*  
*Psalm 85:12*

*We're simply delighted  
Just proud as can be!  
To welcome a daughter  
To our family.*

We joyfully announce the birth of:

MICHELLE GINA

Given to us on August 1, 1987  
A sister for: *Richie, Heidi, Joni and Gordon*

Thankful parents:  
John and Gina Heetebrij  
(nee Tams)

Box 2260  
Barrhead, AB T0G 0E0

With thankfulness to the Lord for entrusting into our care, we wish to announce the birth of our firstborn child, a son:

TIMOTHY DANIEL

Born September 9, 1987  
Con and Anita Bartels  
RR3  
Wainfleet, ON L0S 1V0

With great joy, we announce the birth of our precious gift from the Lord, our third child:

LISA MARIE

Born September 22, 1987  
A sister for *Kristen and Michael*  
Rob and Janet Vanderveen  
(nee Tamminga)  
RR5, Thamesville, ON N0P 2K0

The LORD in His grace has entrusted to us our third covenant child:

CHELSEA MICHAL

Born September 20, 1987  
A sister for *Sarah and Anna*  
Rev. and Mrs. E. Kampen  
Box 45, Site 2, S.S. 1  
Houston, BC V0J 1Z0

With thankfulness to the Lord, who again has richly blessed us, we announce the birth of our daughter and sister:

EMILY JOANNE

Born September 28, 1987  
Gerry and Hettie VanderGaag  
*Wendy, Karen, Colin and Jennifer*  
Box 2723  
Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

*Thy hands have made and fashioned me; give me understanding that I may learn Thy commandments.*

*Psalm 119:73*

The Lord has blessed our family with the birth of a healthy son, whom we have named:

SEAN VINCENT

Born September 17, 1987  
A brother for *David, Stephen, Marcel, Nathan, Deanna, Ryan*  
Leo and Diane Kampen  
(nee Visscher)

425 Easy Street  
Richmond Hill, ON L4C 3Z5

With much joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we wish to announce the birth of our second child, a healthy son:

GAVIN JESSE

Born September 21, 1987  
A brother for *Alisha*  
Gary and Natalie Nordeman  
835 Hwy. 8, GR. 5, Box 12  
Fruitland, ON L0R 1L0

With thankfulness to the Lord, we:

ANNETTE GEURTS

and

HENRY BOSVELD

wish to announce our engagement.  
October 2, 1987  
12577-55A Avenue  
Surrey, BC V3W 1C4

*For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven. . . .*

*Ecclesiastes 3:1*

With thankfulness to the Lord, Mr. and Mrs. Hugo Pilon are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their daughter:

FRANCES RENÉE  
to  
GEORGE THOMAS

son of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Overbeek.

The ceremony shall take place, the Lord willing, on Friday, November 20, 1987 at 7:00 p.m. in the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church at Toronto.

Pastor R.N. Gleason officiating.

*Future address:*  
220 Owen Sound Street, Apt #2  
Shelburne, ON L0N 1S0

*1947 — October 30 — 1987*

*Happy is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God.*

*Psalm 146:5*

With thankfulness to the Lord, we announce and celebrate D.V., the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

GEUCHIEN GERRIT (George) BEUKEMA  
and

ZWAANTJE (Susan) BEUKEMA (nee De Weerd)

May the Lord continue to bless them.

*Langley, BC: Gary and Julia Beukema  
Geoffrey, Robert, Leanne, Nellie,  
Heidi, Benjamin*

*Lethbridge, AB: Susie Thompson  
Shane, Chad*

*Surrey, BC: Anne and Henry Schouten  
Michael, Jonathan, Alisa, Stephen,  
Suzanne, Timothy, Thomas*

*Lethbridge, AB: Bill Beukema*

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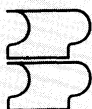
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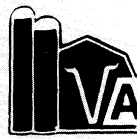
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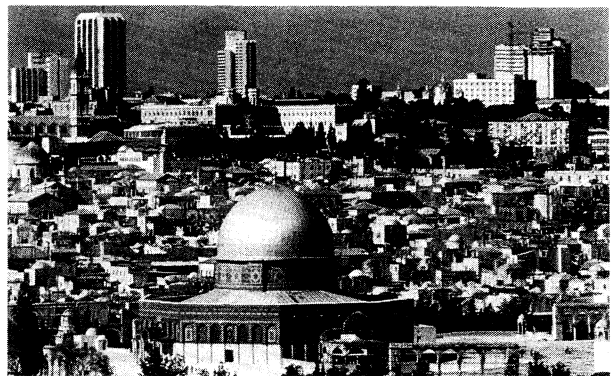


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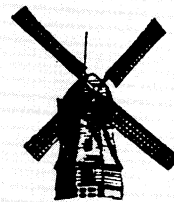
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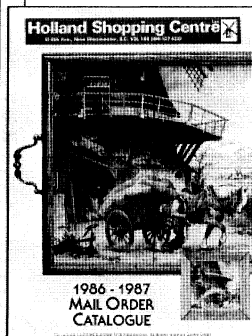
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