Clarion
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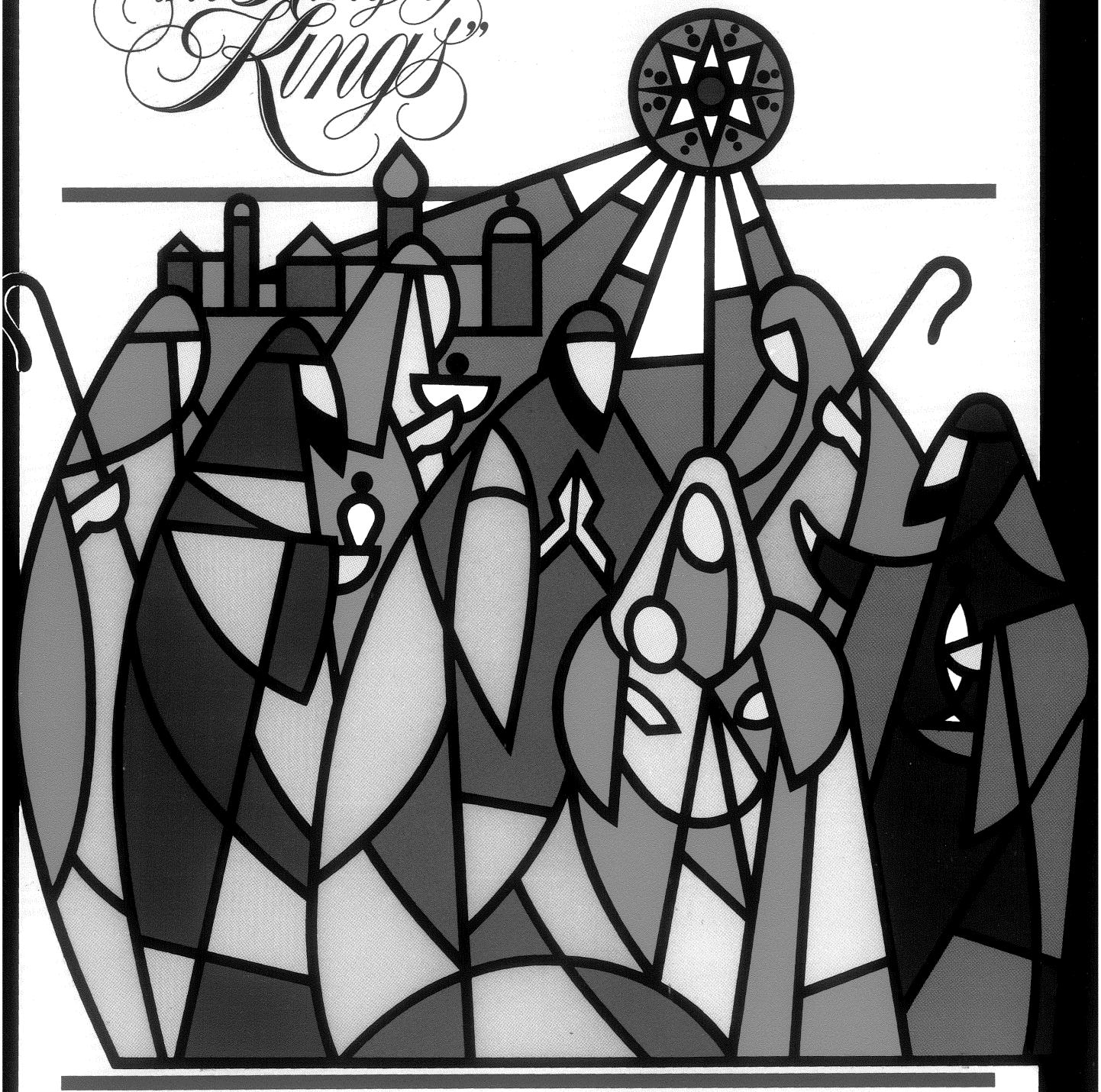
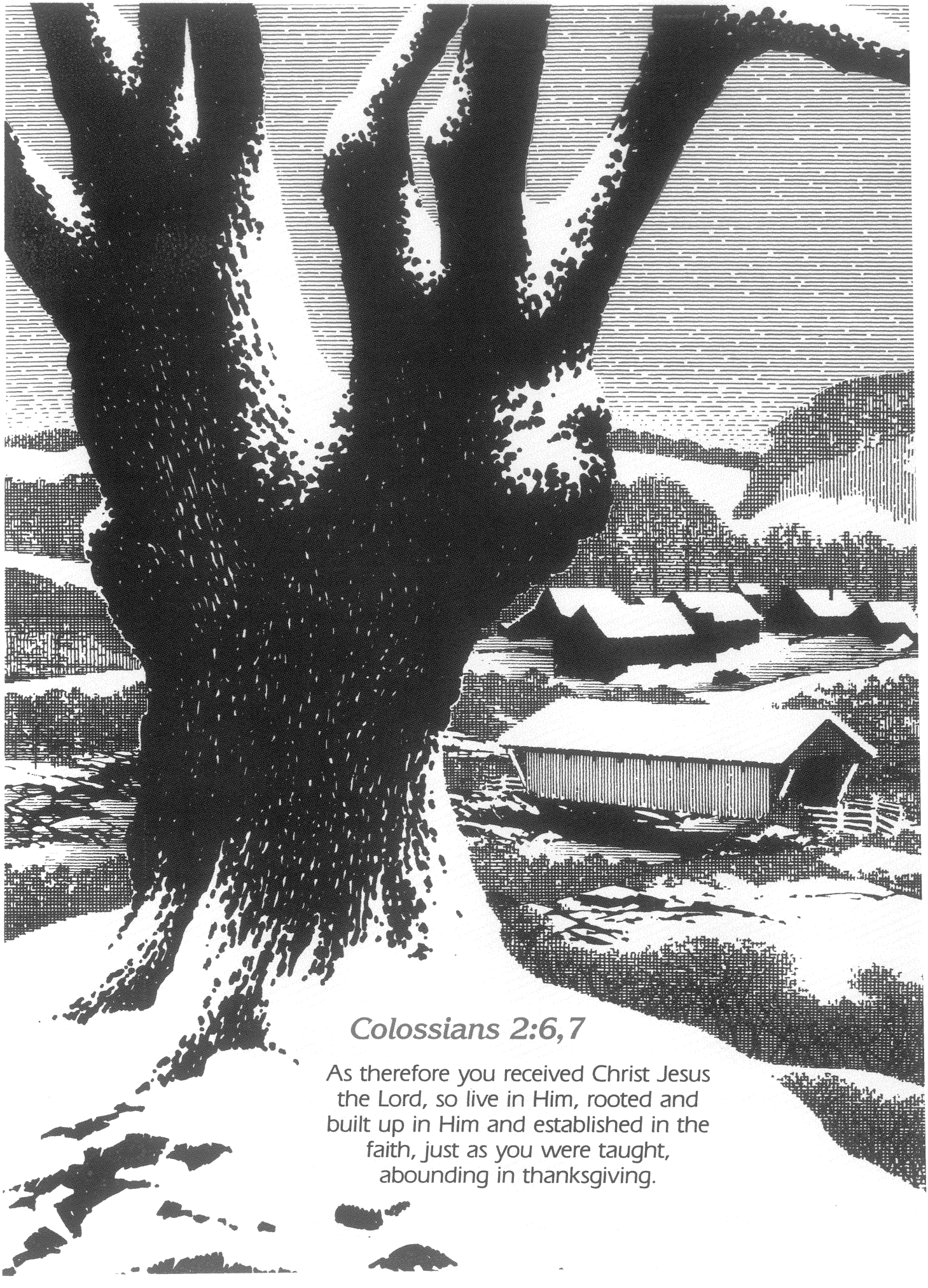
Behold! "the King of Kings"





Colossians 2:6,7

As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

To which future?

The elections are over. What will happen now?

Another year has almost passed by. At the moment that I write this the tension in the country caused by the election campaign has subsided. The Progressive Conservatives have won a majority again. The Christian Heritage Party was in many a riding fourth in number of votes, and probably has cost some PC incumbents their seat in parliament. Not clear is what will happen further with the defeated party leaders. But it appears to be sure that the free trade deal with the United States will go through.

Will this deal truly work out positively? Will it maintain and increase prosperity, as Mr. Mulroney has assured the nation so often? Or will it have a negative effect on Canada? Will it mean that we will lose our Canadian identity? What is that identity, anyway? Will we lose the right to manage our country and especially our resources ourselves? Fears were expressed that the free trade deal will have a detrimental effect on our Canadian environment since big business is concerned only about immediate financial gain and does not care about the future well-being of the people. Will it be so?

We could read in the papers that a rejection of the free trade deal would go against modern world trends. Western European countries are working out free trade among themselves. We live so much in one world that protectionism and a turning into oneself as nation will not work anymore, so we are taught. Whether we want it or not, we are more and more becoming world citizens. Is this a good trend?

But what was missing in this campaign, in my opinion, were issues which were at least as important as the free trade deal. The first forgotten issue is not of a directly economic character but is moral. What will now be done with respect to the abortion issue? Another strongly moral and, at the same time, economic matter is that of the national debt. What will be done about that? If I am not mistaken, each Canadian citizen has a debt of more than $12,000, since our national debt is beyond the 300 billion mark. Will the government drastically diminish this debt? Do we have to pay quite a bit more in taxes?

Thus many questions are left. We cannot answer them, for we cannot look into the future. We cannot predict what will happen, which is a good thing. This is something that I also missed: humble dependence on the Creator. Contrasting predictions were uttered. Without the free trade deal Canada's economic future is in jeopardy, the one said. The other warned that the deal will ruin the nation. But who said that God rules? Who confessed that we depend on the Creator? Who warned that whatever the Canadian nation decides, without God's goodness nothing will go well?

God's providence

Whatever consequences this election will have for our country and its southern trade partner, as well as for the other countries, it is all in God's providence. Mr. John Turner said: let the Canadian people decide on the trade deal. It was his responsibility to give the government of the country into the hands of the people. The people did decide. They chose. However, man makes his plans and decisions, but God leads all things.

On the one hand, this provides confidence to those who believe in God and in His Son Jesus Christ who received all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. 28:19), and who upholds all things by His word of power (or: powerful word, Heb. 1:3). Nothing happens against His will (Belgic Conf., Art. 13; Heid. Cat. L.D. 10). God's children can give their life, also as it is lived within the society of a specific nation, into the hands of their Father in heaven. They can be patient in adversity and thankful in prosperity, while they can have good confidence with regard to the future, just because it is in the hands of their triune God.

On the other hand, this fact that God rules and that He has given all authority into the hands of His Son Jesus Christ,

Hymn 35:1, 3

Rejoice, the Lord is King;
Your Lord and King adore.
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing,
And triumph evermore.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Again I say, Rejoice! Rejoice!

His kingdom cannot fail;
He rules o'er earth and heaven.
The keys of death and hell
Are to Christ Jesus given.
Lift up your heart, lift up your voice;
Again I say, Rejoice! Rejoice!

the Mediator between God and His people, who is the King-Priest of Psalm 110, is a scary thing. Psalm 110 speaks of the promise that this King-Priest will set His feet on the neck of His enemies. He will defeat them all. God Almighty speaks there: "Sit at My right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool." This king "will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; He will shatter chiefs over the wide earth."

One could say that this is Old Testament language. It is. But this does not mean that such language is in conflict with the New Testament. The book of Revelation speaks about judgments sent by the Lamb who is exalted to the throne of God in heaven (Rev. 6). Paul warns in Ephesians 5 against "fornication and all impurity or covetousness" and says that "no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolator), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words for *it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience*" (5:3-6).

Loving Shepherd, ever near,
Teach Thy lambs Thy voice to hear;
Suffer not their steps to stray
From the straight and narrow way.
Hymn 45:3

The need of world and church

In Romans 1:18ff., the apostle speaks about the wrath of God as a present reality. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world His invisible nature, namely, His eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse; for although they knew God they did not honour Him as God or give thanks to Him, but they became futile in their thinking and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles. Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves."

This is a long quotation, but it gives a picture, not only of the Roman world of Paul's days, but also of our own modern world. What can be known about God is still plain. But also modern man does not honour the Creator as God. Modern man, following his own humanistic philosophies, became futile in his thinking and his senseless mind has been darkened. Claiming to be wise, he turned to foolishness, following idols.

One only has to glance through glossy magazines bearing the name of our big cities, *Toronto, Hamilton,* and I suppose the same is true for *Calgary* and *Edmonton.* Look at the pictures, read a few lines from the articles or stories, and it is evident that you are here in a world of Man and Woman who are gods to themselves. It is the world of the well-to-do. It is the world in which sovereign Man/Woman determines his/her life. Whatever Man/Woman thinks is alright, is alright. It is a world in which there is no place whatsoever for the only true God and for His will as expressed in His Word. It is the world of the Liberated, the Independent. But it is, at the same time, the world of which Paul writes that "the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth."

What does our Canadian nation need? A free trade deal? Will it make the well-to-do more well-to-do? Will it have as consequence, through the greed and covetousness of its powerful, more pollution of God's earth? Will it mean more poverty for the not-so-well-to-do? Does Canada, then, need the rejection of the trade deal? No, what the nation needs is repentance from its sins, from its idolatries, from its greed and covetousness, from its immoralities. What does this nation need? It needs the gospel.

There is a word in the beginning of Rom. 1:18 ("For the wrath of God is revealed . . .") which we must not overlook. It is the first word: "for." This word connects the verses 18-32 with the preceeding verses. In 14ff., the apostle has said, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish: so I am eager to preach the gospel to you also who are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written: 'He who through faith is righteous shall live.' " And then follow the words "For the wrath of God is revealed."

In other words, exactly because the wrath of God is revealed as a present awesome reality, for that reason Paul is under the obligation to preach the gospel in such a world to such people who live under the wrath of God. To such a world

the gospel has to go out as God's power for salvation. In such a world under God's wrath the gospel of Jesus Christ is to be heard to bring sovereign, independent Men and Women on their knees before God, acknowledging their arrogance and rebellion in the light of Christ Jesus and Him crucified.

Paul saw this preaching as his obligation to a world under God's wrath. It is the calling of the church in this world under God's wrath to keep seeing this obligation as hers. Let your light shine, Christ said. The Canadian nation needs the gospel. This gospel has to come to it from and through the church of Jesus Christ.

Having so stated the need of the Canadian nation, must we, then, also speak about the need of the church? Certainly. The church can become unfaithful to her calling and to her Lord. The church, that is, her individual members, can fall in the sins of the world; the sins of immorality and greed, in that way making her message dull and powerless. When the apostle Paul warns against immorality and covetousness in Ephesians 5, he does not address the world, but the church. It is to church members that he says "fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, . . . for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light."

Christmas 1988

Christmas lights will shine again in the dark winter nights, adorning many a home or tree. It is truly artificial light, only stressing the spiritual darkness. Many presents will be bought and received, only stressing the spiritual poverty. Many sweet Christmas tunes and songs will be heard, only stressing the spiritual rebellion, because Christmas is not a Christ feast, but a commercial event based on, and promoted by, covetousness.

How does the church of Jesus Christ behave in this world? Is it as light in the Lord? Is it as driven by the Holy Spirit? Is it with full dedication to her God-given calling in this dark world? To fulfil this task, the church needs commitment to her Lord and His service. Let us keep that in mind: the Canadian nation needs faithful local churches of Christ. Those local churches need commitment and dedication to her task to shine as the light of the Lord, being light in the Lord, by living by the Word of the LORD in obedience of faith.

J. GEERTSEMA

Hymn 2:3

Thou, Christ, art King of glory,
radiant is Thy throne;
Thou art the heav'nly Father's
everlasting Son.
Yet Thou didst not despise the
Virgin's womb, O Saviour,
When Thou didst take upon
Thee mankind to deliver.
Thou hast defeated death and
Satan's power infernal,
That all believers might inherit
life eternal.

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In the days of Herod

When people are approaching the days in which the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is remembered, they permit their fantasy to take off.

This applies not in the last place to the events which are described in Matthew 2.

Take, for example, the wise men who came to Jerusalem.

The Lord does not tell us how many there were, but people know that there were three of them, although even the number twelve has been mentioned.

The Lord does not mention their names, but people state that they were Melchior, Caspar, and Balthasar.

The Lord tells us that they came from the East, but people assert that one of them came from the South and was black.

Through all these elements of fantasy the message is obscured.

The Scripture does not tell us precisely in what year the Saviour was born, nor how long after His birth the wise men came.

We are told that it was "in the days of Herod the king."

This was a common way of fixing the time in which a certain event took place, as the more modern way of mentioning month, day, and year was unknown as yet. We learn this also from Luke 3:1 and 2.

Yet there is more to it than meets the eye.

Matthew describes the gospel of Him who is the Son of David.

In the first chapter he tells us whose Son the Lord Jesus is: in Him all the promises given to the forefathers from Abraham on are concentrated and fulfilled.

He is the David of whom the prophet spoke when he passed on this word of the LORD: "And it shall come to pass in that day, says the LORD of hosts, that I will break the yoke from off their neck, and I will burst their bonds, and strangers shall no more make servants of them. But they shall serve the LORD their God and David their king, whom I will raise up for them." Jer. 30:8, 9.

The third number of fourteen generations finds its end, its goal, its fulfilment and completion in the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the David that was to come and to rule, to receive the homage of the nations, Isaiah 55:3, 4.

This homage is brought to Him indeed, for wise men from the East come to honour and worship Him. They bring their treasures of gold, frankincense and myrrh. They kneel down before Him and worship Him.

But is He "a leader and commander for the peoples" as Isaiah foretold?

They come "when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea."

But when do the wise men come? After whom is their arrival dated? By what is this period characterized?

The wise men come "in the days of Herod the king."

This shows how little was left of the glory of David, yes even of Israel, of Jacob. This shows how deep God's people had sunk.

King Herod may then have done whatever was in his power to present himself as a Jew, an Israelite, he was an Idumean, a descendant of Esau, Jacob's brother.

Could Israel have sunk any deeper than here, where the blessing of the firstborn, given to Jacob, seemed to have become a mockery?

He came into a world in which all relations are distorted to bring restoration of the normal proportions and the proper functions.

When Jacob knelt before his father Isaac to receive the firstborn blessing, he heard his father promise to him honour and glory. "Let peoples serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brother, and may your mother's sons bow down to you."

But when Jacob's great Son is born, and when they do come from the peoples to bown down before Him, He Himself is under the rule of a son of Esau, who is lord over Him.

He is the David of whom the prophets spoke. Matthew proved it in the first chapter of his description of the gospel. However, is this the way in which the readers will be convinced of it, when the days of His birth are fixed not by the rule of His father-according-to-the-law Joseph, the rightful heir to the throne, but by the rule of Herod the king, the son of Esau?

When David was king, even Edom was subject unto him. Think only of what Psalm 60 says.

But when He in whom also David found his fulfilment is born, Esau's son has succeeded in gaining dominion over David.

When Jacob received the blessing, Esau could not make his father change his mind: Jacob was and remained the blessed one.

But when Jacob's great Son is born, Esau's son is the one who has gained the upper hand.

The roles are reversed here, in this crucial moment in the history of salvation, the history of the world.

Yet Matthew does not hesitate to describe the situation as it practically is.

This is how deep the Son of David, the Son of Jacob humbled Himself, for He was going to work the reconciliation and the atonement not only for the sins of David but also for the iniquities of Jacob. He was going to obtain the complete salvation and the perfect redemption of all God's children, so that *all* their days and

every event in their lives can be dated after His birth and can be characterized by *His* dominion.

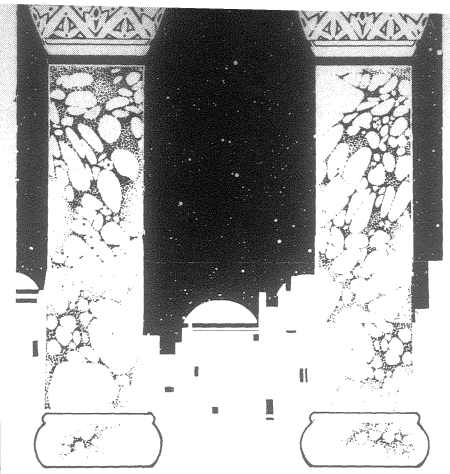
He came into a world in which all the roles are reversed, in which He was going to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain. He came into a world in which all relations are distorted to bring restoration of the normal proportions and the proper functions.

He, who was the David that was to come, was born in the city of David and thus He had to start where His father David began.

He was to receive the crown and the throne in the way of perfect obedience and thus began by humbling Himself when taking on the very nature of man in the days when Herod was king.

It was only in this way that the words of David could be fulfilled: "The LORD has spoken to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand until I have made Thy enemies Thy footstool.' "

Now we speak of "the year of our Lord." And we date our events after His coming into the flesh.



Now we speak of the years before the birth of Christ, and we number our years as they have elapsed after His birth.

He *is* the David who was to come and God *has* given Him the throne of His father David, as the angel Gabriel promised to Mary by the command of the LORD.

Also today the roles seem to be reversed in many respects, but it only seems to be that way. Although the years are numbered and the calendar is arranged according to the time which has elapsed since the birth of the Saviour, fewer and fewer people acknowledge His rule and supremacy.

It seems to be sheer mockery to number our years after His birth and to count from the moment when He was born in the city of David. What influence does He have on the events that take place and the development of history? Do the nations come to bow down before Him and do the peoples hasten to bring Him tribute?

Today we are as much convinced of it that He is the David of whom the prophets spoke as Matthew was when he wrote "his" gospel.

With gladness and confidence we number our years and days after His birth, for He rules on high.

We enter the new year with confidence and great joy in our hearts.

Rejoice, your Lord is King. His kingdom cannot fail. He sits at God's right hand till all His foes submit.

Rejoice, He comes again.

VO

Dear Readers

It is a privilege, but sometimes also a challenge, to be involved in the publishing, and printing of literature with the aim to promote the biblical Reformed doctrine for all spheres of life.

As publishers of Clarion, *along with the editors, it is our committed endeavour regularly to present to you, our readers, a magazine with the aim to stimulate a Christian lifestyle and to direct us in the way of the covenant of grace.*

We therefore wish to express our sincere thanks to our editor, Prof. J. Geertsema, and assistant editors, Prof. K. Deddens, Rev. J. de Jong, Prof. C. van Dam, and Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, for their untiring efforts to fill the pages of Clarion. *Most of the time there is much research and study before an article flows out of the typewriter or computer. May the Lord grant them faithfulness and much wisdom to continue their task. At this time we also wish to thank Rev. Cl. Stam for his contributions in the past. He has now taken up the task of editor of* Reformed Perspective.

The steady growth of subscribers and the faithful readership of many is hereby gratefully acknowledged. The continuous flow of family advertisements — which make Clarion *a real family magazine — and business advertisements underpin the financial structure of* Clarion *and are instrumental in keeping the subscription rate reasonable.*

Although it is not the property of Premier Printing, we urge each and everyone to subscribe and read the very interesting and instructive magazine Reformed Perspective *as a complement to* Clarion. *For a small community as the Canadian Reformed Churches, we can be very thankful that the Lord enables us, by the efforts of many, to publish two attractive magazines of high calibre content. Let's not withold them from ourselves and our children.*

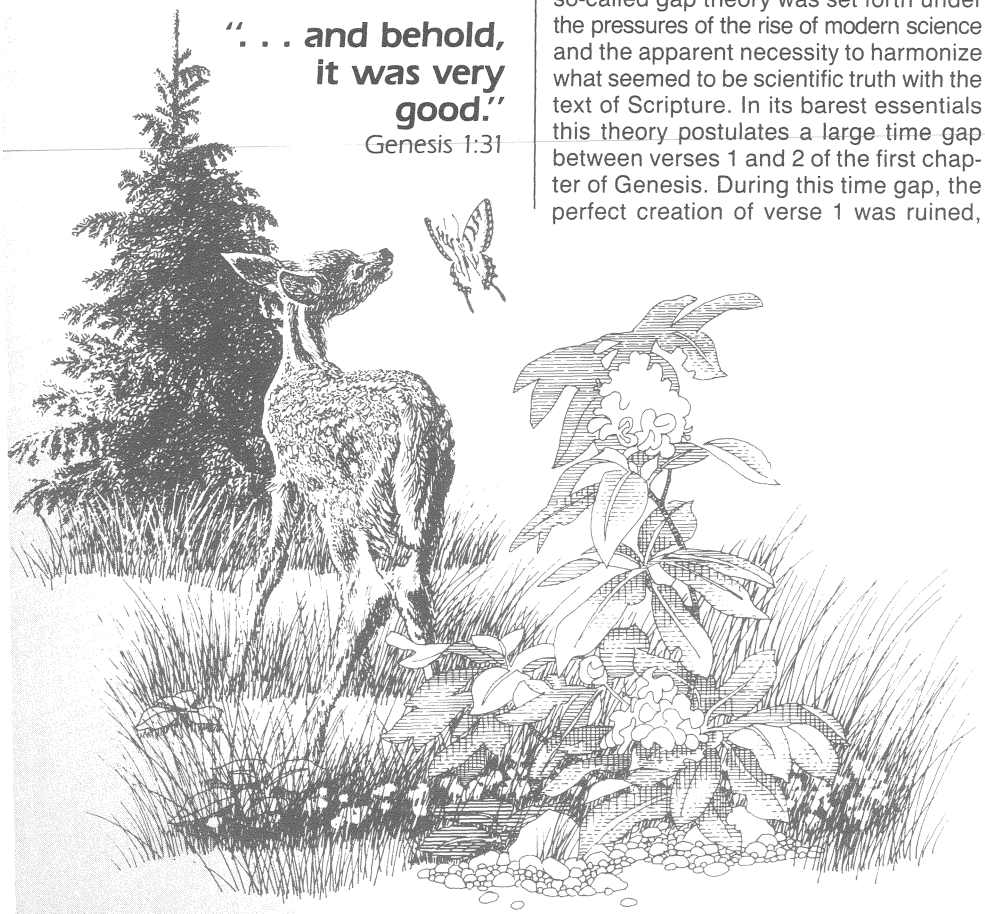
May the Lord grant us a truly Christian festive season and a blessed New Year, wherein the love for His kingdom fills our lives.

G. KUIK

Is there a time gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?[1]

The first two verses (and sentences) of Scripture read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters." How do these two statements relate to each other?

Traditionally it has been explained this way. "The first verse serves as a broad, comprehensive statement of the fact of creation. Verse two describes the earth as it came from the hands of the Creator and as it existed at the time when God commanded the light to shine forth."[1] Since Exodus 20:11 informs us that "in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them," verse two of Genesis 1 is part of the first day. It is also clear from the same passage that the beginning of the creation work of God (referred to in Genesis 1:1) was on that first day as well.



The gap theory

Early in the nineteenth century, the so-called gap theory was set forth under the pressures of the rise of modern science and the apparent necessity to harmonize what seemed to be scientific truth with the text of Scripture. In its barest essentials this theory postulates a large time gap between verses 1 and 2 of the first chapter of Genesis. During this time gap, the perfect creation of verse 1 was ruined, presumably by the fall of Satan. This ruined earth is pictured in verse 2. The conditions there described were caused by God's judgment in the form of a flood, followed by a global ice-age when the light and the heat from the sun were somehow removed. All the fossils, be they of plants, animals or humans, which are found on the earth today date from that destructive time period. These fossils do not bear any genetic relationship with life as now found on the earth. Proponents of this theory "have almost uniformly appealed to it for the harmonization of huge quantities of time required by evolutionary scientists and the rather recent creation Genesis seems to present."[2] With the first world ruined, a subsequent restoration was needed. This we find recorded beginning with Genesis 1:3.

What are the arguments for such a time gap? Since this is a rather popular theory, let us consider the arguments one by one and weigh each one as to its validity.[3]

"To create" and "to make"

The first argument for the gap theory that can be mentioned is that according to the proponents of this theory, the Hebrew verb meaning "to create" must be rigidly separated from the Hebrew verb "to make." "To create" means to make from nothing and "to make" never means that, but only refers to making out of material that is already present. (The verb "to form" is also grouped with "to make" in this context.) It is then argued that in Genesis 1:1 we read: "In the beginning God *created* heaven and earth," but that elsewhere it says: "in six days the LORD *made* heaven and earth" (Exodus 20:11; also see Genesis 2:1-3); that is, God then prepared the heavens and the earth from material that was at hand. According to this argument, Genesis 1:1 therefore describes a completely different event from that recounted in verses 3 and following in the same chapter. Genesis 1:1 does

not speak of the work of God described in Genesis 1:3-2:3, but relates to an earlier work of God, a world that had been *created* before the present world was *made* from the ruined first world.

The question of course arises whether such a rigid distinction can be made between "to create" and "to make" (and "to form"). The answer is no. The evidence is as follows. Although it is true, as we have seen in the preceding article, that the verb "to create" expresses better than any other word the idea of an absolute creation, a making from nothing, yet, we should not drive a wedge or artificial division between "to create" and "to make." After all, both are used of God's work with respect to the origin of the world. Scripture must be compared with Scripture. When this is done, then the only conclusion that can be drawn is that the statement "God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) and the statement "the LORD made the heaven and the earth" (Exodus 20:11) both refer to the same event and not to two different events. The reason for this conclusion is that the verbs "to create" and "to make" are used interchangeably in speaking of God's creation work.

This interchangeability can be demonstrated from Genesis 1 and 2. About the creation of man we read: "Let us *make* man" (Genesis 1:26); "God *created* man" (Genesis 1:27) and compare also "the LORD God *formed* man" (Genesis 2:7). Although with the creation of man there are different connotations of the verbs used (cf. Genesis 2:7), there is an interchangeable usage. Similarly we read that "God *created* the great sea monsters" (Genesis 1:21) and that "God *made* the beasts of the earth" (Genesis 1:25). Here too the terms are used interchangeably. When God called the sea creatures into being (Genesis 1:20), He created (Genesis 1:21). When He called the creatures of the earth into being (Genesis 1:24), He made them (Genesis 1:25). This synonymous usage is also found in Genesis 2:4. "These are the generations of the heaven and the earth when they were *created*, in the day when the LORD God *made* the earth and the heaven." So, just from Genesis 1 and 2 it is already evident that "to create" and "to make" are used interchangeably. This can also be demonstrated from elsewhere in the Old Testament,[4] but let this suffice.

The other Old Testament passages that speak of creation must be interpreted within the light of Genesis 1 and 2 as we have just seen it. When, therefore, the fourth commandment speaks of God's making the heaven and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, then this refers to what we read in Genesis 1:1-2:25. That is the only creation work that Scripture speaks of. And when Ezra said "Thou art the LORD, Thou alone; Thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them" (Nehemiah 9:6), then this too refers to the same creation work of God. There are not two creation works, namely Genesis 1:1 and then separate from that what follows in Genesis 1 and 2.

Sequential action?

A second argument used to plead for a time gap between the first two verses of Genesis is that verse 2 starts in the Hebrew with "and" and thus represents sequential action. First what is described in verse 1 occurred and then later what we read in verse 2. First God created the heaven and the earth and then (according to this argument) verse 2 literally reads, "*And* the earth *became* without form and void." This rendering thus indicates that there is a time gap between these verses.

In response, it should be noted that translating "and" is misreading the Hebrew.[5] According to Hebrew grammar, something that happened subsequently would be expressed by the following order: "and" + verb + subject. That is the normal narrative order in a verbal clause. Here in Genesis 1:2 however the order is "and" + subject + verb. This is the order used for circumstantial clauses. Such a clause describes the condition or circumstance. In this case, verse 2 describes the earth as God originally created it. These were the circumstances and condition when God had called the earth into being and when He created light. Verse 2, therefore, does not describe how the earth became at some time after the creation of everything.

In light of the above, it is with good reason that the Revised Standard Version leaves out "and" in its translation of this verse. In this way any wrong impression can be avoided, such as that something happened subsequent to verse 1. The New International Version translates: "Now the earth was formless and empty." This gets the disjunctive, explanatory sense of the Hebrew "and" across.

Connected with this treatment of "and" is the desire by gap theory adherents to translate "was" in verse 2 ("the earth was without form and void) by "became" or "had become." "And the earth became (or 'had become') without form and void." In this way the idea of sequence in time is conveyed. However, such a translation is without any foundation. In circumstantial clauses the verb "to be" functions as a copula and is for that reason often omitted. Here it is included to stress that this is how it was in the beginning, at the time of God's creation work of the first day.

Two other important arguments for a time gap have been put forward. We hope to consider these as well as other factors in understanding verse 2 the next time.

C. VAN DAM

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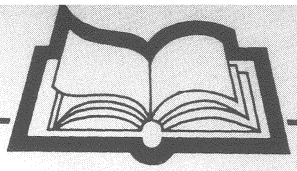
1 E.J. Young, *Studies in Genesis One* (1964), 14.
2 W.W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled* (1976), 8. Also see p.7
3 For an extensive treatment of all the arguments, see *ibid.*, 51-146. What follows in this and in the next article is in part indebted to this work.
4 *Ibid.*, 56-71
5 For more precise and technical information on what follows in very popular terminology in this article, see *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar* as ed. and enlarged by E. Kautzsch, 2nd ed. rev. A.E. Cowley (1910, 1966), sec. 156a, 141e,i; P. Jouon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (1923, 1982), sec. 154m.

Hymn 25:1, 3

All glory, laud, and honour
To Thee, Redeemer, King,
To whom the lips of children
Made loud hosannas ring.
Thou art the King of Israel,
Thou, David's royal Son,
Who in the Lord's Name
comest,
The King and Blessed One.

To Thee before Thy passion
They sang their hymns of
praise;
To Thee, now high exalted,
Our melody we raise.
Thou didst accept their praises;
Accept the prayers we bring,
Who in all good delightest,
Thou good and gracious King.



"The meek shall obtain fresh joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall exult in the Holy One of Israel." Isaiah 29:19

Fresh Joy!

The prophet Isaiah was called to announce the judgment of God upon Jerusalem, the holy city. He foretold a punishment by degrees, in which the apostate leaders of the city would be afflicted with ever increasing degrees of blindness. The city of God would be judged, purged and purified. But in an instant the LORD God would also return to the meek and humble of the city! They were to be exalted, and fresh joy would rise for them like a summer's day sun.

Who were the meek and poor of the land? The meek are those who follow God's commandments and make His service their aim. Scripture says that Moses was a very meek man, "more than all men that were on the face of the earth," Numbers 12:3. This description points to Moses' trust in God and to his consciousness of being a servant of God. God's servant is one who willingly lives in subjection to Him, and follows His every command. So here, in Isaiah, the meek were those who submitted themselves to God's just judgment in the exile, without resistance, and who looked to the LORD for deliverance and restoration.

This restoration was on its way! Literally the passage says, "Joy in the LORD will be added to the meek!" and, as Calvin says, the prophet here describes, "not a joy which continues, but rather a joy which is new." The term points to an adding to joy by degrees, so that as the wicked are punished, the righteous will grow in an ever greater vindication of their position, and an ever greater sense of joy and thankfulness to God.

And these words of prophecy came true! For it was precisely those, the poorest of the land, and the survivors, who shared the new joy in the building of the second temple. It was those who had a humble readiness to be taught by God who rejoiced with fresh joy as the LORD began to show His love and favour again. Yet even with these blessings, the essential joy was still outstanding. For the *new* joy comes with the creation of the *new* thing, (Isaiah 43:19). Joy is increased with the dawn of the age of salvation.

And the Scriptures record the wonderful events of salvation in precisely these terms. Isaiah had said, "Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased its joy," Isaiah 9:3; and indeed, this is how it all happened. In Luke 2:10 the angel says to the shepherds, ". . . for behold, I bring you good news of a *great* joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." So, too, Matthew says of the wise men that "when they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with *great* joy," Matthew 2:10.

From this point the same note continues in the great events of Christ's life, the events which mark God's glorious redemption. On the morning of the resurrection the disciples "departed quickly from the tomb with fear and *great* joy . . . ," Matthew 28:8. At the hour of the ascension the disciples also returned "to Jerusalem with *great* joy . . . ," Luke 24:52. And when the preaching of the gospel of the resurrection came to Samaria after Pentecost, we read that "there was much joy in that city," Acts 8:8.

From the birth of Christ to His ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit we see one ascending line, a line of joy *increased*. The LORD God adds fresh joy day by day in the hour of His salvation. With the coming of redemption in Christ, every day is a day of added blessings, a day of fresh joy.

Where does this joy find its root? It comes with the knowledge that the covenant is maintained and confirmed on God's side, by a mighty wonder of *His* hand. Where men realize that they no longer can expect to present to God anything from their side in order to restore the covenant of the beginning, He opens the door to the unexpected. He provides a Saviour! And for those who meekly accept the just punishment of God over sin, this gift of a Saviour is a message of surprising and unexpected joy! For in the gift of a Saviour the ancient line of faith and trust in God may be opened to us again!

His message still rings true for us today. Repeatedly, *He* adds the joy day by day. From our side, faith wavers and even languishes. Our own performance in the duties of our faith remind us that we can expect nothing for our salvation from ourselves. But the hour of redemption has come in Christ! And the message of the birth of the Saviour is a message of increasing joy — fresh joy for all who humbly submit to His will. For He provides us with His Spirit, and renews hungry and thirsty souls through a living communion with His broken body and shed blood! He imparts the gifts of His victory — forgiveness and life — in Word and sacrament day by day, wherever His church is gathered.

So every day may be a day of fresh joy for us. For the remembrance of His birth implies for us the beginning of a new life! We, too, may be filled with great joy, the joy of a new age! And we may be sure that our joy will increase — until we come to the fullness of joy in the Spirit. May we celebrate the gospel of His coming in a way that daily we grow in fresh joy in the LORD!

J. DE JONG

1988

An always positive balance

When making up the balance of a year that has almost passed by, one has a tendency to look at those things which one had wanted to achieve and which have eluded a person.

We always begin a new year with new plans, new hopes, new ideals and new expectations, although experience has taught us that usually all these expectations and plans were aimed too high. As far as this is concerned, the balance always shows a deficit.

If we approached our review of the past year from this angle, we would, indeed, end up with a deficit.

However, when realizing that we have not deserved whatever we have, and that we have even forfeited many things because of disobedience and ingratitude, there is only reason for thankfulness and we end up with a surplus, giving thanks to God for His immeasurable mercies and goodness.

Ministers of the Word

A "deficit" is to be noted as far as the number of ministers of the Word is concerned.

None of those still serving was taken away by the Lord and "promoted to glory." This was the case with two of them who no longer served a congregation.

In the previous year review we could not mention that the Rev. C. Oly passed away at the very end of 1987. Be it mentioned this time as yet. He did not have an easy life and encountered many difficulties. However, the Lord has relieved him from all this and with all the saints he may be looking forward to the day of Christ, when the fruit also of his life will be revealed.

In the past year the Rev. A. B. Roukema was relieved from his task on this earth. During the last years we did not hear much of him any more. He did not conduct a worship service for a long time due to failing health. The Lord allowed him to reach the age of eighty, and took him unto Himself without much suffering.

One who was not a minister of the Word, yet should be mentioned here, is our sister G.R. Selles. She, too, was taken up into glory after a lengthy illness which, however, did not prevent her from giving her best until the very end. Having attended the Convocation of our College in September, she departed shortly after that to be with the Lord and all who have been gathered around Him already. Until the end she kept her cheerful disposition and therein showed the happiness which the children of the Lord possess in this life, in spite of disappointments and loss.

Three more ministers left the active service in the Canadian churches while a fourth one is waiting for visa to Australia, there to serve a church.

The Rev. M. VanBeveren retired from active service although he still lends a helping hand to the Providence Church in Edmonton which he served last. Neerlandia saw the Rev. A. DeJager leave to serve a church in the Netherlands, and Orangeville became vacant as well.

On the other hand, one of this year's graduates from the College accepted a call to serve as Hamilton's missionary in Brazil, namely Rev. J. Kroeze, and another candidate, Cand. W. B. Slomp, accepted a call to the church at Houston, B. C. One more brother has been declared eligible for call and is awaiting one, namely Drs. D. Moes.

After Mr. Slomp has passed his peremptory examination and has been ordained and installed, the number of vacancies in the churches still stands at nine, which is slightly over 22%.

As for the worship services, Southern Ontario benefits from the presence of the College and the professors, who conduct services in vacant churches practically every Sunday. Southern British Columbia as well as northern Alberta are able to benefit from the services of retired ministers, so that in general not many "reading services" are conducted without a minister. It is the "outlying areas" such as Lower Sackville and Neerlandia that experience most the lack of ministers. Besides, however important the worship services are, there is much more to be done in a congregation of which now the elders have to take care all by themselves without the help of a minister.

One of the ministers, the Rev. J. Visscher of Langley, B. C., saw his years of extra study crowned with the Doctor of Ministry degree, conferred upon him by Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, PA. The result of his thesis is being gratefully used by many congregations for the instruction of the youth of the church in Catechism Classes.

Calls

The churches that were or are vacant did extend calls in order to fill the vacancy. All those which are vacant did call either a minister or a candidate.

The church at Hamilton saw its empty place filled, when the Rev. Cl. Stam of Fergus accepted after having declined a call from the church at Hoogeveen, the Netherlands.

The Rev. J. Moesker arrived in Cloverdale, B. C., having accepted its call in the previous year, while the Immanuel

Church in Edmonton was gladdened by the arrival of the Rev. E. Kampen.

The Rev. C. Bosch is awaiting final clearance to leave Canada and serve the church at Kelmscott, W. A., there to join the other two Canadian ministers serving our Australian sister churches.

The Rev. W. den Hollander of Winnipeg accepted the call to Orangeville, but will not go there till some time next year.

Expansion

No new churches were instituted this past year, except in the mission field in Irian Jaya, where Manggelum rejoiced at the institution and the ordination of elders and deacons. It was beautiful that the first missionary to work there, the Rev. H. Knigge, as well as the secretary of the Toronto Mission Board, brother J. Boot, could be present at this occasion, both accompanied by their spouses.

As for the other mission field, the one in Brazil, the church at Surrey is considering having one missionary work in Recife. The whole situation is not yet clear, at least not to one who is not fully acquainted with all the aspects of the work in that country.

In our own country, Burlington West decided to take measures and to budget certain amounts with a view to future expansion, possibly in the Flamboro area.

Nothing has been heard lately of the plans to come to institution in the Aldergrove area of British Columbia.

Since the number of churches had increased considerably, it was investigated whether or not the Ontario region should be split into three classes instead of the present two. The suggestion could not find sufficient support and so it remains as is.

The Grand Rapids church is still maintaining contact with others who are looking for a soundly Reformed church where the Word of God rules supreme without reservations. For the time being the plans to call a minister specifically for this work have been shelved and the contacts are maintained by the Rev. P. Kingma.

The church at Carman, Manitoba, had contact with a Reformed church in the U.S.A., just south of the border.

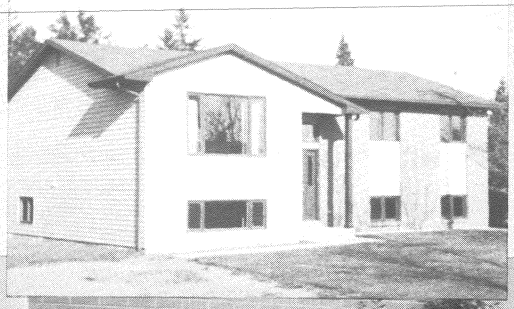
Buildings and properties

More and more children are born and more and more of them start attending the worship services. This necessitates either enlarging the existing building or building a new one, if the time is not there yet to institute another church.

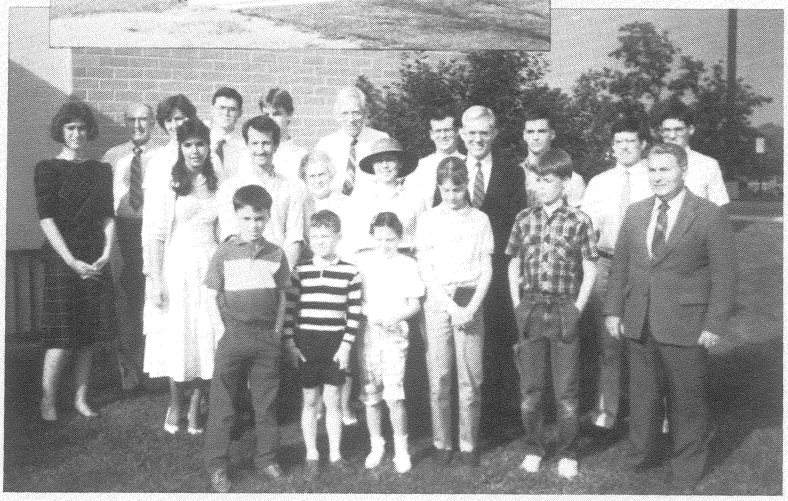
The church at Ancaster had a piece of land donated to it and is in the process of obtaining the necessary permits to erect a church building on it.

Neerlandia — new church building

Free Reformed Church at Byford, Western Australia



Lower Sackville — combined church building and manse



Tri-County Reformed Church congregation at Laurel, Maryland, U.S.A.

Brampton has purchased additonal land next to their existing church building, while the churches at Vernon and Grand Valley bought property to build on. Burlington South is also active in this field and may have succeeded in finding a suitable location.

Elora has been looking for property, while Calgary also discussed the possibility of acquiring something of their own.

Lynden dedicated their new church building, as did Attercliffe. Neerlandia, too, was allowed to begin worship in their new facilities. Orangeville discussed plans for adding to their existing building, while Smithville will have completed their addition by now. Burlington East is in the process of adding meeting rooms and other facilities to their premises, something which was long overdue.

Education

The situation regarding teachers is just as precarious as the situation with regard to ministers. Some schools had to drop grades because no staff could be found to teach the classes.

The Teachers' College provides a valuable service in training young men and young women for this work. When saying "young men," we may say more than we should, for it is especially the male sector which lacks sufficient occupants.

Thus far the large majority of graduates were female teachers and many of them entered the marriage state after some time. In many instances they still help out, but their first task is in their own family, and it is and should remain only in emergencies that they are to be requested to exchange the home for the classroom.

The Teachers' College finally acquired a place of its own when a building was purchased on Mohawk Road in Hamilton. For all the years of its existence facilities of the Cornerstone Church in Hamilton were used, but both the church and the college will be most happy to be on their own again without having to share anything. It will render the work much easier and orderly.

Although there is no realistic expectation that their plans and desires will be realized within a few years, yet a School Society was established in Vernon and the awareness of the calling of the parents is being kept alive also by these means. The same may be said of Calgary.

In the Chatham-London-Watford area discussions were held to investigate whether the parents could not establish a high school which is to serve the students of that region. Although no possibilities are seen at the moment, it is a reason for gratitude that the obligation is seen and that efforts are made to fulfil it.

Miscellaneous

For their mutual edification the ministers held their workshops. In Ontario these workshops are conducted at the College and usually one of the professors introduces a topic with one of the "plain" ministers giving a brief treatment of an aspect of the ministerial work in the afternoon.

In southern British Columbia there is a bi-monthly get-together where various aspects of the ministerial task are discussed and where it is tried to answer any questions which may arise in connection with it.

Our Theological College could operate without hindrance during the past year. Changes will occur in the coming year.

Dr. J. Faber delivered his last Principal's Statement and also gave the main address at the Convocation held in September. He will retire by September 1, 1989.

Various governors who completed their maximum nine years in that position may not be reappointed by the forthcoming general synod, and will thus be replaced by others.

It is and remains a cause for concern that the number of students from the churches is so very small, although we are thankful for the possibility to mean something for others who are attracted to the College because of its Reformed character. In all likelihood, no one will graduate this coming year who is going to present himself for the ecclesiastical examinations.

The churches remain active in their outreach. Not only is the work of mission continuing without interruption, also our own neighbourhoods are not forgotten. In Fergus services are videotaped and then "aired" via cable television. Vacation Bible Schools were conducted in many places, and *Evangel* is being distributed to homes in certain sections of town or city, with follow-up visits being made.

The mercy of Christ is shown in support to those who are suffering from drought or flood, from civil strife or disasters. The Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund sent support to Mozambique as well as to Somalia, with Korea still getting some assistance from Western congregations, where Africa is not forgotten either.

Care for the elderly is evident as well. The Mount Nemo Nursing Home in Burlington received permission to add thirty beds to their facilities, and several elderly brothers and sisters are being taken care of in that institution.

Manoah Manor in Langley expects to get the green light for adding twelve suites to the present building plus a ten-bed section for intermediate care, so that the brothers and sisters can remain in their own familiar environment as long as possible. Consultation of the list of members over 65 years of age brings to the conclusion that expansion will remain an ongoing thing in years to come.

The awareness of our political task is growing among our membership. Not everyone is all that much in favour of the Christian Heritage Party, but the fruit of the discussions is, among other things, that we are being confronted with the necessity of being active in this field, a field which has been neglected for too long. In many places the work of the Association for Reformed Political Action constitutes an important stimulant.

Conclusion

We have to come to a close and to a conclusion.

Again it has to be said that much more could have been mentioned and said. Events which were not included in this review are not for that reason considered to be of lesser importance. On the contrary, it is the plain and common things of every day which are most important and constitute the bulk of our life.

It is in these small and common things that we see and experience the care of our heavenly Father most clearly and constantly. It is from the every day events that the extraordinary happenings derive their importance and meaning.

Who does not have to confess that the blessings were abundant and that they came all of grace, undeserved?

Let us continue in gratitude, expecting even more in the coming year as well.

For the mercies of the LORD are without end. VO

Hymn 32:1

Christ, above all
glory seated,
King triumphant,
strong to save!
Dying, Thou hast
death defeated;
Buried, Thou hast
spoiled the grave.
Thou art gone where
now is given
What no mortal
might could gain,
On the eternal
throne of heaven,
In Thy Father's power
to reign.

The Word became flesh

The antithesis from the beginning

The evangelist John begins his gospel with his own story about the birth of the Saviour. He does it in a way that differs from Matthew's and Luke's. It is called more theological or even philosophical. It has been the custom to see John's gospel against the background of the Greek-Hellenistic religious movement of Gnosticism, which became the greatest danger for the church in the first centuries. Some have said that John's gospel was considerably influenced by this Gnosticism.

Recently New Testament scholars tend to discover a more Jewish background. They realize that in this gospel the conflict between Christ Jesus and the Jewish leaders receives a very important place. The conflict is mentioned already in the Prologue (1:9,11): "The true light . . . came to his own home, and his own people received him not." It is further pictured in the cleansing of the temple (2:13-22) and comes back in practically every chapter.

Because of this conflict between Christ and the Jews the gospel has been characterized as anti-Jewish, anti-Semitic. This characterization is incorrect. John did not write against the Jews as such. He placed the gospel in the light of the enmity of Gen. 3:15, the enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, the spiritual enmity between faith and unbelief, between Christ Jesus, the true Saviour, and Satan and his followers. It is the enmity of for or against Jesus Christ.

This spiritual enmity or antithesis is expressed in the Prologue, 1:1-18, immediately with the very first words: "In the beginning was the Word." It is further worked out in v. 14, where John writes that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." What the evangelist John expresses in these words is the same message which we hear from the apostle Paul: not the Law saves, but Christ Jesus. Not the law is the mediator between God and man, but Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, is.

In the beginning was the Word

These words remind us of the very beginning of the Word of God. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." With this act of creation the history of heaven and earth began. If we divide history into two dispensations, the old and the new, we can say that the old dispensation started with creation. In that beginning of Genesis 1, when God created heaven and earth, was the Word. This Word became flesh at the beginning of the new dispensation.

Throughout the ages the question has been asked why John called God's Son here "the Word." One of the answers was sought in the Greek philosophy of Stoicism. In this philosophy the same word is used, *Logos* as the term not so much for "Word" but rather for "Reason." This *Logos* or *Reason* is in the first place a universal spiritual power. It is called "World-Reason," the Reason that permeates everything and works in everything. Especially in (the mind of) man this universal Reason places its seeds, its sparks, so that man can reason and know god (= Reason), and can live a life which is ruled by reason and thus is not dominated by passions and emotions.

Now it has been said that John used this term *Logos-Reason* as a name for Jesus Christ in order to make the gospel acceptable to the Greek world. Christ Jesus is then pictured as the final revelation of the *Logos* which is at work in every person and was especially at work in many a Greek philosopher. It can be clear that this is not the correct answer to the question why John used this name.

The solution must be sought in the Old Testament. With the words "in the beginning" John goes back to creation. God created heaven and earth through His Word. God spoke and heaven and earth came into being. God spoke and there was light, there was a firmament, sun, moon and stars, plants and trees, fish and birds, and other animals. Psalm 33:6 says that "by the Word of the Lord the heavens were made." This faith of the Old (and New) Testament believers is so clearly expressed in Hebrews 11:3, "By faith we understand that the world was created by the Word of God."

The apostle Paul confesses the same truth in Col. 1:15ff., saying: "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born [first in rank, ruler] of all creation; for in Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or authorities — all things were created through Him and for Him." John writes in 1:3, "all things were made through Him and without Him was not anything made that was made."

We can also refer to the book of Proverbs, chapter 8, speaking about Wisdom as if it were a person. The vv. 27-31 read: "When He established the heavens, I was there, when He drew a circle on the face of the deep, when He made firm the skies above, when He established the fountains of the deep, when He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters might not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside Him, like a master workman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing before Him always, rejoicing in His inhabited world and delighting in the sons of man."

The conclusion can be that John teaches with this name *Logos, Word,* that the Jesus Christ whom he preaches as Saviour is the eternal Son of God through whom the Father created the universe.

The antithesis with the Law

Proverbs 8 was not only used by the New Testament church in connection with her faith in Christ Jesus as Son of God, through whom the Father not only created, but also redeemed. Proverbs 8 was also used by the Jews to glorify the Law. The Wisdom spoken of here was identified with the Law as given to Israel.

Important is here the apocryphal book *Ecclesiasticus, or the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach* (not to be confused with the canonical book Ecclesiastes). Chapter 24 speaks about "Wisdom" in line with Proverbs 8. I give a few quotations.

> Wisdom will praise herself, and will glory in the midst of her people. In the assembly of the Most High she will open her mouth, and in the presence of his host she will glory:
>
> "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and covered the earth like a mist.
>
> I dwelt in high places, and my throne was in a pillar of cloud.
>
> Alone I have made the circuit of the vault of heaven and have walked in the depth of the abyss.
>
> In the waves of the sea, in the whole earth, and in every people and nation I have gotten a possession.
>
> Among all these I sought a resting place; I sought in whose territory I might lodge."

Hymn 15:4

His government and royal power
Shall without end increase,
And He on David's throne shall reign
In everlasting peace.
On justice and on righteousness
His kingdom He shall build.
The LORD of hosts will show His zeal:
His word shall be fulfilled!

But wisdom, although being accepted here and there among the peoples, making them wise, like some gentile philosophers, was not truly accepted anywhere. Then, see what happened:

> Then the Creator of all things gave me a commandment, and the one who created me assigned a place for my tent. And he said, "Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance."

Mark also the following words:

> From eternity, in the beginning, he created me, and for eternity I shall not cease to exist.
>
> In the holy tabernacle I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion.
>
> In the beloved city likewise he gave me a resting place, and in Jerusalem was my dominion.
>
> So I took root in an honoured people, in the portion of the Lord, who is their inheritance." (24:1-12).

Jesus Sirach says here about a personified Wisdom that Wisdom was present at creation, in the beginning, and that Wisdom was involved in God's creation work. The apocryphal author further declares that this Wisdom figure could not find a place to stay among the gentile nations, but was commanded to set up her tent and dwell (in a tent) in the midst of Israel, God's honoured people. It was in Israel's capital, Jerusalem, that Wisdom established itself.

We need to read also vv. 19-23:

> Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my produce.
>
> For the remembrance of me is sweeter than honey, and my inheritance sweeter than the honeycomb.
>
> Those who eat me will hunger for more, and those who drink me will thirst for more.
>
> Whoever obeys me will not be put to shame, and those who work with my help will not sin.

In these verses Sirach ascribes saving power to Wisdom. It saves a person from sinning. It makes him live a holy life. Therefore we should not be amazed reading the next words:

> All this is the book of the covenant of the Most High God, the law which Moses commanded us as an inheritance for the congregations of Jacob.

Wisdom, meant to be the same as the Wisdom of Proverbs 8, is identified with the Torah, the Law of Moses, which the Most High gave to His chosen people Israel. Of this personified figure, Wisdom-Law, it is said that she was "in the beginning"; that through her God created; that she was given to God's people to set up her tent and to dwell in Israel's midst.

This gives us a picture of the Jewish thinking about the Law of Moses, the Torah, in those days. We could render the Jewish view in this way:

> In the beginning was the Law, and the Law was with God, and the Law was divine. She was in the beginning with God; all things were made through her. . . .
>
> And the Law became body (in the book of the Law) and set up her tent and dwelt among us (in Jerusalem, in the midst of God's chosen people Israel). And we, Israel, have seen her glory as the glory of God, full of grace and wisdom.

John writes, "The Word was *God.*" In Greek this is *Theos.* This could not be said of the Torah. It could not be identified with God. But it was said to be *divine,* which is in Greek *theios,* a difference of only one letter.

The greater glory of Christ Jesus

When we see the Jewish view regarding the Law in the background, we understand John's prologue, and with it his gospel, in a better way. John is stating here the antithesis between two Mediators between God and man, two Saviours.

The Jews said: We are God's covenant people, an honoured people, a worthy people. We received from God the Law as a Saviour. The Law is the Mediator between God and us. The Law leads us to, and keeps us in communion with God. Through the Law, and through eating the Law, more and more, we can overcome sin. If we listen to the Law, we will not sin. The Law, thus, is our redemption.

No, says John, this is the great Jewish lie. The Law, that written code, cannot save. It cannot make a person righteous. God has given a better Saviour. The Word, His Son. In the beginning He, the Word, was. He was not just divine; He was God; God the Son. Not through the personified figure of Law-Wisdom, but through the Word, who is Christ Jesus, God created all things.

It is this eternal Word, this eternal Son of God, who became our human flesh and blood; became a human being, our brother. This Son of God so, as the man Jesus of Nazareth, set up His tent among us. He lived among us, and we have seen His glory, a glory as of the only begotten, the one and only Son of God, full of grace and truth.

In Him truly the grace of God is revealed. Grace for sinners. Grace in His blood that was shed at the cross. In Him is God's truth fully revealed. The Law is a shadow of the truth. The truth itself, the reality of the shadows, has come in Christ Jesus.

The Law does not make us children of God. On the contrary, the Law condemns sinners. But Christ, who is the Lamb of God that was slaughtered, is the only true Saviour through His blood.

He, the true light, was in the world, and the world was made through Him, yet the world knew Him not. He came to His own home, and His own people received Him not. But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

J. GEERTSEMA

Education in the Word in an age of the picture[1]

Introduction

Let me begin by raising the issues that were brought to my attention and on which I was asked to comment.[1]

We live in a society that is becoming more and more conditioned by images (especially television). Such conditioning generally results in quick, but also much superficial understanding. Verbal communication no longer has the uncontested place it once had. (Cf. J. Ellul, *The Humiliation of the Word* [1985].)

All this has implications for the teaching process. If our children are likewise conditioned by images, and if pictures have a paramount place in their life, how are we effectively to pass on The Word and the full implications of the gospel in all subject areas to them? How can we teach our children to listen patiently to *God's* Word when much of society today impatiently and selectively grasps what matters to them from pictures they see? More specifically, what exactly is the role of the Word and listening at school, as opposed to that of images and pictures?

A related area of concern is that unless our children are able to listen to and understand God's Word, there will more and more be a dichotomy between what is said and heard in church (and to some extent in school) and what is said and heard in their "everyday life."

What does Scripture and now specifically the Old Testament tell us about the place and function of the Word and pictures in the teaching process? How can these questions (and answers) help us in providing direction in our own educational endeavours? What is the message of the second commandment for Reformed teachers?

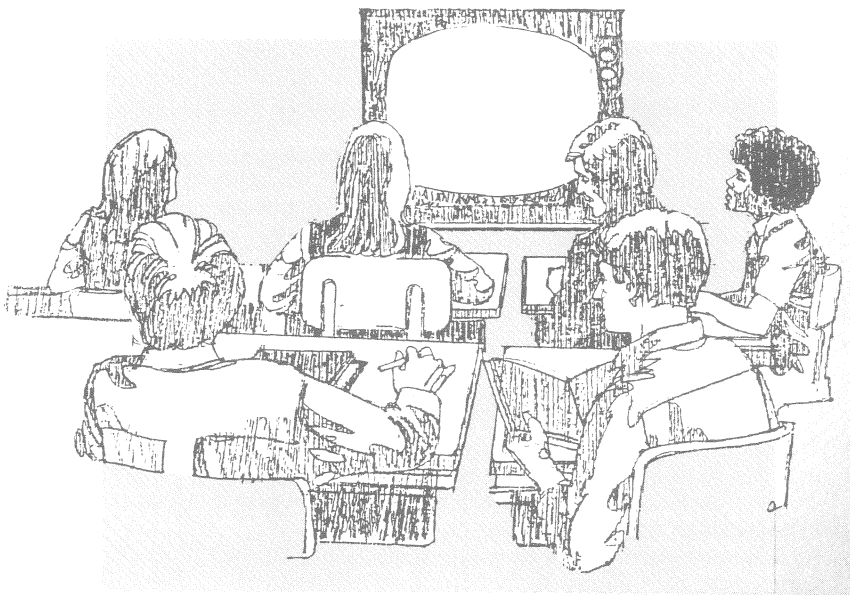
Reflecting on all these concerns, I am only too conscious of the fact that what follows will only be a small beginning to answering them.

Our task as teachers

Before we get into these questions as such, it is necessary to highlight one aspect of our teaching office so that we can approach the problems raised in a fruitful manner. The aspect I am thinking of is that Scripture speaks of a teacher as a father and their students as children (sons). Thus when David in Ps. 34:11 speaks as a teacher, he says: "Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord." Think also how the Lord Jesus calls the students of the Pharisees who perform exorcisms, "sons" of the Pharisees (Matt. 12:27; cf. Acts 23:6). One finds this manner of speaking especially in the book of Proverbs. It is generally agreed that when "father" is mentioned, the teacher-father, the wise man, is usually in view rather than the natural parent and that when "son" is mentioned, the student is in view.[2] However, there are enough passages in Proverbs that do refer to the natural parent-child relationship (e.g., Prov. 1:8), or passages that are ambiguous as to their first reference, to underline that there really is no essential difference in the duty of parent or teacher when it comes to instructing and promoting the growth of true knowledge.

Now the name "father" for teacher raises all kinds of positive connotations and allusions with respect to the teaching task, but within our present context I would like to underline one in particular. Their task concerns the very life of their children. Parents who gave physical life to their children are also to be God's instruments for giving their offspring life in communion with God, eternal life, as well as the ability to make a living. (The religious and the practical, as man today often puts it, went together.) A teacher's task is likewise. It too is life-giving, with a view to equipping for life service in this world and with a view to eternal life. (Cf. e.g., Ps. 78:5-7; Prov. 5:13ff.).[3] Also a teacher's mandate, though in the first instance given by parents, is ultimately from God.

Now as those who are in the service of God, the Father of us all, we do well to consider how He, our heavenly Father, has taught and teaches His people. The manner in which He teaches His own can be instructive for our present topic. The first thing we notice is the priority of the Word, although what is seen is not to be neglected.



The priority of the Word

When God relates to His people, He speaks to them. Thus He blessed Adam and Eve after their creation (Gen. 1:28-30); He commanded the man about eating from every tree except the tree of knowledge of good and evil (Gen. 2:16ff.) and after the fall into sin, He called man and spoke to him (Gen. 3:9). By speaking, He informed Adam and Eve of the way of life and of the promise of the coming salvation. It is by speaking that God communicated to many more since He addressed earth's first couple. When prophets spoke on God's behalf, as His mouthpiece (cf. Ex. 4:15ff.; Jer. 1:9), then their message was prefaced either by "the word of the LORD" came to . . ." (e.g., Jer. 1:4; Hos. 1:1; Joel 1:1) or by "thus says the LORD" (e.g., Ex. 4:22; 5:1; 1 Sam. 2:27; Jer. 33:2, 10,12). In the fullness of time, when God came in the flesh, then with divine authority the Son said, "truly I say to you" (e.g., Matt. 5:18,26; cf. Luke 5:1; Jn. 3:34, 14:24). Clearly the spoken word is of paramount importance. This is a consistent theme throughout Scripture. The first emphasis is on what is heard and not on what is seen.

This emphasis on the word does not mean that the visual is lacking in God's relationship with His people and in His revelation of Himself to them and His teaching them. We will come back to this point. For now we can note that we often read that "God appeared . . . ," for example, to Abraham in the form of a man (Gen. 18:1), to Moses in a burning bush (Ex. 3:2), and to Solomon in a dream (1 Kings 3:5). The phrase "God appeared" has the literal meaning "God was seen" or "was visible." It is striking how God's glory appeared to Israel in the pillar of cloud and fire during the Exodus and wilderness wandering (Ex. 16:10; cf. 13:21ff.). So Israel could see God's presence and know He was with them. In this way God met the human need to see and not only to hear. However, there is no doubt about the fact that the high point in God's self-revelation came when the LORD *spoke* directly to His people from Mount Sinai. So awestruck were the people that they asked Moses to speak on God's behalf to them: "but let not God speak to us, lest we die" (Ex. 20:19).

Another example that comes to mind of the priority of the Word is God's response to Moses' request, "I pray Thee, show me Thy glory" (Ex. 33:18). Moses wanted a visible guarantee that God would be going with them to Canaan. God obliged by showing Moses as much of His glory as possible (Ex. 33:19, 21ff.). However, the stress in God's self-revelation was clearly placed on God's speaking and explaining His name Yahweh. When the actual revelation took place, we do not even read of the visible revelation of God's glory, but we are informed of what God said in explaining the significance of His name Yahweh. "Yahweh, Yahweh, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers

"Come, O sons, listen . . ."

Psalm 34:11

upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation" (Ex. 34:6ff.). What Moses heard was of more significance than what Moses saw in seeing the true glory of God.

The primary stress on the Word, rather than on something visual must be placed within the wider context of how Scripture informs us of the place of the Word of God. God's Word is effective. It accomplishes that for which God spoke it. We read in Is. 55:10ff.: "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it." (Cf. Heb. 4:12). That is because this word is God's Word. It is this Word that works faith. As Rom. 10:17 puts it: "So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes from the preaching of Christ." What the eye sees does not as such work faith. In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, the plea of the rich man in torment that Lazarus be sent to warn his brothers lest they also end up in such anguish is answered in a telling way. "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced if some one should rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31).

Over against the tendency of fallen man to trust his eyes more than his ears, the Scriptures tell us that the Word of God is inspired by God (2 Tim. 3:16) and is truth (Jn. 17:17). It sets the standard. The Word can therefore even specifically refer to commandments. Indeed, what we call the Ten Commandments are referred to in the Old Testament as the Ten Words (Ex. 34:28; Deut. 4:13; 10:4). God's commandments can be obeyed, for "the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can do it" (Deut. 30:14; cf. Roman 10:8).

The teaching task and the priority of the Word

Coming now to our task as teachers, we have a special responsibility to pass on the Word of God and its implications for all of life to our students. The *Word* has to be passed on. That indicates already something of the priority of language in our instruction. It is *God's* Word. That indicates something of the authority with which we must speak when we pass the treasures of the Word on. God's Word demands to be heard! Listening is a must.

We need wisdom here. We saw that as teachers we are "fathers" to our student "children." Our concern includes the fostering of the true knowledge of God and working for that life relationship with God. That cannot be done overnight. It takes time and the confidence of the students needs to be won. We need to look at the long range perspective with each teacher doing his part in awakening in our students the positive desire to know more about the LORD so that they are eager to listen. So we seek to be God's instruments for imparting life to those in our charge.

We can be highly motivated, for these are children of Father in heaven and they *are* already in a covenant relationship with Him. So you as teachers too have your place within the context of the home and the church in seeking as it were to impart faith. For that reason, listening is indeed imperative! Faith comes from hearing the Word (cf. Rom. 10:17; Heb. 4:12). Without faith the Word cannot be truly discerned (I Cor. 2:14).

But how has God helped His children to really listen and be confronted by the wide scope and great depth of the Word of God and so begin to understand the Word, also as it affects all of life? It is at this point that I am convinced that we can speak of the need for images and visual aids in the language of the relationship between God and us, — mind you, not on their own, but in a serving relationship to the Word.

— To be continued

C. VAN DAM

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[1]What follows (in three installments) is a slightly revised version of an introduction presented to a conference of Canadian Reformed teachers in Langley, BC, on 30 August 1988 and in Chatham, ON, on 28 October 1988.

[2]See, e.g., 1:2ff; 3:1,11,21; 4:10,20; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1 etc. See, e.g., W.H. Gispen, *Spreuken* (Korte Verklaring; 1952) I, 25 and H. Haag in G.J. Botterweck and H. Ringgren, eds., *The Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* II (1975), 152.

[3]See further on this C. Van Dam, "Wisdom, Knowledge and Teaching," *CRTA Magazine,* 15:2 (1985).

The Protestant churches in Nazi Germany 4

Persecution

After 1934, and especially after the outbreak of war in 1939, persecution of Christians became widespread. Mass arrests took place; in 1935, for example, a declaration denouncing the "German Faith" movement of the "German Christians" resulted in the arrest of 700 ministers. Leading churchmen, both Protestant and Roman Catholic, languished in concentration camps. Karl Barth was forced to return to Switzerland. Confessing church presses were closed. So was Bonhoeffer's seminary. He himself would be imprisoned in 1943 and executed in 1945. Niemoeller also was imprisoned. Outspoken pastors and church members suffered a similar fate or were drafted into the army as quickly as possible. During the war the pastorate of the confessing churches was spread dangerously thin. The letters and stories of imprisoned Christians provide a moving tribute to the few but dedicated church members who withstood not only false doctrine, but also a diabolical regime.[1]

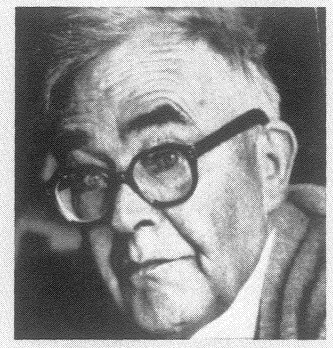
Failures and achievements

Resistance, however, was engaged in by too small a minority; it started too late, and it was too hesitant. Not only Karl Barth — actually one of the leaders of the opposition movement — admitted shortcomings in his stance under Hitler, but so did Niemoeller and many others. After the war, in October 1945, the Stuttgart Manifesto was published wherein the German churches expressed their collective guilt:

> With great pain we say: Through us, infinite suffering has been brought upon many peoples and countries. What we have often declared before our congregations, that we now declare in the name of the whole church: For long years we struggled in the name of Jesus Christ against the spirit which found its frightful expression in the National Socialist regime of force; nevertheless, we accuse ourselves of not having confessed more courageously, prayed more faithfully, believed more joyfully and loved more ardently. Now a new beginning must be made in our churches.[2]

There was reason for self-reproach and penitence. It is only fair to say, however, that there were also achievements, inadequate as they may have been. Perhaps the situation was best described by Karl Barth when he wrote:

> The Confessing Church stands condemned by the message of its own Barmen Confession. And for this, it has been properly and improperly reproached.
>
> Properly insofar as a strong Christian Church . . . should not have remained on the defensive and should not have fought on its own narrow front alone;
>
> Improperly insofar as on this admittedly all too narrow front a serious battle was waged. . . .



Karl Barth admitted shortcomings in his stance under Hitler

> In proportion to its task, the Church has sufficient reason to be ashamed that it did not do more; yet in comparison with those other groups and institutions (the German universities and schools, the legal profession, business, theatre and art, the army and the trade unions) it has no reason to be ashamed; it accomplished far more than all the rest.[3]

Causes of the failures

To have done more than the rest was not enough, and the reasons why believers in Germany failed to prevent the Nazis from bringing disaster to their own country and to the world still deserve careful consideration. In his book from which I have quoted earlier, J.S. Conway suggests four main reasons for this failure.[4] I will summarize them, adding comments of my own. Conway's four reasons are:

1. Narrow individualism, especially the ingrained tradition of Pietism with its subjectivism; the belief that "politics do not concern the Church, and an almost Manichaean conviction that the affairs of political and social life are irredeemable." I would add that neither Barth or Barmen adequately addressed this problem.

2. Submissive allegiance to the state, that is, "the characteristic German readiness to accept the existing political order without criticism and to exact obedience to established authority." "The German church was not equipped with a theology adequate to sustain any critical attack upon the actions of its political rulers, and for that reason, even at the end of the Nazi era, there was no more than what Professor Wolf has called a 'reluctant resistance.' "

I agree here: the Lutheran teaching of two kingdoms, one of this world and political affairs and the other the Kingdom of God, paralyzed many. Yet to say, as at least one author did, that Karl Barth was a *Reformed* Protestant, and to see "in the political activism of that Calvinist

tradition a better protection against political totalitarianism than in the teaching of Luther,"[5] may be putting it too simply. First of all, Barth did not stand completely in the Reformed, Calvinist tradition. As K. Schilder showed, his theology did not comprehend the Calvinist stress on Christ as King and Redeemer of *all* spheres of life. Furthermore, many of Hitler's opponents were Lutherans, in Germany and in the Scandinavian countries. Although I, too, am inclined to say that a truly Reformed theology and preaching prepares the believer better than a truly Lutheran system to resist a tyrannical government, it is clear that one must beware of generalizations.

3. Pursuit of pseudo-Christian doctrines. The author refers here especially to the "German Christians" with their vague knowledge of Christianity and their political opportunism. Again I agree that this movement weakened the church considerably. At this point mention should also be made of the rapid process of secularization during the interwar years, and of the fact that the churches were *Volkskirchen,* where people of all convictions and none could feel at home. Indeed, as Barth said, the whole German church was so steeped in false, unbiblical theology that it hardly realized that Hitler was not the messiah until it was too late.

4. Doctrinaire anticommunism. The churches were conservative and deadly afraid of communism. That gave them tunnel vision. They saw Hitler as the only one who could save Germany from a Bolshevik takeover. He sounded so good, so authoritarian, so Christian. He promised to maintain the *status quo,* exalted faith and morality, was nationalistic, appealed for unity of church and people. I would take this as a warning for us today, that we do not simply vote antileft and think all is well, but that we carefully consider what both left *and* right have to offer.

Martin Niemoeller

Some other conclusions: Barmen showed how important confessions are for the church. They drew people together and gave them a common summary of faith against unbelief. May we, too, be prepared to confess the faith of our fathers if the need arises.

German church history under the Nazis also shows once again that God purges the church by persecution. With the Bible, the confessions of the Reformation, and biblical preaching, Christians in Germany at last learned to withstand false religion and a demonic government. God still purges the church by persecution, as can be seen today in East Germany, where local church life is much more vibrant and committed than it is in West Germany.

It is disheartening that the purging of the German churches did not produce a truly confessional church. The confessional movement gained much influence, yet today the Lutheran and Reformed churches present only a caricature of what they confessed not only during the Reformation, but also at Barmen.

Nevertheless, as stated in the closing line of the Barmen Declaration, VERBUM DEI MANET IN AETERNUM: the Word of God remains forever.

GARNET PEET

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[1]See, e.g., the moving booklet *I was in Prison: Letters from German Pastors,* London, 1938, ed. by Dorothy Frances Buxton. One copy of a 20,000-copy printing of this booklet made it to England before the Gestapo confiscated all the remaining copies and destroyed them in 1938.

See also H. Gollwitzer *et. al.*, eds., *Dying we live: the final messages and records of some Germans who defied Hitler,* London, 1958; and D. Bonnhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison,* London, 1953.

[2]Quoted by L. Praamsma, *op. cit.*, pp. 156ff.

[3]Quoted by A.C. Cochrane in Littel and Locke, eds., *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust,* p. 193.

[4]Conway, *op. cit.,* pp. 334-6.

[5]Robert P. Ericksen, *Theologians under Hitler,* New York and London, 1985, pp. 24-26.

Confession and school[3]

God the Son and our redemption

In the previous issue we listened to Prof. B. Holwerda telling us that as we educate our children there can be no question as to how we have to consider the work of God our Father. There may be no uncertainty with respect to the goal of the education of our children: that the name of the Father may be glorious in all the earth.

Holwerda goes on to speak about the relevance of the confession about God the Son and our redemption in the education of our children (p. 7ff). There should not be any uncertainty with respect to the position of our children in this world, thanks to the work of *God the Son.*

> For there is the reality of God's covenant. There is the immovable firmness of God's *promise,* that our children are washed in the blood of Jesus Christ.

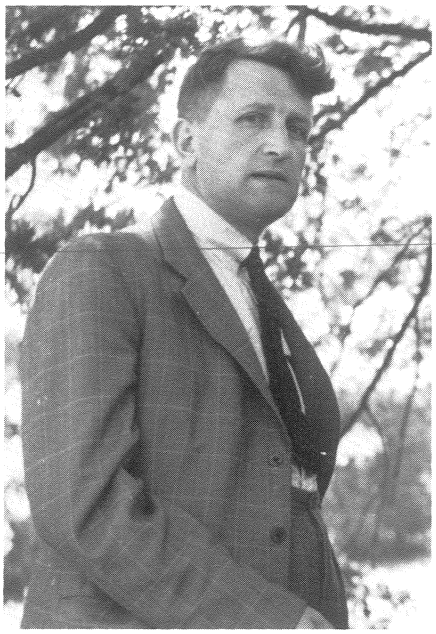
I (K. Deddens) quote in this respect the Form for the Baptism of Infants: "When we are baptized into the Name of the Son, God the Son promises us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins and unites us with Him in His death and resurrection."

Prof. Holwerda goes on to say:

> If we lose sight of this even for one moment, then our children have become baptized heathens, maybe, with a somewhat greater chance for salvation because they are more in contact with God's grace. However, then our schools with the Bible have lost their significance because we would have erased the radical difference between our children and the children of unbelievers . . . ."

Prof. Holwerda stressed that not we, as Christian parents, ourselves, but that the LORD makes the distinction. If we had our Reformed schools only with the intention to create a distinction on our own authority, we would not have a leg to stand on. Saying, the schools are good for bringing the children to Jesus Christ, then we do not see things right. Then the unbelievers are right, saying that Reformed education is a disrupting influence. You know the reproaches of unbelievers, stating that we sow divisions in the nation; we break the national unity. But we reply: the LORD *Himself* made the distinction, already in the baptism of our children. The fellowship of blood and place and time is broken by God Himself where He established the antithesis of His covenant.

In line with Prof. Holwerda we say: This we have to maintain over against everyone who wants to say it differently. If we tried to dissolve the antithesis by a so-called unity, we would commit a crime



Professor B. Holwerda

over against outsiders. But now we have Reformed schools which maintain the confession because God Himself made the distinction in His covenant. "This is the second pillar upon which the Reformed schools stand: the covenant of the LORD as a great and deep reality."

Therefore, in the first place, we see the connection between God's Word with the confession based on it and the school because "the *cosmos* cannot be broken: the earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof." But, secondly, we also want the connection between Bible with confession and the school because there is *indeed* a split in mankind. This God, to whom the whole world belongs, makes a distinction, an antithesis, in Christ Jesus. Our children are set apart by Him as children of God's covenant, being bought by the Mediator of God's covenant, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Of course, also with respect to our children we confess that they are conceived and born in sin, and therefore subject to all sorts of misery, even to condemnation. But in the same breath we also confess that our children are sanctified in Christ and thus as members of His church ought to be baptized. With that we confess that God Himself in Christ Jesus made the distinction with His covenant.

God the Holy Spirit and our sanctification

Holwerda then writes about the third part of our confession: God the *Holy Spirit* and our sanctification. Let me first quote again from our beautiful Form for the Baptism of Infants. "When we are baptized into the Name of the Holy Spirit, God the Holy Spirit assures us by this sacrament that He will dwell in us and make us living members of Christ, imparting to us what we have in Christ, namely, the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal." Holwerda points to the prayer of thanksgiving after baptism where the church prays to God: "We pray Thee through Thy beloved Son that Thou wilt always govern this child by Thy Holy Spirit, that he (or she) may be nurtured in the Christian faith and in godliness, and may grow and increase in the Lord Jesus Christ." Holwerda adds:

> The church professed the Holy Spirit as the sovereign Worker [of grace], as the great Governor of her children: God the *Holy Spirit* is working, not men. But the church also professed the Holy Spirit as her God who in His good pleasure, chooses His instruments, and who wants to govern the children of

the covenant by the means, provided by Himself: the educational office of the parents. He also grants the freedom to make use of others in the education of the children, but He never allows them to pass that office to others or to have others take away that office from them.

The Holy Spirit has said to the parents [in the baptism of the children of God's covenant]: it is I who govern your children, but it pleased Me to do that via your education. He has bound them to this, to His sovereign decree.

Therefore, as Reformed people we are called to establish Reformed schools, being parents of God's covenant children. This is not *a right* of ours, but it is the consequence of the *rightful claim of God the Holy Spirit* on the children of the covenant. Therefore this confession means that we believe that the Holy Spirit promised: "I am the One to rule over your children, but it pleased Me to do that through your education," p. 101. Therefore, the Holy Spirit wants the children of the covenant to be nurtured in the Christian faith and in godliness.

Called by God Himself

Holwerda concludes with this summary:

I believe in God the Father, the Creator; this means: I believe that if I am faithful and acknowledge His claim on my whole life, He Himself will take care that the whole earth will be filled with His glory. Maybe I do not see the results, but I trust in Him: He will do it.

I believe in God the Son, the Redeemer; this means: I believe that if I accept obediently the antithesis also with respect to the education [of the children], He Himself will realize and maintain this antithesis; . . . that He Himself casts fire upon the earth and is bringing the discord among men [namely, between faith and unbelief] . . . .

I believe in God the Holy Spirit who sanctifies; this means: I believe that, certainly, the rights of the parents in the school can be denied [e.g. by a government], but that never the calling by the Holy Spirit can become undone. When I remain faithful on the post where He put me, the situation can become frightening for me [1941: Hitler's occupation] and I can be attacked from several sides, but the Spirit will maintain His calling [for me] also over against those who attack it. Perhaps I cannot do this, but *He* will.

Therefore, we go on working, offering, praying for schools with the Bible [i.e. Reformed schools where the Bible rules over, and the confession is maintained in the entire education of our children, K.D.]. Perhaps, the time is coming when we are only able to pray. But even then we are not beaten. For God, who, in the end, will let the world perish upon the prayer of His church, will, upon the prayer for the hallowing of His Name, create the new world also in and through the [faithful Christian] school. It may not look that way at all at the present moment, but that new world will come, also via our faithfulness to the school with the Bible [and the Reformed Confession, K.D.]: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Thy Name on all the earth.

Let us not forget this urgent appeal of Professor Holwerda.

Martin Luther

Hymn 41:4

That word above all earthly powers —
No thanks to them — abideth;
The Spirit and the gifts are ours
Through Him who with us sideth.
Let goods and kindred go,
This mortal life also;
The body they may kill,
God's truth abideth still;
His kingdom is forever.

Halloween

"Hallowing" — brings me to the name *Halloween,* the feast that is celebrated on October 31. This feast goes back to a practice of the ancient Druids in Britain and France, the Celtic tribes who lived hundreds of years before Christ was born. This celebration honoured one of their gods, namely, the *Lord of the Dead.* The date for the celebration was the last day of October, the eve of the Celtic new year. At that occasion the people needed much food, because the souls of the dead returned to their former homes. It was a big feast.

The church of the early Middle Ages wanted to *accommodate* the conquered people in these Celtic areas and replaced therefore All Saints Day (originally celebrated in May) to the 1st of November. On the evening before All Saints Day, the churches held a vigil for the saints called *All Hallows' Eve* (Eve of the Holy Ones) or All Hallows' E'en, thus Halloween. So actually Halloween is a combination of the heathen feast of the Dead and the Roman Catholic feast of "all saints." A bad combination!

Luther Day

We celebrate a different fact on that day. For a long time, the last day of October was regarded the day of the *Reformation.* That had also to do with All Saints Day, because Luther wanted to dispute his 95 theses on the first day of November 1517, when many theologians were together in Wittenberg on the occasion of the All Saints Day. In connection with the Reformation Day, I ask attention for Luther's words about *ongoing* reformation in a letter written seven years later. It was sent to the princes of the German states. Luther stated in it that Christian *schools* needed to be established and maintained. He wrote: "I think that Germany has never heard so much of God's Word as at the present time; one can perceive nothing of this in the past. If we now let this opportunity pass by without gratitude and without honouring it, then it is to be feared that we shall have to cope with an even more horrible darkness. German friends, buy, now that the market is at your door; gather in, now that the sun is shining and the weather is good. Take hold of God's grace and Word, now that it is asked of you. For know well that God's Word and His grace are like a passing cloudburst which never comes again once it has passed. It was with the Jews but gone is gone — now they have nothing. Paul brought it to Greece, but there too it has gone; now they have the Turks. Rome and the Latin countries had it, but gone is gone; now they have the pope. And you Germans need not think that you will have it forever — ingratitude and contempt will drive it away. Therefore, let everyone who can, take hold and hang on. Lazy hands will have a bad year."

K. DEDDENS

Christmas

SANDYS. (S.M. and Refrain.)

English Traditional Melody.

A CHILD this day is born,
A child of high renown,
Most worthy of a sceptre,
A sceptre and a crown:
Nowell, Nowell, Nowell,
Nowell, sing all we may,
Because the King of all kings
Was born this blessed day.

These tidings shepherds heard,
In field watching their fold,
Were by an angel unto them
That night revealed and told:

To whom the angel spoke,
Saying, 'Be not afraid;
Be glad, poor silly shepherds—
Why are you so dismayed?

'For lo! I bring you tidings
Of gladness and of mirth,
Which cometh to all people by
This holy infant's birth':

Then was there with the angel
An host incontinent
Of heavenly bright soldiers,
Which from the Highest was sent:

Lauding the Lord our God,
And his celestial King;
All glory be in Paradise,
This heavenly host did sing:

And as the angel told them,
So to them did appear;
They found the young child, Jesus Christ,
With Mary, his mother dear.

('Incontinent' means 'without any delay'.
'Silly' means 'simple'.)

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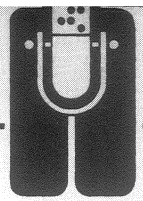
NEWS MEDLEY



Let us start close to home this time. I mean our own home.

During the past weeks we have received many, many cards, telephone calls, letters, and oral congratulations from all over the country, yes, even from far beyond its borders. I think here especially of the Australian brotherhood. It was a reason for deep joy and gratitude that so many brothers and sisters remembered us and let us know it, too. We wish to thank you all from the heart for your wishes, prayers, and words of appreciation. Please accept these words as a personal answer to your thoughtfulness. In this manner we are certain that we do not forget anyone, as we address you all. Thank you!

Meanwhile, it is high time that we sit down again and write another medley. Various brothers and sisters expressed disappointment at missing this feature for a while. One sister even phoned to say that, if I quit the news medley, she would quit *Clarion*. I do not think that her threat would materialize, for one day I will *have* to quit. And what then? Anyway, here we are again.

Staying close to home, we mention that the Langley consistory decided to increase the number of celebrations of the Lord's Supper to six per year. This is a step in the right direction. Four times a year is a bare minimum, as we mentioned before.

On the other hand, there is the consistory of Attercliffe, that decided not to increase the frequency. "A proposal to increase the frequency of the Lord's Supper celebration was tabled and discussed. It was decided not to accede to this proposal as there are no pressing reasons to change the present practice."

What I would love to know is what the consistory of Attercliffe then considers to be "pressing reasons." Should we, then, change the text of I Cor. 11: 26 from "For as *often* as you eat this bread and drink the cup . . . ." into "For as *rarely* as you eat . . . etc."?? We all know, of course, that we are not allowed to change the text of Scripture, but neither are we allowed to ignore this text in our practice.

Back to the Fraser Valley.

The Lynden consistory received a letter in which "the Free Reformed Church of Aldergrove requests the plans of our church building. The plans will be given in consultation with the designer. The Church of Vernon makes the same request. The plans will be given in consultation with the designer."

A few Sundays ago I had the privilege of conducting services in this church building for the first time. It was my experience that it is a very nice church building, with very good acoustics. It is easy to deliver a sermon there as far as the presentation is concerned. I am not surprised at all that there is wider interest in the design.

Lynden has an electronic organ, but it is one of the best of its kind. The sound could be more pronounced so as to lead the singing of the congregation more clearly, especially with not-too-well-known tunes, but perhaps this is simply a matter of registration. The console impresses one with the array of switches and push buttons, but I was told that this was mostly to preset registration. Anyway, the congregation of Lynden is to be congratulated with their acquisition of building and organ.

The consistory report of Lynden reveals that the consistory received a letter from the church at Surrey "re: their request to General Synod 1989 to return to the historic formulation in the forms of baptism as well as the form for Public Profession of Faith, so that they read: 'contained in the articles of the Christian faith,' or 'as summarized in the Apostles' Creed.' "

We shall not say much here about the contents of this request to the forthcoming general synod. Personally I have no objection to the present text nor to the old text to which Surrey wants the churches to return, as long as it is made abundantly clear that a return to the old text does *NOT* mean that we are, therefore, bound only to the Apostles' Creed as if this were something different from and more "general" than the other confessional formulas. However, enough has been written about this point.

What we wish to draw the attention to at this present time is something else.

In various bulletins I read that an "Appeal" had been received from the Surrey church. I was happy to read in the Lynden report that it is simply a "request" to the forthcoming synod. That is correct.

I could not understand why Surrey would wish or even would have the right to send an *appeal* in this case, since it is simply a proposal to change the wording of the forms. When a church wishes to have the wording of forms changed, it simply sends a *proposal* and does not adorn this wrongly with the name "appeal."

How could the church at Surrey ever have been *wronged* by a formulation which originally was initiated upon a proposal by the church at . . . Surrey???

Mind you, I found the same wrong terminology in the Brampton consistory report. "An appeal to General Synod, Winnipeg 1989, concerning an ambiguity in a decision of Regional Synod, 60, 15, 1987, is finalized."

Is this really an *appeal*, a decision by which the Brampton consistory has been *wronged*? If so, the terminology is correct. To me it is difficult to conceive that one can be wronged in the sense of Art. 31 C. O. by an ambiguity. I have an idea that here, too, it simply is a question of a proposal to the forthcoming general synod. Let it be called, then, by its proper name.

The wrong idea is still widespread as if a church "appeals" to a broader assembly when it tries to have something changed. If, in the opinion of a consistory the "interest of the churches" demands that something shall be changed, this consistory simply makes a proposal to that effect.

To call it an "appeal" is totally wrong.

We mentioned Vernon. When a couple moved away, the Rev. Van Spronsen wrote that the exit visa quotum was reached and that no more permits would be granted. "We are thankful," he wrote, "that the arrivals still outnumber the departures and that we may experience a healthy growth."

The same can be said about Calgary, where the membership now "hovers around 90."

However, we are not yet through with British Columbia.

Up to Smithers we go.

Smithers is the happy owner of a pipe organ. It is being used, too. However, not everyone enjoys listening to it at all hours of the day or evening. "A letter from a neighbour re: the loudness of the organ playing in church especially after 10:00 o'clock in the evening. The organists will be notified that there should be no playing after 10:00 p.m."

Hopefully the neighbour's ears are just as good on Sundays, so that they can benefit from the services as well.

Congratulations Rev. and Mrs. VanderWel

We congratulate Rev. and Mrs. M. VanderWel and their family with their 35th wedding anniversary, which took place on the 15th of October. It was mentioned in the same issue of the Fraser Valley *Church News* in which I read of the anniversary of the VanOenes. That's how I became aware of these two anniversaries. The wedding of br. and sr. VanderWel took place in 1953, about nine years before Rev. VanderWel entered the ministry in 1962. In other words, last year there was the 25th anniversary in regard to the ministry. Before br. VanderWel began his studies in Kampen, he worked in the printing and bookbinding business of "Drukkerij Boersema" in Enschede.

The work in the ministry was started in Sneek-Koudum, in Friesland. After six years, in 1968 the family moved to Southern Ontario, where Rev. VanderWel served the churches of Watford and London, a second combination of two congregations. Such a combination is a give and take situation, and can bring along its own problems. It often means, in certain aspects, double work and much time is needed for travelling. But it was good to work in the service of the Lord for these two churches, even though it was rather short. After three years a call was received from Abbotsford.

Since 1971 Rev. and Mrs. VanderWel served the church at Abbotsford, each in their own function. Br. VanderWel does not place himself in the foreground. He is very precise in many ways, especially in what he puts on paper. Is that the consequence of having worked

in a printing business? We hope that our br. and sr. will receive more years together in good health and continue to be of service in and for the churches of our Lord. And, perhaps, when more time is available, our brother can share his knowledge and insight with all of us in some publications.

THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

"At the request of a brother the reading of Article 35 of the Belgic Confession in preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Supper was discussed. This is left in the freedom of the minister to see if this could fit in with a preparatory sermon for the Lord's Supper."

And a final item from Smithers: "At the suggestion of the church visitors earlier this year, the consistory considers that it would be beneficial for Rev. Marren to attend a classis. If this is found to be satisfactory, more opportunities could be made for contact of this sort."

Seems like an excellent idea, as missionaries are working mostly among others and should also be fully acquainted with the life within the congregation and the federation.

Although he is retired, the Rev. van Beveren still conducts some services in Edmonton once in a while and also teaches some catechism classes. This will be a very welcome help for the elders there.

In the Immanuel church bulletin I found something which is to receive wider attention, as the "evil" described therein is found in many congregations.

"There is a small matter that needs some attention today. It happens quite regularly that during the worship service there is a significant amount of traffic in and out of the auditorium. I would suspect that these little trips are in the direction of the washrooms. It should be kept in mind that these trips tend to be disruptive. It is not so much that the minister is bothered by them, but it is quite easy to see that the congregation gets very distracted by these excursions. It is only natural curiosity that we try to see who is going this time. Then the return trip can be a bit noisy when the door does not cooperate right away. These little trips thus distract the members from paying attention to the sermon. When we keep in mind that the worship service is a covenantal meeting of the LORD and His people, where the LORD speaks to us through His Word, we will realize that there is a need to be attentive all the way through. Now of course there can be exceptions, where a trip to the bathroom is an absolute necessity. But, we should not let the exception become the rule. Parents, please make sure that the whole family is properly prepared for the worship service. With proper attention also the children should be able to remain seated for the whole service."

It is a great privilege that there are many children in our congregations, and it is only normal that these children are taken into church as soon as they can sit reasonably quietly during the sermon. We would not advocate organizing a "Sunday School" for our children at the same time when a worship service is in progress. They belong there just as well as the adults.

Children don't bother me when I am conducting a service, but the warning in the above should be taken to heart. It happens too often that one of the little ones "has" to go out. The strange thing is that, when one goes, there are all of a sudden

— continued on page 534

Congratulations Rev. and Mrs. VanOene

We congratulate Rev. and Mrs. W.W.J. VanOene and their family with their 45th wedding anniversary on November 2; and with br. VanOene's 45 years of service in the ministry on November 7, sister VanOene constantly being present as his helpmeet. Through the strength and goodness of the Lord they were together for almost half a century, and together they could serve Him, both in their own place, the one more in the front-line, the other more in the background. These years were years of hard work, done out of love for the churches.

The service began in Oud-Loosdrecht, in 1943, during the war and the struggle which led to the Liberation, politically, from the German occupation and, church-politically, from the synodical hierarchy. It was continued in Schiedam from 1948 to the end of 1952. Then the VanOene family moved to New Westminster in British Columbia. After a little more than 17 years of service in New Westminster, 17 more active years were added in Fergus. Since then the VanOenes share an active retirement.

The service goes on. If I am correct, we will soon hear that a second edition of *Inheritance Preserved* will

be published. There is a need for it. I also understand that more will be coming. It is good to hear this. We are also thankful that br. VanOene has done so much for so many years for our magazine *Clarion* and also in this respect still can continue. May the Lord, in His grace, grant more years of service together.

THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Congratulations on your 25th anniversaries!

Twenty-five years ago on December 15, 1963, Professor J. Geertsema was ordained as minister of God's Word in Kantens, Groningen, the Netherlands. Just before that event (on December 6, 1963), he and Mrs. Geertsema were united in holy wedlock. Also from this place, we would like to offer our congratulations on these milestones!

Our colleague was born into a minister's family in Dwingeloo, Drente. However, he scarcely knew his father who died in a German concentration camp. After his theological studies in Kampen, he entered the ministry in Kantens. About four years later he served the churches in Opende and Surhuisterveen. Emigration to Canada took place in 1971, and in the spring of that year he became minister of the flock in Carman. Professor Geertsema subsequently served in Chatham (1976) and Surrey (1979). He was also called from this last congregation to serve in the Theological College where he became professor in 1986.

Professor Geertsema's love for the churches and the work that he does is well-known. For many years he has sought to use the talents that were entrusted to him for the well-being of the churches. As far as *Clarion* is concerned, his involvement goes back to the summer of 1974 when he started to cover the Press Review.

In 1983 he became editor with Rev. W. Pouwelse and when the latter left for the Netherlands, Professor Geertsema became sole editor in 1986. We are grateful for the many good things that we have received from his hand in these pages and we wish our colleague and his wife the continued blessing of the Lord for the future.

THE EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

other ones who wish to follow the example. You should see the triumphant look on their faces when they stroll or hasten through the aisles. It is interesting and this is appealing.

The less attention the other members pay to them, the better it is. It takes some of the glamour off the adventure. Don't look every time. You saw a child go by before, didn't you?

It is always nice when one can refute a rumour. I am, of course, not acquainted with the latest developments, for I go only by written sources.

You will recall that a meeting was to be held in Burlington to discuss the continuation or discontinuation of the Dutch services. In the Burlington East bulletin we now read: "A report was given on a meeting held after a recent Dutch service. The meeting was held to gauge the need to continue with the Dutch services. It was decided to continue with the present services and review it again next year."

The church at Grand Valley bought a three-acre lot, conditional on rezoning.

With a view to the growth of the congregation and the absence of a minister, it was decided to elect a fourth elder.

And, last but not least, the church received a "new Lord's Supper set" from the "mother-church" of Orangeville. No better present can be given.

From the Watford bulletin we learn that the division into three classes instead of two in the Ontario region will not take place. At the Regional Synod "also the redistribution of the Regional Synod East into three classical districts was dealt with. Because the churches in Classis Ontario North were opposed to it, this proposal was rejected."

To conclude our Canadian part we pass on that at the Lincoln consistory there was "A letter from the consistory of the church at Houston asking our minister to send them three sermons . . . . As well, they request (him) to send three sermons to the *Preach the Word* series. Consistory does not accede to this request as they feel it should come from the editor of the *Preach the Word* series."

Although I can well appreciate the reaction of the Lincoln consistory, I would almost be tempted to ask the above-mentioned editor to publish some of his experiences with asking colleagues to cooperate. The brothers might be surprised to see how little response is received generally. Rest assured that this editor appealed many a time for help and that most of the time he received either no answer at all or a negative response.

I could give you a description of how difficult it is to get the cooperation of colleagues and I could tell you how many of them I asked to contribute to *Mercies New Every Morning* before I finally decided not to ask any more but to take care of the rest myself. But why do so? I mention this only to justify Houston's request. Perhaps, if the consistories go after their own ministers, you might see some results. Please do it, even though you don't want to take an official decision to do so.

In conclusion, a few particulars from Australia.

It has been reported that the Rev. Koelewijn and family have received their visa for entering Papua New Guinea. This was published with joy and thanksgiving by the church at Albany W.A.

The Rev. C. Bosch and family passed their medical examinations and they may expect to receive their visa shortly. Perhaps they even have them by now. It will be quite a change, from the snowstorms of Ontario to the summer heat of Western Australia! The Kelmscott church received a building permit for the parsonage they are going to provide for the Bosch family.

I don't think that Rev. Huizinga will take it ill of me when I quote from a personal letter — for which our heartfelt thanks — and pass on some more particulars.

Not only is the institution of a church in West Tamar, Tasmania, scheduled for December 4th, "Hobart has pulpit supply fortnightly and the audience grows!" Hobart, as our readers may know, is the capital of Tasmania. If things keep going this way, there will be a third church in the island state some time in the future.

"In Albany a group of one hundred members in Little Grove held meetings to see if separate study clubs should be established as a first step to a new church. Here in Perth six to eight families have located in Rockingham and plan to start a new congregation."

This progress emphasizes the more the need for students of theology whose desire it is to serve in the ministry of the Word. There are brothers of whom it is known that they are preparing themselves for enrolling in the Theological College in Hamilton. We need more of them.

This brings us to the end of the news this time.

When typing "the ministry of the Word" I had to think of a wrong term which some use when speaking of the proclamation of the gospel. They sometimes use the term "administering the Word." No, we do not "administer" the Word; we minister to or proclaim the Word and we *administer* the sacraments. This distinction should be made clear also in the terms we use.

Happy to have been able to pass on to you some items which are reason for joy and gratitude, I sign off.

Till next time, if the Lord wills. Yours

VO

Institution of a second congregation in Tasmania

We are happy to announce, that the Lord willing, a second congregation will be instituted in the 3 p.m. service on Sunday, 4th December 1988, at 53 Howick Street, Launceston.

In this service the respective office-bearers will be ordained and the "West Tamar Free Reformed Church" will be instituted.

The Free Reformed Church of Launceston, Tasmania being approximately 3000 km from its neighbouring sister churches in Western Australia, has been busy since 1985 with the preparation.

Due to church growth and when the membership exceeded the 500 mark, members from the West Tamar area have selected to be busy working towards this happy occasion, and further were able to extend a call to Rev. R. Aasman from Ancaster, as minister for this newly to be instituted church.

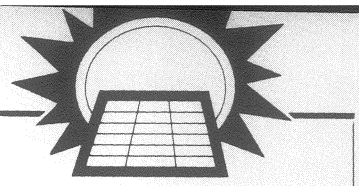
Following this, the church services will be convened in a separate building at 452a West Tamar Road, simultaneously with the city church.

We extend a welcome to those who wish to participate in this commemoration.

For and on behalf of the consistory,

REV. K. JONKER, chairman
M.J. MOL, clerk

RAY OF SUNSHINE



"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us." John 1:14

Dear brothers and sisters,

Once again we may commemorate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. The eternal Son of God, who is and continues to be true and eternal God, took upon Himself the very nature of man. At the appointed time Christ, the Word, who was with God and is God, became man and dwelt among us. He became one of our generation, the seed of Abraham, the Son of David, born of the virgin Mary.

The dwelling among us of the Son of God became the turning point in history, the fulfilment of God's promises made of old.

The eternal Son of God assumed our flesh with its inherent infirmities.

He became like unto His brethren in all things, sin excepted.

Why is it of such great importance that we believe Christ to be real man?

In Hebrews 2 we read that Christ assumed our flesh and blood in order that He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is the devil and as our faithful High Priest make expiation for the sins of His people and deliver them of their lifelong bondage. (vv. 14-17).

That means in fact that we all were sitting on "death row" in the prison of the devil. He held us in bondage. Lifelong! And at the end eternal death.

In order to set us free Christ Jesus humbled Himself, being born in the likeness of man, and He became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. (Phil. 2:8). God who is merciful and just required that the same human nature which had sinned should pay for sin. (Lord's Day 6).

Only when we believe and acknowledge the depth of our fall in the first Adam, we will be able to see the glory of our redemption through Jesus Christ, the last Adam. As true and righteous man He did what we could not and would not do. He fulfilled all the obedience of the law of God perfectly. He bore in His body the curse of God against our sin and rebellion, so that we might be freed from the power of sin and death and be restored into the fellowship with God. He has turned our darkness into light. He renews us by His Spirit and makes us willing and ready to live for Him. He gives us the faith which is necessary to become partakers of Him and all His benefits.

That is the comfort of Christmas for all believers. Merely out of grace we are freed from the bondage of death through the Lord Jesus Christ, who became flesh of our flesh and bone of our bones.

We may now already enjoy the fruits of His redeeming work.

And although we are still daily confronted with the results of sin, adversities, illness, death, we have hope for the future. For the Word which became flesh and dwelt among us, is now in heaven, seated at the right hand of the Father.

In Him our flesh is already in heaven, as a sure pledge that once He our Head also will take us, His members, up to Himself. Our flesh in heaven is the guarantee of our complete redemption.

We may with the church of all ages look forward to the blessed appearance of our Lord and Saviour, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body. (Philippians 3:21).

Our birthday calendar for January 1989:

LIZ KONING
Allen Gray Auxiliary Hospital
7510-89 Street
Edmonton, AB

Liz will be 28 years on January 2nd.

CHRISTINE BREUKELMAN
Box 666
Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

Christine will be 17 years old on January 7th.

ROBERT WIERENGA
Box 115
Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0

Robert hopes to celebrate his 8th birthday on January 10th.

HENRY DRIEGEN
72 Ross Road, RR 1
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1M3

Henry's birthday is on January 17th. He will be 33 years old.

GRACE HOMAN
"Anchor" Home
361-Thirtieth Rd. South, RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

Grace will also be 33 years of age on January 17th.

JANINE SMID
RR 1
Arcona, ON N0M 1B0

Janine hopes to celebrate her 19th birthday on January 19th.

HENK ORSEL
705 Surrey Lane, Apt. 1201
Burlington, ON L7T 3Z4

Henk will be 58 years old on January 27.

CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ALL. It is a whole list this time, which makes up for the month of December when I had no birthdays to report!

With heart and mouth let all confess
That God's eternal Son
Was in the flesh made manifest
Did not our frailty shun.

Christ Jesus conquered hell and grave;
All heard the joyful news,
For He was far and wide proclaimed,
To Gentiles and to Jews.

He into glory was received,
For He the battle won.
Now at the Father's side He reigns:
Christ Jesus, God the Son!

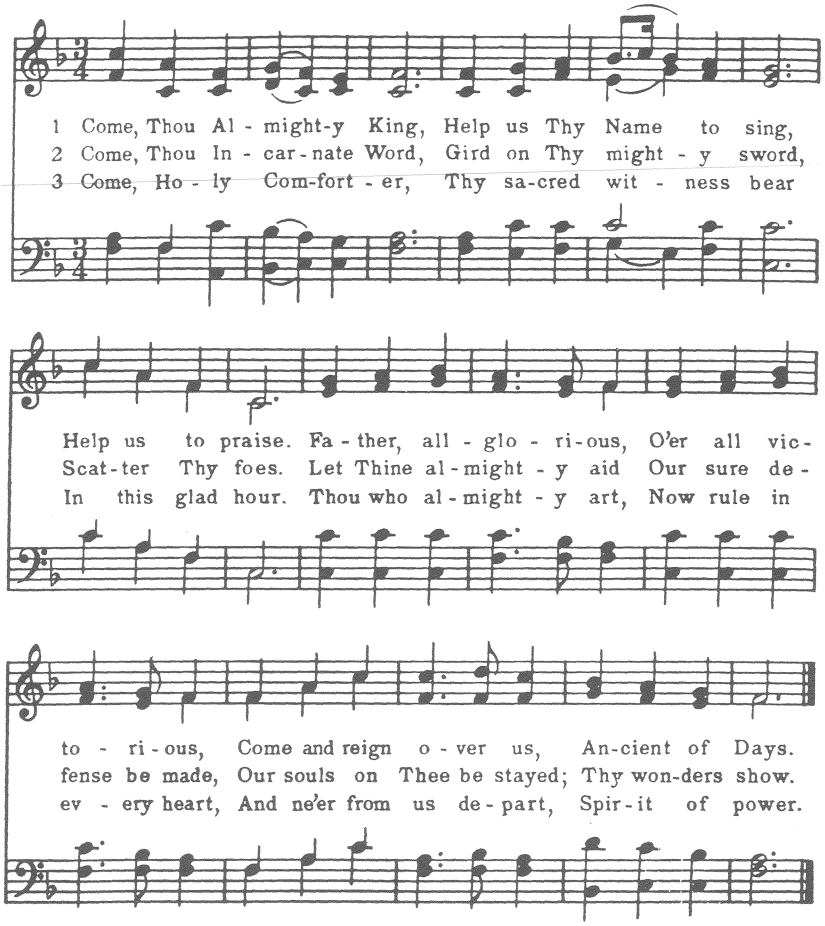
Hymn 20:1,4,6

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas and the guidance of the LORD in the year 1989!

MRS. J. MULDER
1225 Highway 5, RR 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

Come, Thou Almighty King

Felice de Giardini, 1769



Farewell sermon and evening of Rev. Stam

On Sunday, October 16, the congregation of Fergus came together to listen to Rev. Cl. Stam's farewell sermon. His text for this service was Psalm 133.

A psalm of ascent, which the people of Israel sang during the pilgrimages to Jerusalem. The theme for this service was: The Lord teaches Israel to rejoice in the true unity of the people of God!

1. The visible bond of this unity
2. The only source of this unity
3. The great blessing of this unity.

We are together in the faith of God. God's love holds us together. In this Psalm the unity is visible. Israel is blessed when everyone works and worships in unity. The spiritual unity can be seen in the Lord's supper, in baptism and in the confession of faith. The unity is based in the blood of Christ. Psalm 133 compares the oil on Aaron's head with the dew on Mount Hermon. They show a downward flow. This means that the unity comes from above. We must rejoice in the unity that is granted us by God. May the blessing of Christ rest upon you in this life and in the life to come, when we shall dwell in unity and in perfection with all our brothers and sisters from all times and places with Christ forevermore.

After the service several delegates from neighbouring churches spoke a few words of thanks to Rev. Stam, namely, br. L. DeWitt from the church of Elora, br. G. Vis from the church of Grand Valley and br. J. Jonker from the church of Orangeville.

On October 14, the congregation of Fergus came together to say farewell to its minister and his family. The vice-chairman of the consistory, br. K. Sikkema, said that the congregation will remember what it has received from the Lord in this minister during the three years that he has been in Fergus. We do so with joy! Rev. Stam has shown us the way of salvation, has spoken about the works of the Lord. It is for this that we say thank you.

Several societies received their turn to say a few words of thanks. The choir sang two pieces.

Hymn 5:3

Glory to the King of angels,
Glory to the Church's King,
Glory to the King of nations!
Heav'n and earth, your
praises bring.
Hallelujah, hallelujah!
To the King of glory sing!

On behalf of the congregation sr. B. DeWitt and Sr. E. DeVries presented the Stam family with a farewell gift.

Rev. Stam spoke a few words of thanks. He remembered a few highlights during his stay in Fergus. The institution of the church at Grand Valley and Elora, a Remembrance service of the Legion in our church building, the opening of our new school building.

We sang yet Hymn 65, "Now thank we all our God," whereafter Rev. Stam closed with prayer. A social hour followed. There was sadness but also joy. Praise was given to our heavenly Father, who preserves, gathers and defends His church.

A MEMBER OF THE CONGREGATION

Cornerstone Church of Hamilton, ON

1951 — 1976 — 1988

Sunday, October 23 was once again a special day in the thirty-seven year history of this congregation. For the third time she received her own minister of the Word when on this day the Rev. Drs. CI. Stam was installed by Rev. R. Aasman of the neighbouring church at Ancaster, after a vacancy of almost two years since Rev. W. Huizinga departed for Armadale, Western Australia.

For the installation Rev. R. Aasman had chosen I Thessalonians 5:12-13 as text. He explained and stressed that the whole congregation must work together and let the light of the Scriptures shine brightly. He summarized the message as follows:

Paul beseeches the Thessalonians to hold their spiritual leaders in the highest esteem.

1. What the leaders will do for the congregation.

2. Why the congregation must esteem their leaders.

3. How the work of the leaders and the esteem of the congregation will lead to blessing.

In very fitting words Rev. Aasman explained the text. It refers clearly to office-bearers and describes their work in the congregation. Today few ministers make the sacrifices like Paul had to. Nevertheless often the calling of ministers weighs heavily: they are taking care of the flock of Christ. Yet it is a labour of love. This is what Rev. Stam is coming to do here: preach the Word and labour amongst you in the congregation, that your lamps may be burning brightly on the day of the Lord's return. This charge does not place office-bearers on a pedestal, they are called to serve you in all circumstances either with comfort or also with admonition.

Therefore respect and esteem Rev. Stam because of his work. Your own salvation is at stake.

It was a serious and encouraging sermon.

After the "I do with all my heart" in answer to the questions of the Form for the Installation of Ministers of the Word, the congregation sang with and for its new Pastor, Psalm 134:1 and 3.

A coffee social followed during which many met the Stam family.

In the afternoon Rev. Stam preached his inaugural sermon in a church filled to capacity.

He had chosen Psalm 122 as text for this special occasion. He warned that even though this is an inaugural sermon, it is the same as every sermon, that the whole counsel of God is expounded. His theme was:

David teaches Israel about the beauty of the service of the Lord in Jerusalem.

1. The joy of going to Jerusalem.

2. The reason for being in Jerusalem.

3. The prayer for the peace of Jerusalem.

Rev. Stam, after explaining the dangers of going to Jerusalem for the Israelites, pointed out that they yet must come to say "I was glad to go to the House of the Lord." Today we must enjoy similarly the service of the Lord in the weekly worship services and for a minister it should be a marvel to proclaim the gospel from week to week.

Worship is hard work. Some of our youth may not like it to go to church every Sunday, even adults may be preoccupied with all kinds of cares which cause us to miss the joy of faith. Yet today we do not have to go to Jerusalem for worship nor do we need an ark and an altar, for Jesus Christ has made the great sacrifice of atonement. We may lift up our hearts to God in heaven where Christ is seated. Therefore we have the more reason to meet together in thanksgiving and praise. On this Sunday the Lord unites us as congregation and minister and we need the Lord's blessing for that bond. Let us pray for that blessing and for the Peace of Jerusalem that things may go well, according to the will of God. Let us pray and act for the upbuilding of the church of Christ.

The final peace of Jerusalem will be to see God face to face. May we through this ministry see the peace and happiness of Jerusalem progressing and may through our work together the true upbuilding of the church of Christ be served.

After the service elder A. Witten, our chairman for the past two years spoke words of welcome to Rev. Stam and his family as well as the mother of Rev. Stam who was present for this occasion. Elder Witten expressed appreciation to the professors and retired ministers who willingly filled the pulpit during the vacancy and for the assistance in catechism teaching. He read a letter received from Rev. W. Huizinga congratulating our congregation with the missionary team and Rev. Stam and passing on some practical advice for our new Pastor.

Also the church at Lincoln sent a letter of congratulations, while the church at Smithville passed on the greetings via br. J. VanWoudenberg. In the absence of Rev. D.G.J. Agema, our counsellor, elder H. VanderVelde conveyed a congratulatory message. Last but not least Rev. R. Aasman welcomed Rev. Stam in the district of Classis Ontario South and congratulated the new Pastor and congregation on behalf of the daughter church at Ancaster.

In closing we sang of Psalm 118:1, 6 and 8.

A beautiful day had ended.
A new beginning was made.
To the Head of the church belongs
all honour and glory, now and forever.

Editor's Note: Also reports about the welcoming or farewell of ministers must have the name of the author, otherwise, from now on they will not be published. Besides, these reports must be kept brief; otherwise they will be drastically shortened.

J. GEERTSEMA

CRWRF

Annual Report — 1988

The world scene from a relief point of view has not improved any, it seems, since our last annual report. Oppression and hunger continue on a large scale. Natural disasters compound the problem, and the number of refugees in the world has grown rather than diminished. On some fronts, however, there are rays of hope piercing the gloom, evidence of Christ's love in action. Homeless children in Kenya are being raised in a happy, God-fearing, home environment. Food aid to hungry Eritreans is getting through in spite of government interference. Many blind people receive new sight after simple, inexpensive operations. Efforts among refugees are providing a new life for those who formerly existed within the confines of camps. These are mere drops, unable to assuage the thirst of a parched world, but they do make a difference, and we are grateful that we are able to support such work on your behalf.

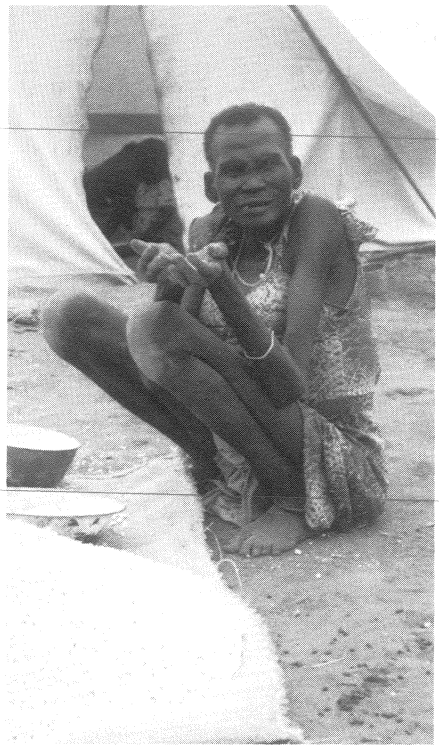
In 1988, your gifts were channelled in the following ways:

Achego Children's Home, Kenya

The small house being constructed for our manager, Mr. James Randa, and his growing family (they were blessed with a baby daughter this fall), should be completed soon, allowing space in the dormatories for more needy children. We anticipate that by year's end an additional fifteen children will make their home at Achego, bringing the number cared for there to seventy-five. Mr. Kees Rookmaaker who visits the home on our behalf, writes that the manager is doing well in his new position and the children are happy. Your continued support is appreciated to meet the additional expenses incurred.

Somalia

The Madanys have been in the village of Homboy since April, adjusting to their new environs after years of working in the nearby Labadaab leprosy colony.



At a refugee camp in East Africa. Food is distributed once a week according to the number of people registered at each tent

In August they were suddenly called to the Netherlands where Oetje's mother went to be with the Lord. After spending a month with Oetje's father, they are now back in the small, impoverished East African country they call "home." They find the residents of Homboy to be, in general, hardworking and friendly. Michael has been able to plant dozens of fast-growing leguminous tree seedlings as well as hundreds of seeds in various farmers' fields — a small start in the tree-planting program whose primary goal is to increase cattle fodder and thus contribute to the production of a most valuable commodity: milk.

Ethiopia

Still struggling to recover from another year of drought and hunger, Ethiopia is in no position to handle the recent huge influx of refugees from both Somalia and Sudan. Hopefully, conflicts within those two countries will soon abate, allowing those in the camps to return home.

This year we sent $15,000 in emergency aid to assist the Eritreans who were especially affected after the callous government expulsion of foreign relief workers in that area in April. The money was sent through the Canadian Foodgrains Bank whose funds are tripled by the Canadian government and which has a proven track record of reaching those in need with a less than 5% loss. (Most of the aid goes through the Sudan.) To further assist the people in this area and enable them to begin working towards self-sufficiency again, we allocated our special Thanksgiving collection for food and development aid. Thank-you for your generous response!

Bangladesh flood relief

When news of the severe flooding that devastated much of Bangladesh reached us, many wondered how we could render assistance. Shortages of food, shelter, and especially safe drinking water were critical. An estimated 21-25 million were homeless. After discussing various options, we decided to contribute $10,000 to the CRWRC team which is distributing grain among the many desperate families who have lost everything. Medical supplies and seed are also being provided to try to meet the greatest needs in this crowded, impoverished country. Your additional contributions are most welcome for this cause.

ZOA aid to refugees — Thailand

The numbers at Ban Vinai have dropped a little since thousands of "illegals" registered officially with Thai author-

ities and were moved to another camp. However, refugees from Vietnam continue to arrive in spite of Thai government measures to deter them. Our gifts ($3,000 this year) help finance medical care and training among the approximately 40,000 Hmong still confined within Ban Vinai's boundaries.

Long-term life in the camps is not easy and as yet conditions in home countries do not make returning a realistic option. Sponsorship to the West is no simple solution either, but for now, it is the only one which offers some hope. CRWRF is happy to field any inquiries about assistance in this area.

Christian Blind Mission International

Again this year, we sent a gift of $1,000 to CBMI to help alleviate the suffering caused by blindness. The money goes far. For example, a simple glass of Vitamin A enriched milk given daily to Afghan children in Pakistan's refugee camps can help prevent blindness, and a $20.00 gift can finance cataract surgery, giving a blind man or woman renewed sight and hope. CBMI's efforts extend to programs for the blind and those with other physical handicaps in Ban Vinai.

Primary Care Unit, Busan, Korea

Our decade-long involvement with the Health Care Unit in the slums of the large city of Busan came to an end this summer with the news that the clinic would soon be closing its doors. The Korean government has now committed itself to providing health care for underprivileged citizens, so the people our clinic has served in so many ways can now be cared for at the local hospital. We greatly appreciate the dedicated service and Christian witness "our" nurses have faithfully provided over the years.

Since this project no longer requires our support, funds have been freed which together with gifts you have supplied, enable us to look at other worthwhile projects — always a pleasant activity! We are presently considering a major project (details soon!) and have also decided to support the following "new" effort in which one of our church members is involved.

ZOA Refugee Aid — Papua New Guinea

Refugees from Irian Jaya, who until early 1988 were existing in camps, have now been permitted to settle in some no man's land purchased by the PNG government. The new inhabitants have begun enthusiastically to build new homes, lay out fields, and provide for drinking water in the East Awin area. ZOA, in cooperation with the UNHCR and the government, will assist in all of this and in particular in the area of health care. Its aim is to provide an entirely self-supporting life similar to that evident in local villages so that relief workers can gradually retreat again.

Our Health Care Unit in Busan no longer functions since the government now provides care for the underprivileged

Richard Bultje, from the congregation of Chatham, will be responsible for overseeing a sawmill operation and providing guidance and direction to resettled refugees in selecting, cutting and sawing trees to build village homes and other necessary buildings. Richard left at the end of July for a two-year term as a volunteer with ZOA to whom the CRWRF will contribute $5,000 annually to help cover his expenses. It is always gratifying to have one of our own members personally involved in the work of CRWRF contributing by daily labour and Christian witness to the goals we hold dear. Young people, consider such service when you think about your future!

A Hmong woman and child at Ban Vinai

Conclusion

Our budget this past year totalled $65,000 and we are thankful that you have more than met this through church collections, school giving, and an ever-increasing number of individual donations. May the Lord enable you to match or even increase your giving in '89 so that together we may do more to reach those in need.

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF
PO Box 793
Burlington, ON
L7R 3Y7

All gifts are gladly received. For donations of $10.00 or more a receipt for tax deduction will be issued.

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

In Art. 21 it is said of Jesus Christ that "He presented Himself in our place before His Father, appeasing God's wrath by His full satisfaction, offering Himself on the tree of the cross."

And after thus the ground, or the meritorious cause of our justification has been pointed out, Art. 22 confesses: "We believe that, in order that we may obtain the true knowledge of this great mystery, the Holy Spirit kindles in our hearts a true faith. This faith embraces Jesus Christ with all His merits, makes Him our own, and does not seek anything besides Him." Consequently, only and also solely the true faith brings us into the possession of the benefits of salvation. This is still further confirmed in the following words: "or, if it is all in Him, that one who has Jesus Christ through faith, has complete salvation." And all contradiction is excluded when thereafter it is quoted what Paul says: "*that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith apart from works of law*." And then in the last part of this article the following confession is still written: "and faith is the instrument that keeps us with Him in the communion of all His benefits. When these benefits have become ours, they are more than sufficient to acquit us of our sins." Note well: "to *acquit* us." *To acquit us* — that is: to our *justification*, isn't it? — serves all that Christ has done for us, of which we become the possessors through the true faith. We do not *become conscious* of our acquittal through faith, but we *receive* it through faith, because only then we come into the possession of the benefits of Christ's salvation, which become ours only when we have received the faith which is the instrument by which we can enter into and remain in the communion with Christ and His benefits unto our justification.

We find the same expression in Art. 23, "which," namely the obedience of Christ, "is ours when we believe in Him."

This is more than sufficient proof of it that in our Confession we speak only of a *justification* through *faith* and not of an *eternal* justification of which we only have to become *conscious* through faith.

The justification is found in the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 23, as the *fruit* of faith: "That I am righteous before God in Christ and an heir to eternal life." And the answer to the question: "*How are you righteous before God?*" reads: "Only by a true faith in Jesus Christ." It reads then further: "yet God, without any merit of my own, out of mere grace, imputes to me the perfect satisfaction, righteousness, and holiness of Christ . . . if only I accept this gift with a believing heart."

It is still added in the answer to question 61 that "only the satisfaction, righteousness and holiness of Christ *is my* righteousness before God. I can *receive this righteousness* and make it my own *by faith only*."

Also this Confessional Formula speaks only of the *justification* in *time* through *faith*.

This also appears not unclearly from the *Five Articles against the Remonstrants*. In the first Chapter, Art. 7, it is taught: that God "has from eternity appointed Christ to be the Mediator and Head of all the elect and the foundation of salvation. However, there is nothing here of a *justification* from eternity. On the contrary, it is taught as clearly as possible in what follows that God, for the sake of Christ, *justifies* IN TIME those who were *elected* FROM ETERNITY. "And thus He decreed to give to Christ those who were to be saved, and effectually to call and draw them into His communion through His Word and Spirit. He decreed to give them true faith in Him, to *justify* them, to sanctify them, etc." See also Second Chapter, art. 7 and 8.

"But to those who truly believe and are by the death of Christ freed from their sins and saved from perdition, this benefit comes only through God's grace, given to them from eternity in Christ. God owes this grace to no one," Art. 7. What is it that was given to them from eternity? *Not* the *justification*. This is obvious from Art. 8: "For this was the most free *counsel* of God the Father, His most gracious *will* and *intent* that the life-giving and saving efficacy of the most precious death of His Son should extend to all the elect, to *give* to them alone *justifying faith* . . . God willed that Christ through the blood of the cross . . . should effectually redeem out of every people . . . all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation and were given to Him by the Father. God further willed that Christ should give to them faith, etc." From this it appears that by this grace, given them from eternity, *not* the grace of the *justification* is to be understood, *but* the grace of *the election* in Christ Jesus and the giving of the elect to Christ in the Counsel of Peace, in order that as their Redeemer and Mediator *He should do all that was necessary to their justification* and complete salvation. What is referred to here is the free counsel, the gracious will and purpose from eternity of God the Father. However, what is from eternity in God's counsel and will does not yet for that reason exist in reality; otherwise also the world would be from eternity.

The justification was *willed* by God from eternity. He also from eternity destined the Son in order to do in time for the elect all that was needed for their justification. To this end He gave the elect from eternity to the Son as their future Redeemer, ordained from eternity as their High Priest. As those who had been given to the Son they were, therefore, *known* by God from eternity as such who *would be* justified. But the real, personal *justification* becomes a fact only when, united with Christ through faith, they become partakers of the righteousness which Christ was to obtain (in the Old Testament dispensation) or has obtained (in the New Testament dispensation). They do not, therefore, through faith, in time, become conscious of their justification as having already taken place, but they only then factually *enter into* the right relation towards God as those who have been justified, and through that faith *remain* in the communion with Christ and all His benefits to their abiding justification and continuing sanctification.

For each of the elect it must become reality through faith that they are those "given to Christ", "being in Christ", having already "received a place in heaven" with

Christ. The consciousness of all this is not the *justification itself,* but *follows* the *justification*, which is received through the communion-of-faith with Christ.

As long as they have not been justified by faith, the *legal* relation towards God is the same for the elect as for the reprobate. The Holy Spirit puts this into the brightest light through Paul in Romans 3, where both Jews and Greeks are placed "under sin" and guilty before God. "Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God . . . they are *justified by His grace as a gift*, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, *whom God put forward as an expiation* by His blood, to be received by faith. This was to show *God's righteousness* . . . vv 19-27 — which does happen *in time.* This show of *God's righteousness* in the death of Christ Jesus, "who was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification,"4: 25, is, in fact, denied by those who say that the justification has already been a reality from eternity.

Such persons distort the whole doctrine of justification which the letter to the Romans teaches so clearly. Or was, perhaps, the Jewish heresy which Paul refutes this, that by the works of law man becomes *conscious* of his justification? Not at all! The Jews imagined that they were freed from their debt and *obtained the right to salvation* by the works of law. Not knowing the righteousness of God, they sought to establish a righteousness *of their own* and they did not submit to the righteousness of God. Instead of accepting by faith the righteousness which was valid before God, obtained by Christ and revealed in the gospel by God, they sought peace with God by a righteousness which proceeded from themselves, a righteousness "of their own" Ch. 10:3. The letter to the Romans deals with the question of "being declared righteous" which stands diametrically overagainst "being condemned," ch. 8:33 and 34 . . . ." It is God who *justifies*, who is it that *condemns*?"

All who have been ingrafted into Christ by a true faith and accept all His benefits can exult: "Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," 5:1 ff. To all others it has to be proclaimed "that the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them as long as they are not converted." Heid. Cat. Lord's Day 31.

Third Thesis

According to the Confessional Formulas, the Holy Spirit works the regeneration IN TIME, *by means of the Word, and this mainly the means of the proclamation of the Word; it becomes apparent in the faith and in the good works. Insofar as the regeneration is worked already in infancy, in children of the Covenant, it cannot remain hidden as soon as the child has reached the age of understanding.*

What applies to the regeneration, applies also to the faith as a faculty, as the seed of faith.

It is in conflict with the Confessional Formulas to put: that the regeneration took place already from eternity in Christ, as the central Head of the elect generation, that it happens apart from the Word and without the Word, and can be present in a person for years without any effect or without becoming apparent.

In Art. 17 of the Confession, dealing with "The Rescue of Fallen Man," it is taught that God "in His marvellous wisdom and goodness set out to seek man when he trembling fled from Him. He comforted him with the promise that He would give him His Son . . . to make man blessed." God Himself, therefore, began to seek and to call, promising the Seed "born of woman, to bruise the head of the serpent."

This seeking by God in the audible call of the preaching of the gospel is therefore the beginning of the rescue of man. What is described in Gen. 3:15 is not in the first place the justification, or the regeneration, but God seeking (man) by calling.

In Art. 24 we confess "that this faith — whereby we are justified — worked in man by the *hearing of God's Word* and by the operation of the Holy Spirit, regenerates him and makes him a new man." In Art. 35 it reads: "Those who are born anew have a twofold life. One is physical and temporal . . . the other is spiritual and heavenly, which is given them in their second birth and is effected *by the word of the gospel* in the communion of the body of Christ."

In Lord's Day 7 of the Catechism, where we speak of a true faith, it reads: "This faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the gospel." This is put even more clearly in Lord's Day 25. For to the question where this faith comes from which "makes us share in Christ and all His benefits" it is answered: "From the Holy Spirit who works it in our hearts *by the preaching of the gospel* etc."

In the *Five Articles,* Chapter I, Art. 3, we read: "So that man may be *brought to faith*, God mercifully sends heralds of this most joyful message to whom He will and when He wills. *By their ministry* men are called to *repentance* and to *faith in Christ* crucified." In proof of this, Romans 10: 14, 15 is quoted, "for how are they to believe in Him of whom they have never heard? etc." Calvin states in his explanation of these words: "And truly, the voice of a human being can in no way penetrate into the soul of the people by its own power . . . but all these things do not prevent that God works powerfully by means of the human voice in order *through its service to create in us* the faith."

In chapters 7 and 16 it is said — as if it were casually — that the living faith in Christ etc. is worked by God through means, for which reason these means are to be used, "*through which* God has promised to work these things *in us*."

In the Third and Fourth Chapters, Art. 6, we confess: "What, therefore, neither the light of nature nor the law can do, God performs by the power of the Holy Spirit *through the word* or ministry of reconciliation, which is the gospel of the Messiah etc." In Art. 12: "This conversion is that regeneration, new creation, . . . (which) is by no means brought about only by the outward preaching." And then it follows in Art. 17: "So also the aforementioned supernatural working of God whereby He renegerates us, in no way excludes or overthrows the use of the gospel, which the most wise God has ordained to be the *seed of regeneration* and the food of the soul." Thus: *also* to be the *seed of regeneration*. Calvin says therefore, when explaining I Pet. 1:23: "For the gospel is not being preached in order only to be heard by us, but in order that, as a seed of immortal life, it should renew and improve our souls basically." In Eph. 2 it is said of the believers: "We were by nature *children of wrath* like all the others," v 4; "once," v 2, "at that time," v 12, we were "without Christ." But *now* "in Christ Jesus, "etc., v 23. *At that time* born as children of wrath, they were also *in time* regenerated into children of God.

— To be continued

Guido de Brès High School Graduation — 1988

Back row (left to right): *James Stieva, Rob Smink, Leon Hordyk, James VanAmerongen, Harvey Bosch, Peter VanDelden, Ian Hulzebosch, Mark Wanders, Bill DeJong, Paul VanderVeen, Job Schenkel, Eric Mulder, Peter Stegenga, Peter Scholtens.* Middle row: *John DeBoer, Theo Flach, Linda DeBoer, Hilda Bruinsma, Joyce Werkman, Janine Ravensbergen, Linda Ravensbergen, Lisa Bremer, Charlene VanWoudenberg, Chris Oosterhoff, Linda Jans, Craig Alkema.* Front row: *Cindy Blokhuis, Denise Stoffels, Irene Gritter, Sonya Vanderee, Vicki VanEgmond, Debbie Jongsma, Joanne Heemskerk, Marianne Vanderboom, Michelle Boersema, Teresa DeBoer, Helen VanEerden, Jackie Vis.* Missing: *Steve Bremer.*

Outside it was dark and drizzling, a few degrees on the liquid side of freezing. For the twelfth time in the history of Guido de Brès High School, graduation evening was held. For the graduands, their parents and their teachers, the evening started at six and ended at 10:30.

Inside, the forty-two graduands brightened the cafeteria-styled High School gymnasium. They as graduands were the fruit of the 275-strong Guido de Brès student body. Eleven Canadian Reformed congregations contributed to this event.

To emphasize the joy and fellowship of this occasion, a warm meal was served in the Guido de Brès gymnatorium. Besides the tasty warm meal for the body there were pithy limericks and other poems read to stimulate the mind. The staff read poems that they had composed about each graduand. After photo arrangements and socializing, the graduation event opened for phase two, only a block away in the large Bethel church.

All were standing at 8:30 in Bethel when the forty-two proud and nattily dressed graduands strode to their reserved seats. The chairman of the school board, Mr. Leo Knegt, opened the meeting with the reading of Joel 2:18-32.

The principal, Mr. J.G. VanDooren, spoke words of welcome and explanation. The graduands had spent many hours in class, at home, and on the road to achieve their goal. This ceremony also represented the completion of another year of Reformed education. May God be glorified because we did not "in our own strength confide."

Before the diplomas were presented, a beautiful rendition of W.H. Monk's "Abide with me" was heard. In this instrumental trio Alvina Boot played the trumpet, Theodore Lodder the organ, and Mrs. Lori Snow the piano.

Dr. W. Helder, the vice-principal, announced the presentation of diplomas. Thirty-eight of the 42 diplomas were a

new breed of documents named Ontario Secondary School Diploma, made up of 30 credits and born from the new OSIS system.

Tim Denbok, the President of Student Council, introduced the speaker for the evening, the Rev. C. Bosch. In his address to the graduands entitled, "Young Visionaries and Old Dreamers," Rev. Bosch stressed that we must be goal-oriented in the biblical sense. Our graduands live in an age of materialism and quick fixes. Rather than following the glamour and greed of the world, we are called upon to serve the Lord and Him only. In his introduction to the Belgic Confession, Guido de Brès stressed the necessity of acknowledging the Lord. De Brès died on the gallows at age 45 in the very act of admonishing the crowd to be dreamers and visionaries. Rev. Bosch closed his speech by wishing upon the graduands the strength of their abiding God as it is described in terms of the soaring eagle in Isaiah 40.

Awards were presented for proficiency, participation, good citizenship, and academic excellence. As a new item two scholarships were presented. In grateful memory of the dedicated former board chairmen who are now with the Lord, the Harry Aasman Memorial Scholarship and the George DeBoer Memorial Scholarship were given to James Lof and Edwin Ludwig.

Under the direction of Mrs. Lori Snow, the 75-voice Guido de Brès choir filed forward and sang Don Marsh's "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." In a world of rock and rage it is refreshing to see teenagers choose to sing the clean and powerful music of faith.

Eric Mulder had the honour of being the valedictorian. Eric brought a message of commitment and thankfulness. Daily life at Guido was cleverly represented in this witty and incisive address. After prayer and the singing of the national anthem, everyone went to the auditorium for refreshments and congratulations.

May we work and pray to keep the vision of Reformed education and the dream of continued faithfulness ever unclouded and true at Guido de Brès High School.

P. SMID

INTERNATIONAL

JERUSALEM (IDEA)

Yearly one hundred times as many Christians become Jews in Israel as there are Jews who become Christians. Yearly between five hundred and one thousand Christians chose for the Jewish faith. Overagainst that between five and ten Jews become Christians.

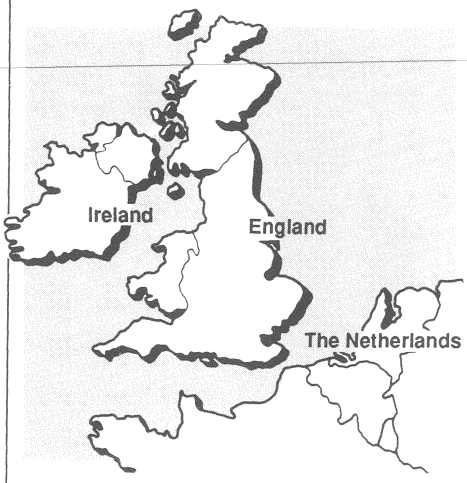
This was stated by the West German minister Johannes Friedrich who works in Jerusalem.

He said that he did not know from which circles the most Christians come that go over to the Jewish faith nor what the motives are of those who do so. (ND)

> These are the ones of whom the letter to the Hebrews says that they crucify the Son of God again and that there is no possibility of repentance for them.

LUNTEREN, THE NETHERLANDS

Although the number of Christian organizations operating in the Netherlands has been sharply reduced in the last decade, this development does not invalidate Kuyper's concept of the church as institution and organism, according to the synod of the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands (GKN). By "institution" Kuyper meant the ecclesiastical organization of the church, whereas by "organism" he meant the presence of Christian social organizations in other areas. Last year a study report recommended that the distinction be dropped. A synodical advisory commission concluded that the distinction is always valid, even if separate Christian organizations are not functioning in all realms of society. The synod agreed with this point of view and called on local churches to encourage members to remain active in the service of people and society. (REC NE)



HAMILTON, NEW ZEALAND

The Reformed Churches of New Zealand have formally withdrawn their membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Council. This was a result of a decision taken by the RCNZ already in 1986. They determined that, if the RES in Harare would not expel the GKN (and the GKN had not repented), the membership of the RCNZ would be terminated immediately. The Synodical and Correspondence Committee took the decision on behalf of the RCNZ.

The REC Secretariat expressed its regret to the RCNZ at this decision. At the same time, it denied the conclusions taken by the RCNZ that the REC was not true to its own confessional basis. (REC NE)

ULSTER, NORTHERN IRELAND

Fearing that people would be "retrospectively baptized" as Mormons, the Ulster (Northern Ireland) Board of Education has turned down a request by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints to microfilm old school registers.

The Mormons had offered to pay up to $70,000 to the Northern Ireland Public Record Office for permission to film the documents. Rev. Richard Potts, a Presbyterian minister who chairs the school board, said that in refusing permission, the board was protecting the rights of dead people unable to speak for themselves. (RNS/TB)

ACCRINGTON, ENGLAND

The Rev. N. Green from Omagh, Ireland, and the Rev. L. Moes, retired minister at Flushing, the Netherlands, went to England to assist in making a beginning with firmly rooting a well-founded Church Federation in Northern England. The Fellowship has received advice from the Dutch deputies for the contacts with Churches Abroad and moral support from several countries, e.g. Canada. (PRESBYTERIAN FELLOWSHIP NORTHERN IRELAND) VO

Address delivered at the opening of "Maranatha Home"

September 24, 1976

Note of the Editor: It was the intention to publish this address together with the "In memoriam" for the Rev. A.B. Roukema. Unfortunately this did not happen. We publish it as yet.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies, and Gentlemen!

It is my privilege to say a few words on behalf of the tenants of this Home.

It is a Senior Citizens Home! That means, that those who live here are all people who are approaching the end of their lives on earth.

But then, this Home is called "the Maranatha Home." And one who knows his Bible — and most of us, if not all, do — remembers right away: this is a word used by the apostle Paul as part of his closing salutation in I Cor. 16:22, and it means either: "Our Lord has come," or "Our Lord, Come!" Or: both of them! It is an Aramaic word, and the fact that it is part of a more or less formal salutation of Paul addressing a Greek church, would indicate that it had become a familiar watchword of Hope and Encouragement among the early Christians.

And now, we are very happy that we could move into this particular Home. For, sure, we are all old people, senior citizens, although quite often we do not want to admit it, saying: you are as old as you feel; deep inside we know we are approaching the end. But: we are approaching this end under the Motto: Maranatha! The Lord has come, and is coming. And praying: "Our Lord, Come!"

We think of another word of Paul, Phil. 3:20: "But *our* commonwealth in Heaven — or to translate it a little more clearly: "The State of which we are citizens is in Heaven" —, and from it we await a Saviour, Jesus Christ, who will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body." Those people in Philippi could understand this easily, for their city was a "colony," (Acts 16:12). When the emperor Augustus had obtained the absolute power in the huge Roman Empire, he put his veterans at various points in the world, gave them a property (which he took from the inhabitants) and made them dwell there. Of course they formed a well-trained core among the subdued population which would always be faithful to the Emperor. But they retained their citizenship in the Capital! They lived in the colony, but their real city was Rome. In the city where they lived they were but colonists, they could do everything for it, and as a matter of fact, they did; quite often these colonists brought prosperity and stability to the colony. But they were never absorbed in it; it would never become their country, or their city. That was Rome!

Well then, Paul says, and the name of our Home is a daily reminder of his words: "That is our life, also in this Home, the life of a colonist." Sure, we are very grateful that we may live in this beautiful Home, and we thank all those who worked so hard to build it. But it is not our real Home, for that is in Heaven. Maranatha, the Lord is coming!

Naturally, the citizens of Heaven live on earth; we too. We have also the need of food and drink, of work and clothing, of heating and shelter. And, as I said before, we are very thankful that we spend our last days in this particular Home. But in the final analysis, our minds are not set on this house, neither on earthly things. Our eyes go upwards above every Home and city, also above sorrow and loneliness, above joy and happiness. For we are waiting for our Saviour who is coming from above to bring us into our real Home, the City which has foundations.

Lots of people do not understand this anymore. They just want the earth; they call the colony their country! They even think: slowly but surely we will make the colony as good as the country. That is: they want to build a heaven on earth. Somewhere I read it in a poem: "The human outlook":

> These things shall be: A loftier race
> than e'er the world has known shall rise
> with flame of freedom in their souls
> and light of knowledge in their eyes.
>
> They shall be gentle, brave and strong,
> to spill no drop of blood, but dare
> all that may plant man's lordship firm
> on earth and fire and sea and air.
>
> New arts shall bloom of loftier mould
> and mightier music thrill the skies,
> and every life shall be a song
> when all the earth is Paradise!

To be sure, nowadays many people have given up this dream of such a world of peace and happiness. The facts of history since this poem was written are all against it. Today the same modern man is pessimistic, although perhaps they claim to be optimistic. People live in the dark and most of them cannot see any light ahead, in spite of all the noise and promising words of economists and philosophers and politicians. Yet, they still think that *this* world is their country.

But one who lives under this motto: "Maranatha," and prays: "Come, O Lord, come soon!" knows that we do not have a lasting city on earth, neither a lasting Home, but seek the city to come. And the Home to come. For he remembers that here he is but a colonist, and once he may return to his country, His Father's Country, the new Heaven and the new Earth. And His Father's Home.

Therefore, although we are very happy and feel privileged as tenants of this beautiful Home, we are still looking forward to move into another Home, a better Home. For even here we live as colonists, that is, foreigners. But then we will be at Home Forever in our own Country and our own Home.

> "Some day the silver cord will break,
> and I no more as now shall sing.
> But Oh, the joy when I shall wake
> within the Palace of the King!
> And I shall see Him face to face,
> and tell the story: Saved by Grace."

A.B. ROUKEMA

PRESS RELEASE

Regional Synod West, November 8, 1988 at Coaldale, AB

1. *Opening:* On behalf of the convening church, the church of Coaldale, Rev. J.D. Wielenga calls the meeting of the delegates to order. He requests them to sing Psalm 89:1,7, reads I Colossians 1:9-23, and leads in prayer. He welcomes the brethren and brings them to mind that they are to do their work under the rule of Christ and that, in doing so, their work will not be in vain.

2. From the report on the *Credentials* it appears that Classis Alberta-Manitoba as well as Classis Pacific are lawfully represented.

3. *Constitution of synod:* The following ministers are chosen to serve the regional synod as a moderamen: Rev. J.D. Wielenga, chairman, Rev. M. VanderWel, vice-chairman, and Rev. W. den Hollander, clerk. Regional synod is constituted.

4. *Adoption of agenda:* After a few points have been added to the provisional agenda, the agenda is adopted.

5. *Overture Classis Alberta-Manitoba:* In this overture regional synod is asked to overture General Synod 1989 with the proposal to change in the first sentence of Art. 46. C.O. (church visitation) the words "in that year" into "once every two years." During the discussion this overture is amended as follows: "At least every second year Classis shall authorize no less than two of the more experienced and able ministers to visit the Churches." In this fashion the proposal is taken over by synod and it is decided to overture General Synod 1989 accordingly.

6. *Appeal Cloverdale:* The church of Cloverdale appeals some decisions made by Classis Pacific September 27, 1988. In answer to this appeal the following motions are adopted:

a. *Observations.* The Church at Cloverdale appeals the Acts of Classis Pacific Sept. 27, 1988, Art. 8 regarding the admissibility of an appeal of a brother in the congregation giving the following grounds:

1.The brother was not wronged personally.

2. The disciplinary action which is appealed is still of a private nature.

3. The consistory was not allowed to discuss this action except with the sister who was suspended from the Lord's Supper.

Considerations.

1. The Church of Cloverdale does not prove that this brother was not wronged personnally.

2. The Church of Cloverdale does not prove that this private matter could not be appealed.

3. The Church of Cloverdale does not prove that it was not allowed to discuss the disciplinary action with the brother, since this sister could have involved the brother in the matter.

Judgment. Regional Synod judges that the Church of Cloverdale has not proved that the reasons which Classis must have had for declaring the appeal admissible were in error.

b. *Observations.* The Church of Cloverdale requests Regional Synod to judge that Classis Pacific did it injustice when dealing with an appeal of a sister in a disciplinary matter. It gives as grounds:

1. Classis required the evidence provided by the delegates from the Church of Cloverdale for making its decision.

2. Classis Pacific should have judged whether the sister had sufficient grounds to uphold her appeal.

3. Classis Pacific advises the Church at Cloverdale to reconsider its dealings with the sister in light of the discussion.

Considerations:

1. Classis has the freedom to use the testimony of delegates from a local congregation to help in understanding and judging an appeal against its decision.

2. The Church of Cloverdale does not prove that Classis did not base its decision on the grounds given in the appeal.

3. The advice of Classis added to the decision does not nullify the decision concerning the appeal.

Recommendation: Not to grant the request of the Church of Cloverdale.

7. *Reports.*

a. Reports of the Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O. are heard and received with thankfulness.

b. Rev. P.K.A. de Boer reports on the revision of the *Regional* Synod Regulations. After a number of amendments have been made and applied, the Regulations are adopted.

c. The report of the treasurer of regional synod is discussed. It is noted that several of the churches have not paid their assessment of $3.00 per comm. member yet. The report is accepted with thanks to the treasurer.

8. *Appointments.*

a. As Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O. are (re)appointed: Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, Rev. J.D. Wielenga, Rev. M. VanderWel and Rev. J. Visscher; alternates: Rev. B.J. Berends and Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar.

b. Nominated for the Board of Governors of the Theological College are: Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. M. VanderWel and Rev. C. Van Spronsen; alternates: Rev. J.D. Wielenga, Rev. P.K.A. de Boer and Rev. J. Moesker (in that order).

c. Delegated to General Synod 1989 are: Rev. B.J. Berends, Rev. P.K.A. de Boer, Rev. W. den Hollander and Rev. M. VanderWel; alternates: Rev. C. Van Spronsen, Rev. J. Visscher, Rev. J.D. Wielenga and Rev. J. Moesker (in that order); Elders: J.F. DeLeeuw, W. Gortemaker, A. Poppe and L. Stam; alternates: J. Hendriks, C. Hoogerdijk, P. Van Bostelen and G.J. Hofsink (in that order).

d. The next regional synod will be convened by the church at Cloverdale, BC, on Tuesday, November 7, 1989 at 9:00 a.m.

9. A *Question Period* is held. Censure ad Art. 44 C.O. appears not to be necessary.

10. The *Acts and Press Release* are read, and adopted.

11. *Closing.* At the close of the meeting the vice-chairman thanks the chairman for his leadership. He also thanks the convening church for its hospitality and service rendered for the interest of this synod. The chairman then speaks a few closing words. He requests to sing Psalm 96:1,2,8 and leads in prayer of thanksgiving.

For the regional synod,
M. VANDERWEL

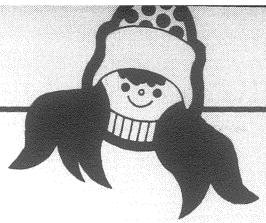
CHURCH NEWS

CORRECTION

NEW ADDRESS:

REV. CL. STAM

48 Gerald Crescent
Stoney Creek, ON L8J 2G8
Phone (416) 578-5758



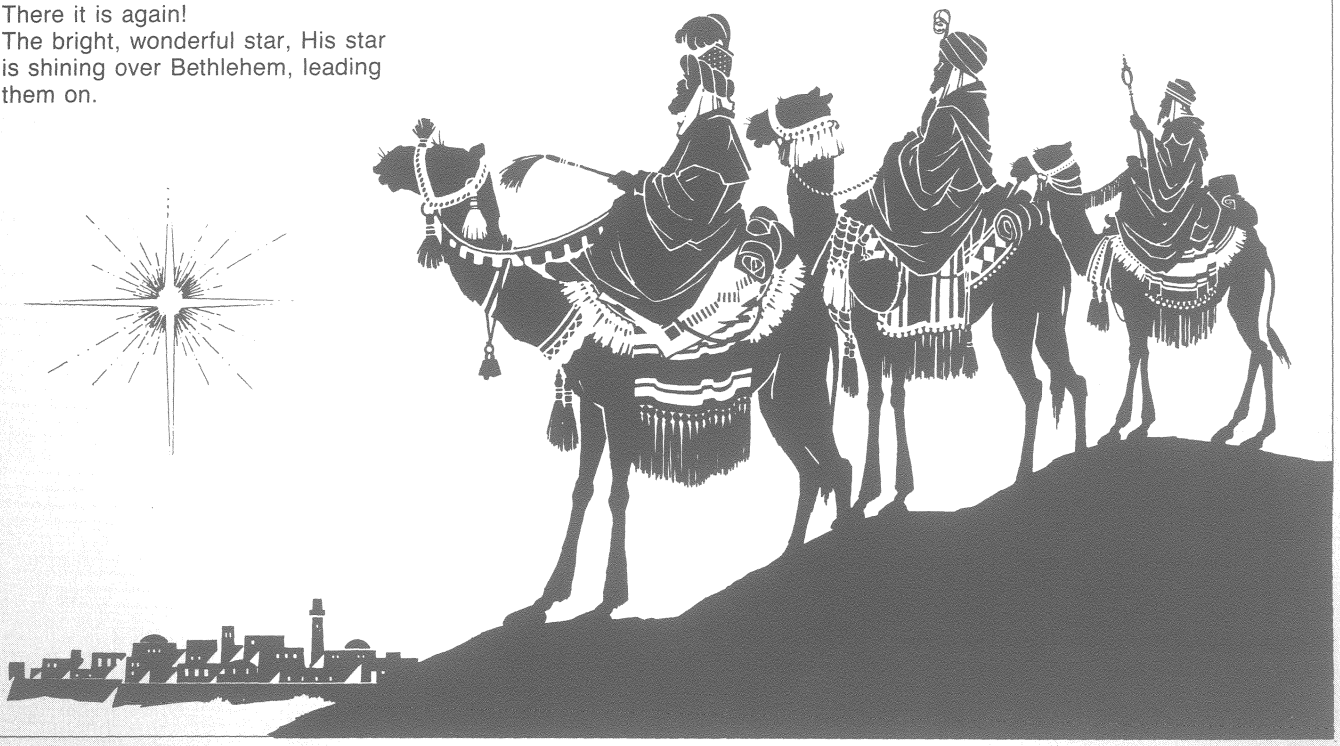
Dear Busy Beavers,

"When (the wise men) saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy . . . ." Matthew 2:10.

Can you imagine the wise men's joy and happiness?
They knew that star!
Weeks ago they had seen it
back in their own city in the East.
A brand-new star so bright,
so wonderful, could mean
only one thing.
The Messiah, the King of the Jews
had been born!
This the wise men knew from their old books
and old, old prophecies.
They KNEW and that's why
they simply had to go and
welcome this new King.
They planned their trip.
Carefully they picked and packed
their gifts. (After all He was a King!)
They collected their guards.
A big caravan set out for Jerusalem
of the Jews.

But in Jerusalem they couldn't find
the newborn King.
King Herod said they must look
for Him in Bethlehem.
And now look!
There it is again!
The bright, wonderful star, His star
is shining over Bethlehem, leading
them on.

In Bethlehem, the wise men, powerful
as kings themselves, get down off
their camels, bow low and kneel before the
newborn King.
Their servants carry into His
humble home kingly gifts
of frankincense and myrrh.
The servants, too, bow before
the small child whom their
masters revere as King.
King?
But He is only a child, a small
child in a very humble home.
Still He was the King of the Jews,
He was the Messiah.
The wise men knew from their old
books and prophecies.
We know it from the Bible.
From the Bible we know that
every day we may live joyfully
as children of that King.
And one day He will come again,
not as a small child,
but as King of all.
And then every knee will bow to Him!



Star of Bethlehem

WHO KNOWS?

Who knows what the star means?
Who knows when there is peace?
Who knows who found the bright star?

The star, the star is for the new baby Jesus.
Peace we have when we love the Lord Jesus.
The star, the star was seen by the wise men.

Who knows why the Lord came to earth?
Who knows why the angel Gabriel came to the shepherds in the field?
Who knows, who knows, who knows?

The Lord came to earth to save us,
The angel Gabriel came to tell the Saviour was born in Bethlehem.
Who knows? We know!

by Busy Beaver *Corinne Versteeg*

A LITTLE CHRISTMAS POEM

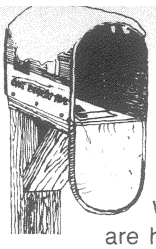
On December twenty-fifth
We celebrate God's great gift.
He sent His only Son
To save us, the sinful ones.
Jesus, down to earth He came,
Emmanuel is His name.

by Busy Beaver *Marilyn VandeVelde*

JESUS' BIRTHDAY

On December 25, Christmas, Jesus' birthday is celebrated. We do not have a birthday party for Him, but we do gather with family or friends to talk about things, and the kids can play. On Christmas we remember the tiny baby who lay in the manger of some animals because there was no room in the inn. That tiny baby became our great Saviour who died on the cross for our sins. So if you are with your family or friends on Christmas, don't forget to remember Him.

by Busy Beaver *Linda Stam*



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Laura Bol.* We are happy to have you join us. And you're a good puzzler! Will you write and tell us about yourself and your family, and your BIRTHDAY! Don't forget. Bye for now.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Linda Verhey.* I see you like sports! Thanks for your letter, Linda. And I hope you soon get a pen pal. Be sure to let me know!

Welcome to the Club, *Steven VandeVelde.* I see you keep very busy at home. What are you planning to put in your new field next year Steven? In the meantime I hope you enjoy winter on it!

A big welcome to you, too, *Jennifer Postma.* What a big trip you made this summer! I think you must have enjoyed being with your cousins. How is your new kitten, Jennifer?

I'm glad you like your new teacher, *Laura Breukelman.* What did the soldiers in uniform do at the re-enactment of the War of 1812, Laura? And how are you planning to spend your holidays?

Hello, *Margaret DeWitt.* It was good to hear from you again. Do you have lots of snow, Margaret? Enjoy your holiday!

Thanks for your letter, *David DeBoer.* So how many languages can you speak, David? Are you sorry baseball season is far away? Or do you like the snow?

Do you play your organ every day, *Theresa Bredenhof?* And I'm glad you have a good time with your friends in school. Thank you for a pretty letter, Theresa.

Hello, *Sara Plantinga.* How are you doing? Thank you for the riddles you sent in to share with the Busy Beavers. I hope you really enjoy your school holiday, Sara. Bye for now.

Busy Beavers, who will exchange letters with:

Linda Verhey (9 years old)
1776 Sunny Creek, S.E.
Kentwood 49508
MI, U.S.A.

Picture by Busy Beaver *Billy Dekker*

Riddle Fun

by Busy Beavers *Esther Bergsma* and *Mary-Anne Moes*

1. Why did the teacher wear dark glasses?
2. When is a girl's dress like a frog?
3. What kind of dog can tell time?
4. What kind of spy never gets out of bed?
5. What did the scissors say to the hair?
6. What did the rose say to the bee?
7. Why do firemen wear red suspenders?
8. What did the pig yell when the man grabbed his tail?
9. What comes up to the door but can't come in?
10. What has four wheels and flies?
11. What has four legs but can't run?
12. What has 2 heads, one tail and 6 legs?

(See answers)

Games to Play in the Snow

BURIED TREASURE

You need:

- 2 or more players
- Lots of snow
- 2 shoe boxes
- A timer or watch

Getting ready:

Find two playing areas that are hidden from each other, like a front and backyard.

Divide into two teams. Each team gets a shoe box. One team goes to the front yard. The other team goes to the backyard.

The game:

Set the timer for 5 minutes. Each team has 5 minutes to bury the box in the snow in their yard. After you bury the shoe box, try to fool the other team. Make bad clues to trick them. You might make footprints leading to wrong spots or dig funny holes. When 5 minutes are up, each team goes to the other yard and looks for "the treasure."

The first team to find the other team's treasure is the winner!

BUCKETS

You need:

- 1 or more players
- A pail
- 10 snowballs for each player

Getting ready:

Put the pail on the ground open side up. Mark a throwing line in the snow about 15 steps from the pail.

The game:

Players take turns tossing the snowballs into the pail from behind the throwing line. You must keep one foot behind the throwing line at all times.

The winner is the first player to get five snowballs in the pail during one turn.

Quiz Time!

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Fill in each blank with the correct answer about the Christmas story.

1. _____ was the home of Mary and Joseph, Luke 2:4
2. _____ announced Jesus' birth to Mary. Luke 1:26,27
3. _____ was the town where Jesus was born. Luke 2:4-7
4. _____ was where Jesus was laid. Luke 2:7
5. _____ in a manger was the sign the shepherds were to look for to find Jesus. Luke 2:12
6. _____ kept the sayings of the shepherds in her heart. Luke 2:19
7. _____ guided the wise men to Jesus. Matt. 2:2
8. _____ was where the wise men found Jesus. Matt. 2:11
9. _____ warned the wise men of Herod's trick, Matt. 2:12
10. _____ told Joseph to flee with Jesus to Egypt. Matt. 2:13

MESSIANIC PROPHECIES

A challenge quiz! The prophets wrote and spoke of the coming Messiah. Tell which prophet made the following prophecies. (Use a reference Bible or a concordance.)

1. _____ said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.
2. _____ said the Messiah would be born of a virgin.
3. _____ said the Messiah would be taken out of Egypt.
4. _____ said the Messiah would be a mighty prophet in word and deed.
5. _____ said the Messiah would have his hands and feet pierced.
6. _____ said the Messiah would be despised and rejected.
7. _____ said the Messiah would make a triumphal entry into Jerusalem.
8. _____ said the Messiah would be made an offering for sin.
9. _____ said the soldiers would cast lots for the Messiah's garments.
10. _____ said the Messiah would be betrayed and sold for thirty pieces of silver.
11. _____ said that Jesus would suffer in silence.

(See answers)

Father, Mother, Son

In each of the numbers below there is the name of a man in the Bible, with a row of squares for the name of his father, and another row for the name of his mother. Can you fill them all in?

1.

A				
B				
E				
L				

2.

				M				
				O				
				S				
				E				
				S				

3.

S	A	M	U	E	L

4.

J	A	C	O	B

(See answers)

Winter WORDSEARCH

by Busy Beaver
Alisa Schouten

Look for:

mittens	icicles
cold	frost
hat	Jack Frost
scarf	reindeer
snow	snowflakes
snowman	winter
snowshovel	boots
ice	earmuffs
icy	

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

WISHES IN CODE!

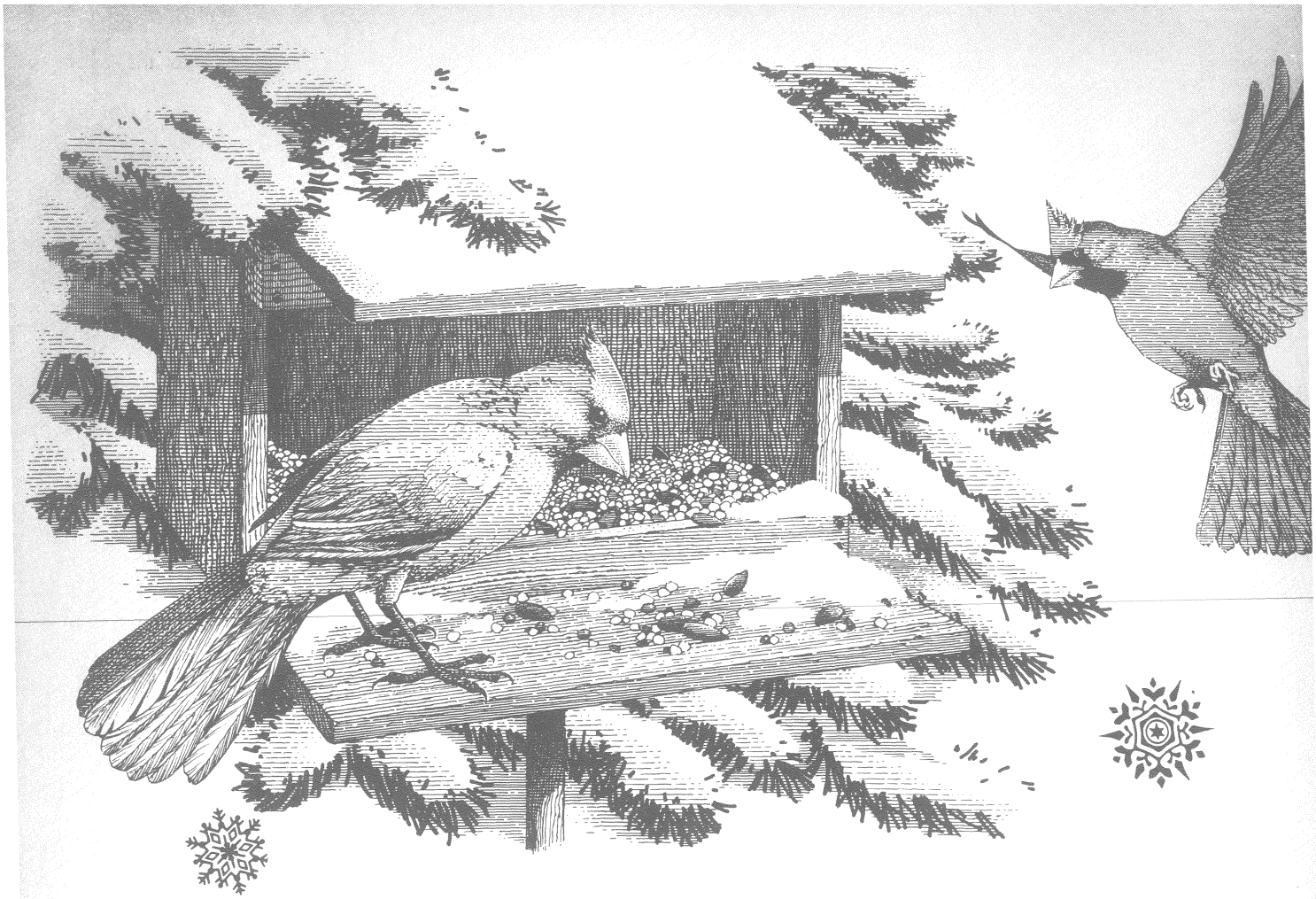
by Busy Beaver *Andrea Feenstra*

8 1 22 5 1 8 1 16 16 25

8 15 12 9 4 1 25!

19 5 1 19 15 14 19 7 18 5 5 20 9 14 7 19!

1 - A	7 - G	12 - L	16 - P	20 - T
4 - D	8 - H	14 - N	18 - R	22 - V
5 - E	9 - I	15 - O	19 - S	25 - Y



Won't be long now and it will be January!

To all the Busy Beavers celebrating a January birthday we say "A very happy birthday, and many happy returns of the day!" Here's hoping you all have a very happy and thankful day celebrating with your family and friends. And we send, too, our very best wishes for the Lord's blessing in the year ahead.

January

Lois Helder	4	Rita Wubs	14
Kerri-Ann Spoelstra	5	Carl De Boer	15
Vicki Roodzant	6	Michelle Meyer	17
Christina VanderVelde	7	Jennifer Postma	18
Anna De Vries	8	Kelly Kleefman	19
Alan Van Raalte	8	Mary-Lynn De Boer	24
Teena Buzeman	11	Shauna De Haas	24
Michael John Mans	11	Marguerite Kleefman	24
Merika Linde	13	Sarah Vanderzwaag	25
Julie Stieva	14	Krista Ellens	28

I will send a reward to all the Busy Beavers who send me a story about "How we celebrated Christmas" OR the answers to the Christmas quizzes.

I'm really looking forward to your letters!

Answers:

Father, Mother, Son: 1. Adam, Eve 2. Amram, Jocheb
ed 3. Hannah, Elkanah 4. Isaac, Rebekah

Messianic Prophecies: 1. *Micah* 5:2 2. *Isaiah* 7:14 3. *Hosea* 11:1 4. Moses, Deuteronomy 18:18,19 5. David, Psalm 22:16 6. *Isaiah* 53:3 7. *Zechariah* 9:9 8. *Isaiah* 53:10 9. David, Psalm 22:18 10. *Zechariah* 11:12,13 11. *Isaiah* 53:7

The Christmas Story: 1. Nazareth 2. Gabriel 3. Bethlehem 4. manger 5. the baby 6. Mary 7. a star 8. a house 9. God 10. an angel

Riddle Fun: 1. Because her class was so bright 2. When it is a jumper 3. a watch dog 4. an undercover agent 5. "Won't be long now!" 6. Buzz off! 7. to keep up their pants 8. That is the end of me 9. the step 10. a garbage truck 11. a chair 12. a man on a horse

Busy Beavers, I wish you all a Blessed Christmas and also a very happy holiday from school!

With love to you all,
Aunt Betty

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. He has blessed us with another child:

YOLANDA RENEE

Born November 8, 1988

Tom and Jane Boeve
Pauline, Rianne

35235 Page Rd. RR 1
Matsqui, BC V0X 1S0

With great joy and thankfulness to the LORD, we announce the birth of our fourth child, a daughter:

MICHELLE AMELIA

Born November 12, 1988

A sister for *Jonathan, Alicia* and *Michael*

Proud parents are:
Jim and Jackie Janssens
(nee Vanderwoerd)

Watford, ON

Thou has turned my mourning into dancing for me . . .

After much sorrow over the loss of Pake and Beppe Ludwig, the LORD has given our family joy in the birth of:

DAVID

Born September 26, 1988

James and Simone DeBoer
Justin and *Scott*

RR 2
St. Ann's, ON L0R 1Y0

We give thanks to Thee, O God; we give thanks; we call on Thy Name and recount Thy wondrous deeds.
Psalm 75:1

The LORD has richly blessed us with the birth of our second daughter:

REBECCA ANN

Born November 12, 1988

A sister for *Steven, Kevin, Ryan* and *Heather*

Peter and Helen Oosterhof
(nee Boot)

RR 2
Grand Valley, ON L0N 1G0

Thy eyes beheld my unformed substance; in Thy book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them.
Psalm 139:16

On October 15, 1988 the LORD richly blessed us with the gift of another covenant child whom we have named:

JONATHAN LEN

A little brother for *Kristin Nicole* and *Brandy Erin.*

Dennis and Marg Muis

2377 Maryvale Court
Burlington, ON L7P 2P1

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall laud Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts.
Psalm 145:3,4

With much thankfulness to our heavenly Father who has made everything well, we wish to announce the birth of our first child. We named her:

HOLLY SERENA

Born November 14, 1988

Thankful parents:
John and Susan Wanders
(nee Selles)

85 Kennedy Road N. #5
Brampton, ON L6V 1X7

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

The LORD has richly blessed our family in entrusting into our care another one of His covenant children, whom we have named:

MIRIAM PORTIA

Born November 15, 1988

A sister for *Deanna, Marjorie, Adrian* and *John*

Bert and Grace Vanderwoerd
(nee Malda)

21st grandchild of:
Mr. and Mrs. J. Malda, Sr.
Burlington, ON

25th grandchild of:
Mr. and Mrs. A.H. Vanderwoerd
Alberton, ON

1338 Humphreys Crescent
Burlington, ON L7P 1K9

With great thankfulness to the LORD, we announce the birth of our first son:

TYLER WILLIAM

Born October 19, 1988

Bill and Jennifer Bergsma
(nee van Rietschoten)

106 Primrose Lane
Chatham, ON N7L 4N7

From our heavenly Father we have been blessed with a son. We thank our Lord for:

MARC ALAN

Born November 11, 1988

A brother for *Jeremy, Daryl, Laura* and *Colette*

Ron and Marcia Vandenbos
(nee Boersema)

RR 1
Caledonia, ON N0A 1A0

O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good; His steadfast love endures for ever! *Psalm 118:1*

With praise and thanksgiving to our heavenly Father, we joyfully announce the birth of:

DARREN MICHAEL

Born October 20, 1988

A brother for *Andrew* and *Jessica*

Ralph and Anita Bos

PO
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Lo, sons are a heritage from the LORD; the fruit of the womb a reward. *Psalm 127:3*

With great thankfulness to the LORD who has richly blessed us, we announce the birth of our son and brother:

CHAD JONATHAN

Born October 31, 1988
Birth weight: 4 pounds, 1 ounce

A brother for *Joshua James*

Harry and Cathy Peters

Box 180
Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0

1918 — Soli Deo Gloria — 1988

70th Wedding Anniversary

On December 28 of this month br. and sr. Jacob Kuik of Carman, Manitoba, hope to celebrate their 70th Wedding Anniversary, surrounded by their family, friends, brothers and sisters of the church. The LORD granted them 10 children, 40 grandchildren and 106 great-grandchildren.

They look back with great gratitude to the care and blessing of the LORD during these years. They began their married life after the First World War on a farm in Koekange, Drente, where they lived and worked till 1932. Illness (two small children were taken Home) and adversity made them decide to move to Enschede, where they lived from 1932 till 1950. In the Second World War br. and sr. Kuik lost their oldest son; he died in a German concentration camp. These first thirty years were not easy. However, also br. and sr. Kuik experienced that hardship is a means in God's hand to strengthen His children in faith and establish them firmly in His service.

In 1950 the Kuik family emigrated to Canada. On their way to Lethbridge, Alberta, they got "stuck" in Homewood. There was work to do in this place, close to Carman: fields with sugar beets had to be harvested. What was meant to be temporary became permanent. This also meant that more Dutch immigrants of Reformed stock settled in the Carman and Winnipeg area, so that through them, together with others, under God's providence and blessing, two Canadian Reformed Churches were established in Manitoba. Quite a part of the membership of the churches of Carman and Winnipeg belongs to their offspring. It is one of the great blessings of the LORD that parents/grandparents may see the upbuilding of the Church of Jesus Christ in their children and (great) grandchildren.

For more than 38 years now br. and sr. Kuik have lived in Canada, after the 32 years of marriage in the Netherlands. They saw many blessings in many ways, and also hardships. But the blessings prevail. Both are 89 years of age, still enjoy relatively good health, and are still active, living members of the church at Carman, surrounded by their children and grandchildren, and brothers and sisters in the church.

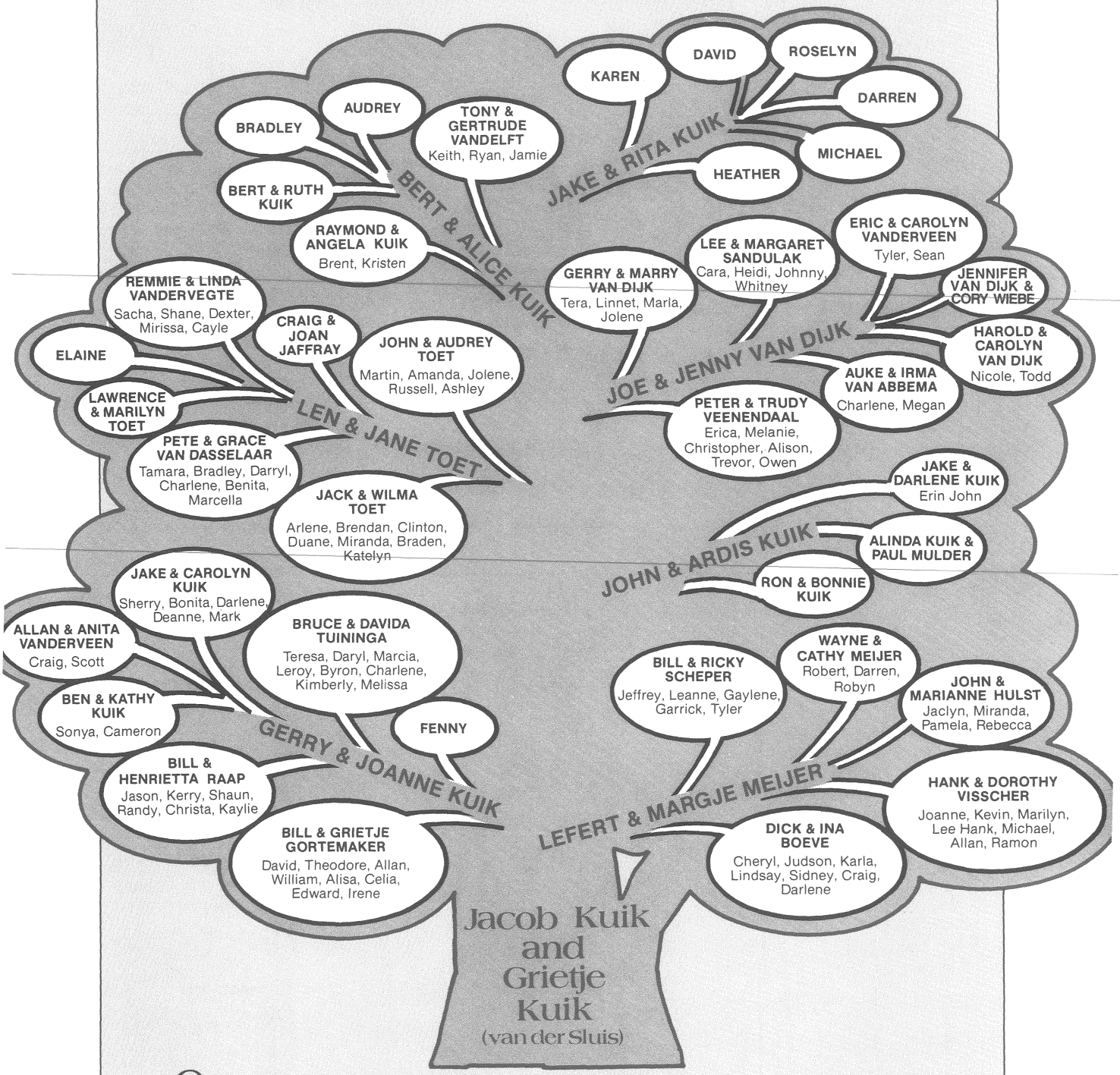
A marriage of 70 years is something special. It is a special blessing. We congratulate you on this gift of God's grace. We wish you the further blessing of the LORD. May you continue to see the well-being of Jerusalem (the Church of Christ) in your children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren through Jesus Christ. (Psalm 128:5, 6). Soli Deo Gloria.

J. GEERTSEMA

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Thy works to another, and shall declare Thy mighty acts. Psalm 145:3, 4

Jacob and Grietje Kuik 70th Wedding Anniversary

1918 — THE NETHERLANDS / CANADA — 1988



On December 28, the Lord willing, we will celebrate the 70th wedding anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents and great-grandparents.

We are thankful that the Lord has spared them for each other and for us, and that it has pleased Him, through them, to lead us in the way of faith and the covenant of grace. They continue to live out of that faith in times of joy and sorrow.

Box 841, Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0

Danielle, Nadine, Heidi, Derek and *Caleb* thank God, the Creator, for giving them a cute baby brother on October 31. His name is:

JOSHUA RICHARD

His proud parents are John and Elisabeth de Vries.

But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.
Joshua 24:15b

London, ON

We thank and praise the Lord for the birth of our son:

STEPHEN RICHARD

Born October 29, 1988

A brother for *Mark, David, Jonathan, Alisa, Roseanne, Joel*

Mr. and Mrs. W.B. Slomp

3285 Cooper Road
Houston, BC V0J 1Z0

With thankfulness to the Lord, who has blessed us with another child, we announce the birth of our second daughter:

KAITLIN MELISSA

Born November 4, 1988

A sister for *Jodi*

Harry and Cynthia Hordyk
(nee Ludwig)

3169 Willow Lane
Burlington, ON L7N 2H9

Praise be to God, who made everything so wonderfully well. With joyful and thankful hearts we annouce the birth of:

DAVID MATTHEW

Born October 28, 1988

A brother for *Jaclyn, Andrea, Nicholas*

Will and Janet Havenaar
(nee Kamstra)

30 John Martin Crescent
Millgrove, ON L0R 1V0

Psalm 78:4b

"... tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD, and His might, and the wonders which He has wrought."

With thankfulness to the Lord, who again has blessed us with a covenant child, we are pleased to announce the birth of our third child, a daughter:

KAYLA JUSTINE

Born November 12, 1988

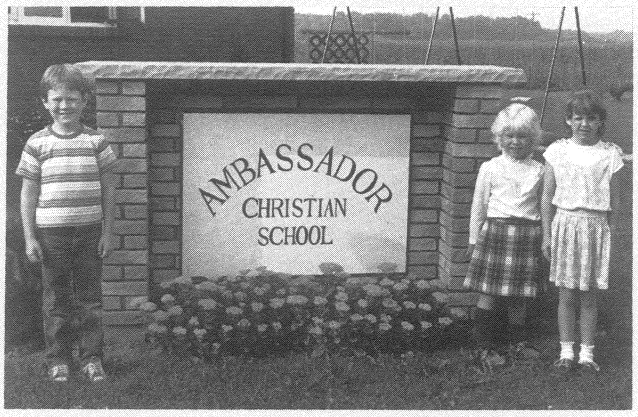
A sister for *Amy* and *Jason*

Norman and Diane VanderHorst
(nee Doesburg)

5705-211 Street
Langley, BC V3A 2L7

Graduation at Ambassador Christian School, Watford, ON June 30, 1988

Graduation at Ambassador Christian School. The four graduates with their teachers, from left to right: Miss A. Van Spijker, Mariet Nap, Annette Tamminga, Rieta Wubs, Marcel Wattel and Mr. S. Nap.



Three children entered Grade 1 at Ambassador Christian School. From left to right: Andrew Lenting, Kimberley Van Gorkum, Irene Wubs.

With great joy and thanks to God, we announce the birth of our daughter. We named her:

KENDRA JAYNE

Born September 25, 1988

A sister for *Jordan, Kelly* and *Katie*

Jim and Karen Van Spronsen

Box 690
Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

We,

RICHARD AIKEMA

and

HEATHER BERGSMA

announce our engagement as of November 18, 1988. We pray that the LORD will continue to guide our paths, which He has brought together.

Psalm 119:105

16548 61 Avenue
Surrey, BC V3S 5V4

With thankfulness to the LORD, who brought us together and guides our lives, we:

ALINDA GRETHA KUIK

and

PAUL EDWARD MULDER

wish to announce our engagement.

December 28, 1988

1225 Highway 5, RR1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

With gratitude to God whose hand guides all things, we announce our engagement:

KAREN BARENDREGT

and

TONY GROEN

October 1, 1988

Box 2034, Smithers, BC V0J 2N0

With thanks unto the LORD who brought us together, we announce our engagement.

ELINOR PIEPERS

and

PETER ZUIDEMA

December 24, 1988

RR 2, North Gower, ON K0A 2T0

With thankfulness to the LORD, Mr. and Mrs. Ken Linde and Mr. and Mrs. Talo Tamminga are pleased to announce the forthcoming marriage of their children:

LORRAINE TERESA

and

JACOB ROELOF

D.V. on Friday, December 16, 1988 at 6:30 p.m. in the Canadian Reformed Church of Attercliffe, Ontario

Prof. J. Geertsema officiating.

Future address:
Simpson Street, Alma, ON N0B 1A0

December

Groningen 1963 *1988 Ancaster*

Together with our children

Marten
Marieke
Hermen and Stephanie
Annelies
Joanne

we remember with thankful joy that the LORD has kept and guided us throughout 25 years of marriage, family life, and ministry.

Ephesians 3:20, 21

Jakob Geertsema
Anny E. Geertsema
(nee Bronsema)

41 Amberly Blvd.
Ancaster, ON L9G 3R9

1953 — December 5 — 1988

I give Thee thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart.
Psalm 138:1a

With thankfulness to the LORD, who has kept them in His care, we hope to celebrate the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

EBEL BRUINSMA

and

ALLY BRUINSMA (nee Klos)

Winnipeg, MB: Harriet and Larry Suderman
and family
Edmonton, AB: Willa and Joe Bosch
and family
Charlie and Liz Bruinsma
and family
Liz and Jake Vanderlinden
and family
Winnipeg, MB: Brian

103-20265-54A Avenue, Langley, BC V3A 3W6

1958 — December 4 — 1988

With thankfulness to the LORD for His many blessings, we hope to celebrate the 30th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

JOHN and JOHANNA VAN BODEGOM
(nee Van Leeuwen)

Grand Valley, ON: Ed and Bertha Groen
Shelley, Charles, Tricia,
Rosalie, Andrea, Joel
Don and Lisa Van Bodegom
Kristopher
Orangeville, ON: Emeline
Frank

46 Brenda Boulevard
Orangeville, ON

1929 — January 11 — 1989

This is the day which the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

Psalm 118:24

With praise and thankfulness to the LORD who has spared them for each other and for us, we hope, D.V., to remember and celebrate the 60th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents, grandparents and great-grandparents:

HENDRIK KLOS

and

HENDRIKJE KLOS (nee Vos)

Langley, BC: Ebel and Ally Bruinsma
Aldergrove, BC: Ko and Gerrie Hamelink (nee Van Wijk)
Delta, BC: Wicher and Rie Beugelink
Carman, MB: Bert and Eke Klos (nee Van Assen)
Winnipeg, MB: John and Annie Vandasselaar
Surrey, BC: Henry and Gaya Klos (nee Elsinga)
Carman, MB: Jake and Rita Kuik

grandchildren and great-grandchildren

Correspondence address:
#306 Manoah Manor
2065-54A Avenue
Langley, BC V3A 3W6

Due to ill health we will not be able to publicly celebrate this joyous event.

1949 — January 12 — 1989

With thankfulness to the LORD, we are happy to announce the 40th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

KLAAS AIKEMA

and

ANJE AIKEMA (nee Kamstra)

on January 12, 1989 *Philippians 3:20*

Their thankful children and grandchildren:

Carlisle, ON: Gary and Corinne Aikema
Angelina, John, Tracy, Julia Lisa, Kyle
Langley, BC Peter and Margaret Aikema
Kevin, Suzanne, Bradley Robert, Dennis
Waterdown, ON: Marten and Joanne Postma
Mark, Christopher, Jennifer
Caernoron, N. Wales: Richard and Terri Davies
Beamsville, ON: Peter and Margaret Feenstra
Richard, Matthew, Aileen Scott
Edmonton, AB: John Aikema
Burlington, ON: Dorothy Aikema

487 Elwood Road
Burlington, ON L7N 3C6

Open House to be held January 12, 1989, 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Ebenezer Church, Dynes Road.

1958 — December 13 — 1988

With thankfulness to the LORD, we would like to announce the thirtieth Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

CORNELIS ROELAND VAN ANDEL

and

JANIE VAN ANDEL (nee Hayema)

Burlington, ON: Roland and Janice van Andel
Michelle
Hamilton, ON: John and Irene van Andel
David and *Matthew*
Chatham, ON: Rick and Audrey Gritter
Jaron
Hamilton, ON: Bernice van Andel

For Thou, O LORD, art good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on Thee.

Psalm 86:5

117 William Street N.
Chatham, ON N7M 4L6

January 6, 1916 — November 29, 1988

I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Romans 8:18

The Lord took unto Himself our beloved husband, father and grandfather:

KLAAS ROOK

after a lengthy illness.

Carman, MB: Antje Rook – Jonker
Elizabeth and Martin DeWit
Fred, Steven, Anthony, Jonathan Kevin, Annette, Marion
Len and Edith Rook
Timothy, David, Marcia, Laura Kathy, Leanne
Rinie and Peter Vandermeulen
Alvin, Gregory, Denis
Neerlandia, AB: Margaret and Andy Tams
Karl, Warren, Debra, Garth Cheryl
Winnipeg, MB: Neil and Linda Rook
Barrhead, AB: Ronald Rook and Evelyn Hamoen
Robyn

Box 473
Carman, MB R0G 0J0

On October 22, 1988 the LORD called home His faithful servant,

REV. A.B. ROUKEMA

We, the members of *Search the Scriptures* wish to share with his family, our sorrow at his passing. Rev. Roukema attended our meetings regularly while he served in Grand Rapids. We also wish to express our joy for this brother and servant now that he is with his heavenly Father, with the words of Psalm 138:8

Search the Scriptures
3167 68th Street S.E.
Caledonia, MI 49316

On November 4, 1988, our heavenly Father, in His infinite wisdom and mercy, suddenly called unto Himself our dearly beloved mother and grandmother:

AAGJE ANTJE (Attie) VANSPRONSEN – Dral

at the age of 61 years.

Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. *Matthew 11:28*

Elora, ON: Annette and Onno Sikkema
St. Ann's, ON: Maurice and Lorraine VanSpronsen
Derek VanSpronsen

and six grandchildren

Wife of H.A. VanSpronsen, Lethbridge, AB

Correspondence address:
A. Sikkema
43 Mill Street E.
Elora, ON N0B 1S0

On November 4, 1988, the LORD suddenly took unto Himself our friend and sister in the LORD:

ATTY VANSPRONSEN

May the LORD comfort the family with the words of Romans 8, that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Hamilton, ON: John and Martha Beintema
Burlington, ON: Pieta Jansen Van'tLand
Peter and Hennie Knooihuizen

The Board of the Ambassador Christian School at Watford, Ontario invites applications for

PRINCIPAL/TEACHER

Duties to commence as soon as possible.

Applications may be sent to
Mrs. Gertie VanLuik
Secretary of the Education Committee
210 Park Street
Strathroy, ON
N7G 3V9
Phone (519) 245-4681

The Canadian Reformed School Society of Abbotsford operating the

JOHN CALVIN SCHOOL

in Yarrow, BC requires an

ELEMENTARY TEACHER

for the 1989-1990 school year.

For information regarding this opening please contact the principal:

Mr. H. DeRaad
School (604) 823-6814
Residence (604) 854-8134

Applications may be sent to the secretary:

Mr. J.A. Van Laar
900 Bowman Road, RR #2
Abbotsford, BC V2S 4N2

The Board of the Covenant Canadian Reformed School of Neerlandia, AB, invites applications for the position of

TEACHER

Specialization in the area of Language Arts is a definite asset. Grade assignment will depend on the performance of the applicant and next year's staffing.

Our school has a present enrollment of 82 students and a staff of five teachers and one teacher's aid. Consider the prospect of teaching at a school in a beautiful rural setting and with a young and friendly staff. Added incentives include attractive salaries, comprehensive fringe benefits, and affordable housing.

For more information contact the principal:

Mr. J. Harthoorn
(403) 674-4774 (school)
(403) 674-6457 (home)

Applications may be sent to:

Mr. H. Wierenga, Education Committee
Box 67
Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0

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THANK YOU

Brothers and sisters, thank you very much for sending letters and cards, or other means of showing your kindness on the occasion of my 80th birthday. Seldom have I seen such a large family ad, and all that for a single person. I am faithfully cared for in the communion of saints and my health is improving.

G. ANTONIDES

THANK YOU

We would like to thank everyone who in one way or another made the celebration of our 25th Wedding Anniversary such a memorable and happy occasion.

With Christian greetings,
Evert and Johanna Breukelman

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Brian or Hanne Selby
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858-3434

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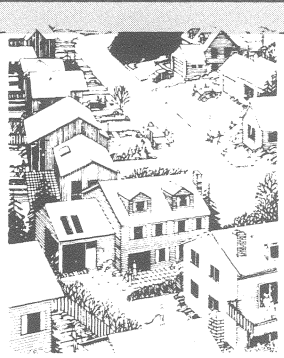

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T.M.P. VanderVen in *Reformed Perspective* : "It throws a (perhaps too) personal light on the life and experiences of the early settlers in Pella, but as a biography adds color to this fascinating and important part of church history."
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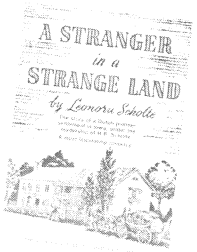

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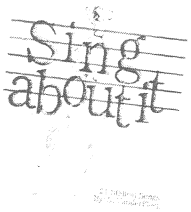

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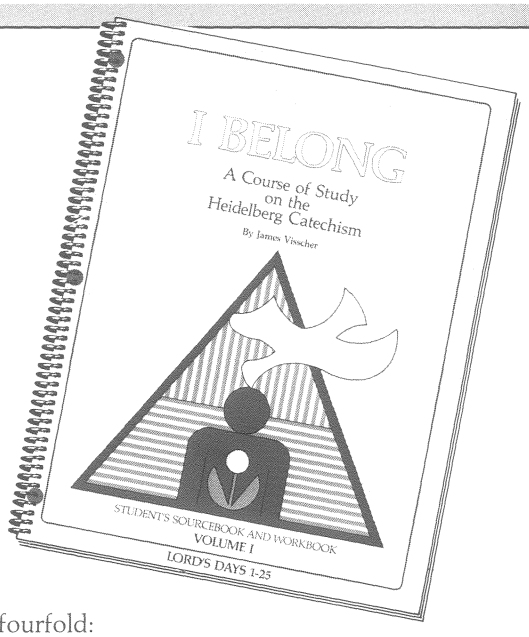

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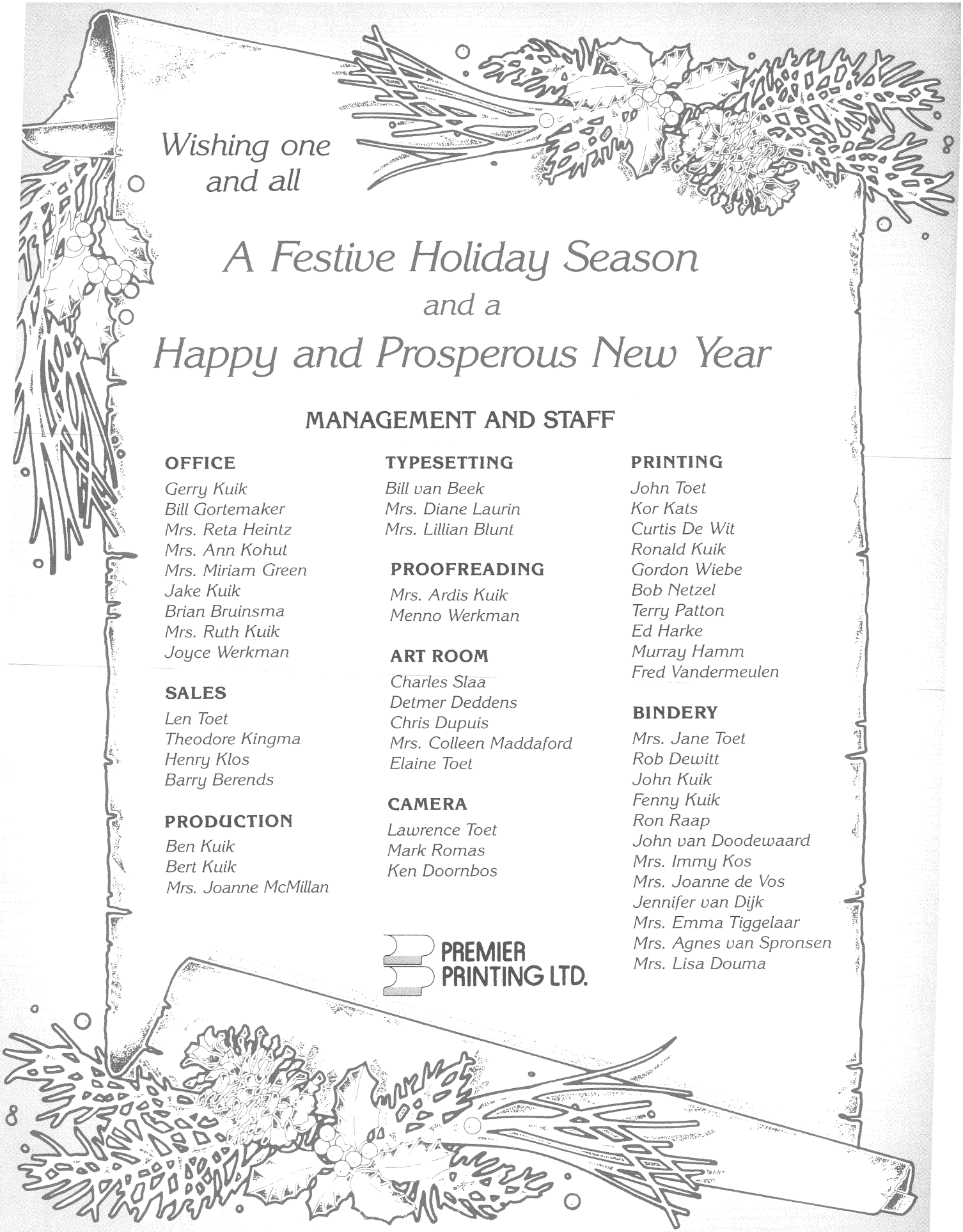

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A Christmas Message

John 1:1-5

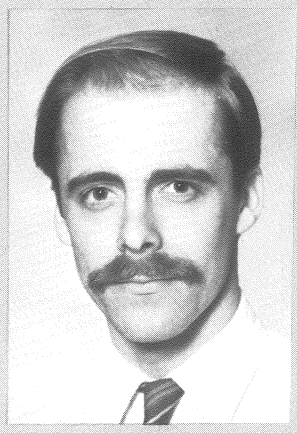
In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

John 14:6-7

. . . know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father, but by Me. If you had known Me, you would have known my Father also, henceforth you know Him and have seen Him."

Revelation 21:1-4

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them; He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away."



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Blessed are all who fear the LORD, and who walk in His ways.

Psalm 128:1

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God's continuous blessing and guidance for the year 1989 is our wish to all our brothers and sisters.

For the LORD is good; His steadfast love endures for ever, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100:5

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Rolf Jansen and Yolanda Barendregt

Hardenberg — the Netherlands

Aan familie en kennissen gezegende Kerstdagen en Gods zegen gewenst voor het Nieuwe Jaar.

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"And He said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto Him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."
Revelation 21:6

The staff of the American Reformed School at Grand Rapids wishes all our brothers and sisters God's blessing in the coming new year.

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Watford — Ontario

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God's blessing to all our brothers and sisters for 1989.

May the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
I Thessalonians 5:23

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Grand Rapids — Michigan, U.S.A.

AMERICAN REFORMED CHURCH

The following members of the American Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, wish all their brothers and sisters a blessed 1989.

Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall praise Thy works to another . . ."

Psalm 145:3,4a

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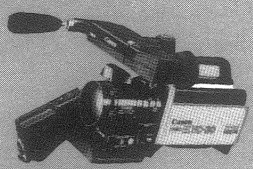

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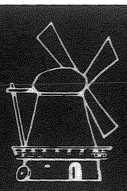

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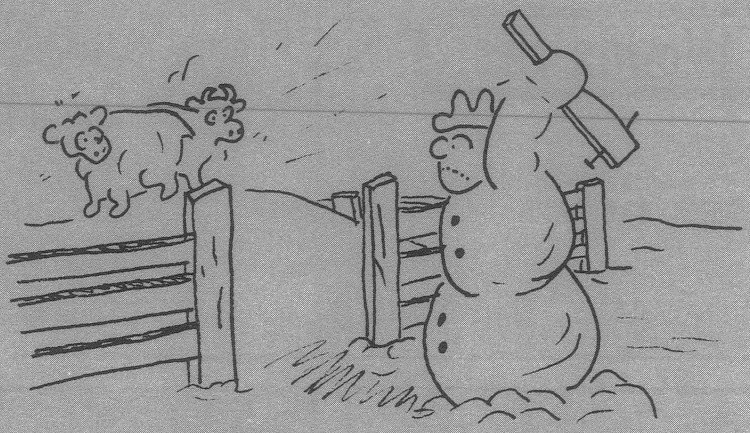

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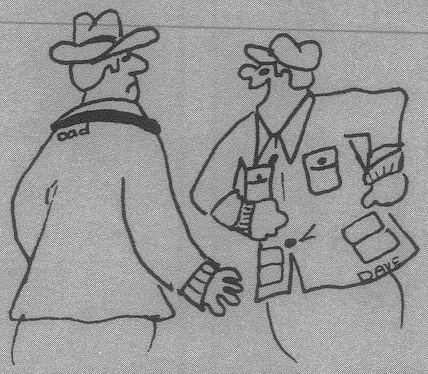

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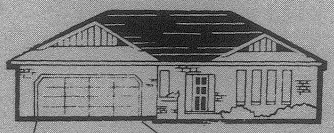

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Psalm 67:1, 2

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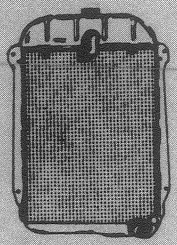

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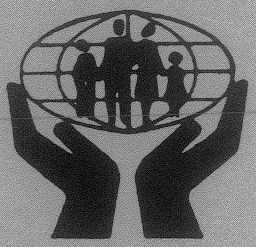

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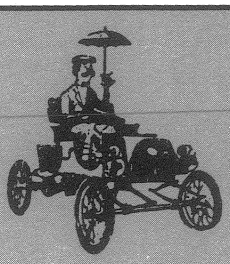

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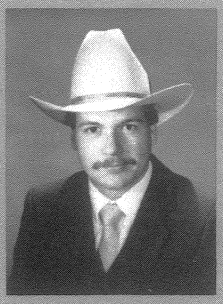

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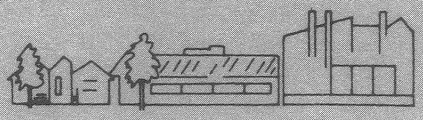

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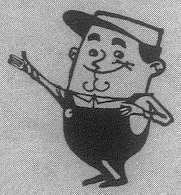

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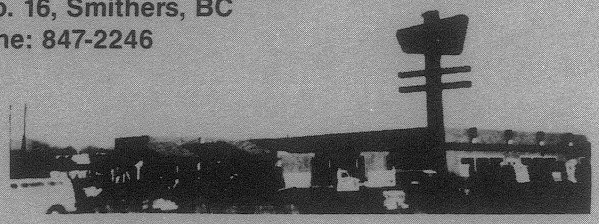

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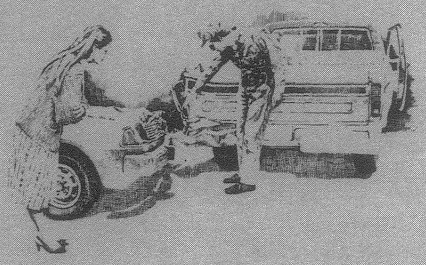

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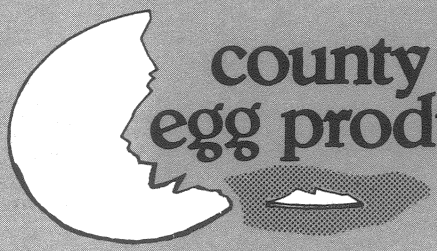

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The following brothers and sisters and their families of the Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa wish you God's blessings at Christmastime and throughout the New Year.

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May we all also in 1989 ask only for the LORD's blessing and guidance on all our ways and He will make straight our paths.

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a blessed Christmas and a prosperous New Year

Houston — British Columbia

HOUSTON CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

Wishing all our brothers and sisters in Canada, the U.S.A., and abroad, the Lord's blessings and guidance in the New Year.

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.
Philippians 4:4

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We wish all our brothers and sisters in the Lord, God's blessing and guidance throughout 1989.

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We wish you all the joy and peace of the Christmas Season and the Lord's blessing and guidance throughout the New Year.

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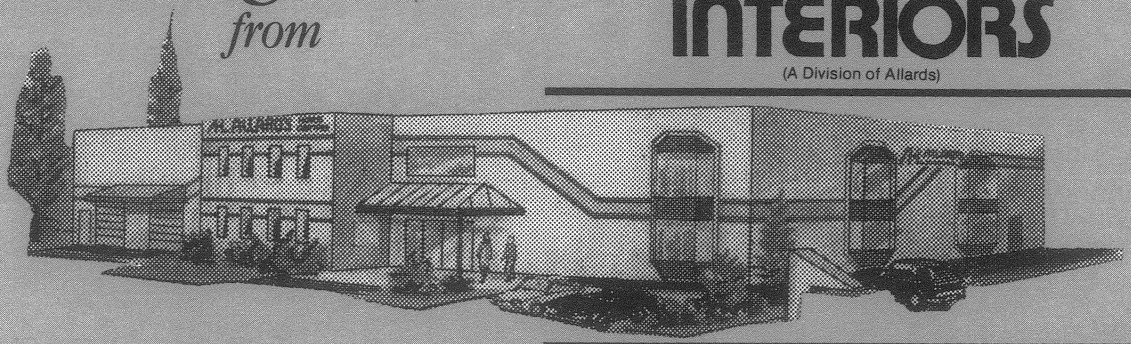

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Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting! And let all the people say, "Amen!" Praise the LORD!

Psalms 106:48

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Wishing all our Brothers and Sisters in Canada and abroad, a Joyous New Year, in which you may experience the LORD's blessings.

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The LORD is a stronghold to him whose way is upright.
Proverbs 10:29

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Calgary — Alberta

CALGARY CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters in Christ a blessed A.D. 1989.

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well.
Matthew 6:33

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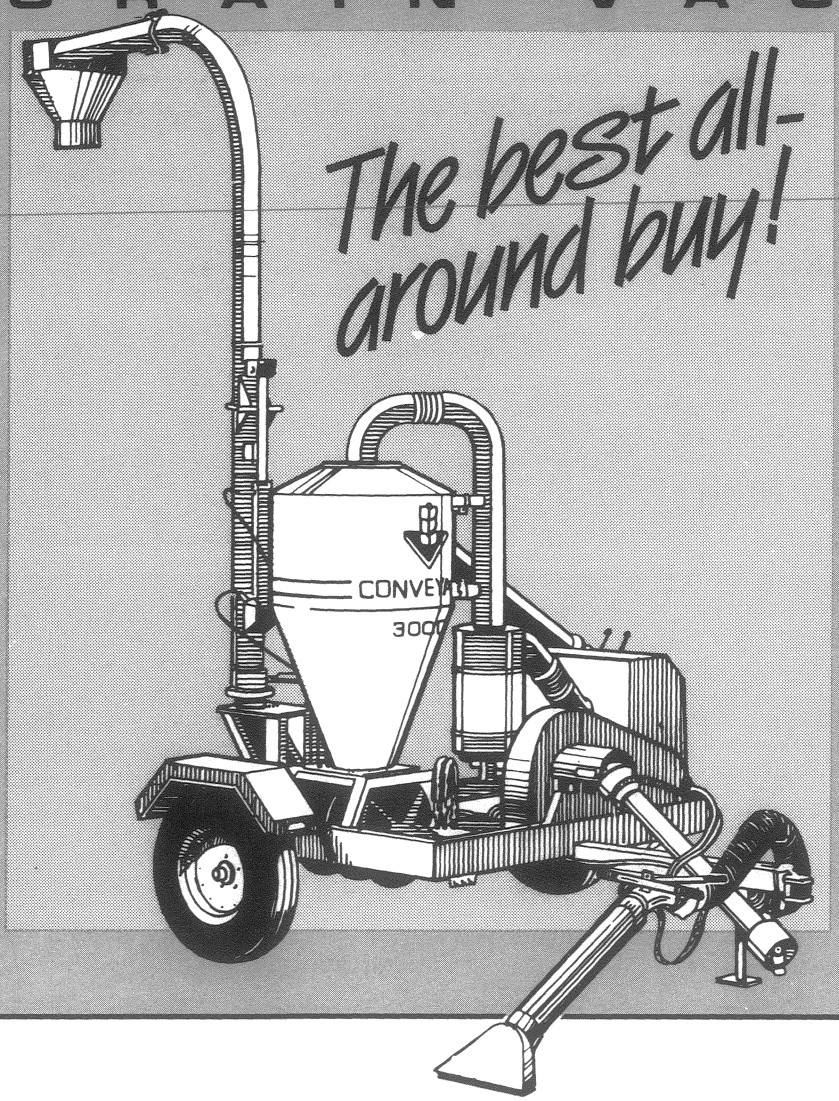

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Carman — Manitoba

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We wish all the brothers and sisters in Canada, United States and elsewhere, the Lord's blessing and guidance for the year 1989.

Thy faithfulness endures to all generations, thou hast established the earth, and it stands fast.

Psalm 119:90

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Christopher, Andrew

Elora — Ontario

ELORA CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad, a blessed 1989.

Happy the people whose God is the LORD!

Psalm 144:15b

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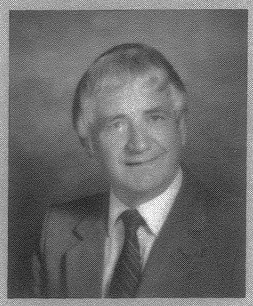

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We wish all our brothers and sisters in the Lord, in Canada and abroad, God's blessing and His guiding hand throughout the New Year.

Yet I will not forget you. Behold, I have graven you on the palms of My hands.

Isaiah 49:15b-16

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Edmonton – Alberta

IMMANUEL CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the Lord's blessing and His guidance for 1989.

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PETER and GWEN BOUWSEMA, *Timothy, Benjamin*
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GARRY and CATHY VISSCHER, *Lorna*

London – Ontario

PILGRIM CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

We extend greetings to our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad, and pray for the Lord's continued blessings for 1989.

For the LORD is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.

Psalm 100:5

BERT and JEAN BLOKKER, *Kenneth, Michael Steven, Wesley*
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Fergus — Ontario

MARANATHA CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The following brothers and sisters and their families of the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church at Fergus wish you God's blessings at Christmastime and throughout the New Year.

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

Ecclesiastes 3:1

MR. and MRS. HARRY BOUWMAN
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LYDIA VANVEEN

Grand Valley — Ontario

GRAND VALLEY CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

The following brothers and sisters of the Canadian Reformed Church, Grand Valley, wish all their brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad God's continuous blessing and guidance for 1989.

Sing praises to the LORD, O you His saints, and give thanks to His holy name.

Psalm 30:4

BILL and GRACE BALCH, *Andy, Eddy, Christina, Allan*
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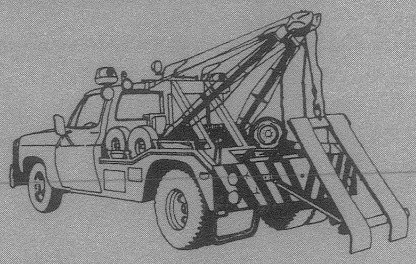

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Burlington-South — Ontario

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God's continuous blessing and guidance for the year 1989 is our wish to all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad.

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Burlington-East — Ontario

EBENEZER CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH

O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, our shelter from the stormy blast, and our eternal home.
Hymn 42:1

MR. and MRS. K. AIKEMA, *Dorothy*
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Alicia, Nadine, Krista, Ian
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We wish all our brothers and sisters the LORD's blessing and guidance in 1989.

Be watchful, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.
I Corinthians 16:13

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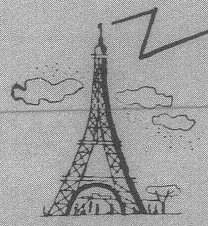

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I will joy in the God of my salvation. God, the LORD, is my strength.

Habakkuk 3:18,19

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We wish all our brothers and sisters in Canada and abroad the Lord's blessing and guidance in the New Year.

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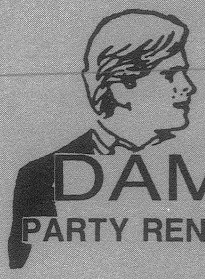

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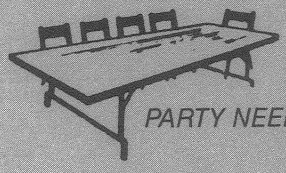

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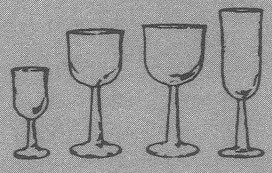

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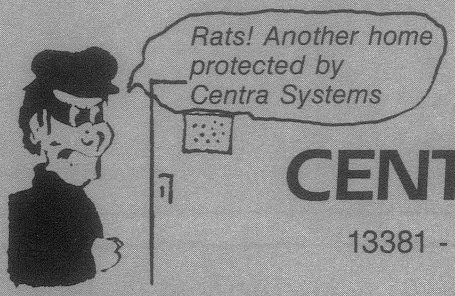

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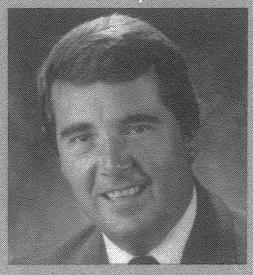
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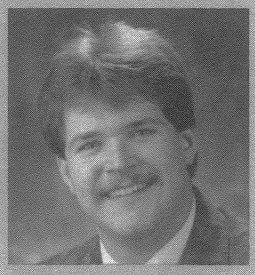
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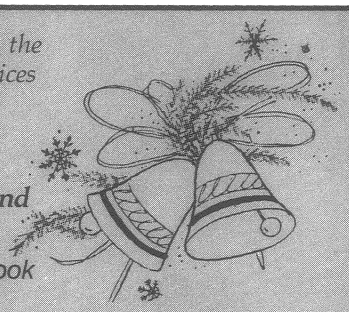

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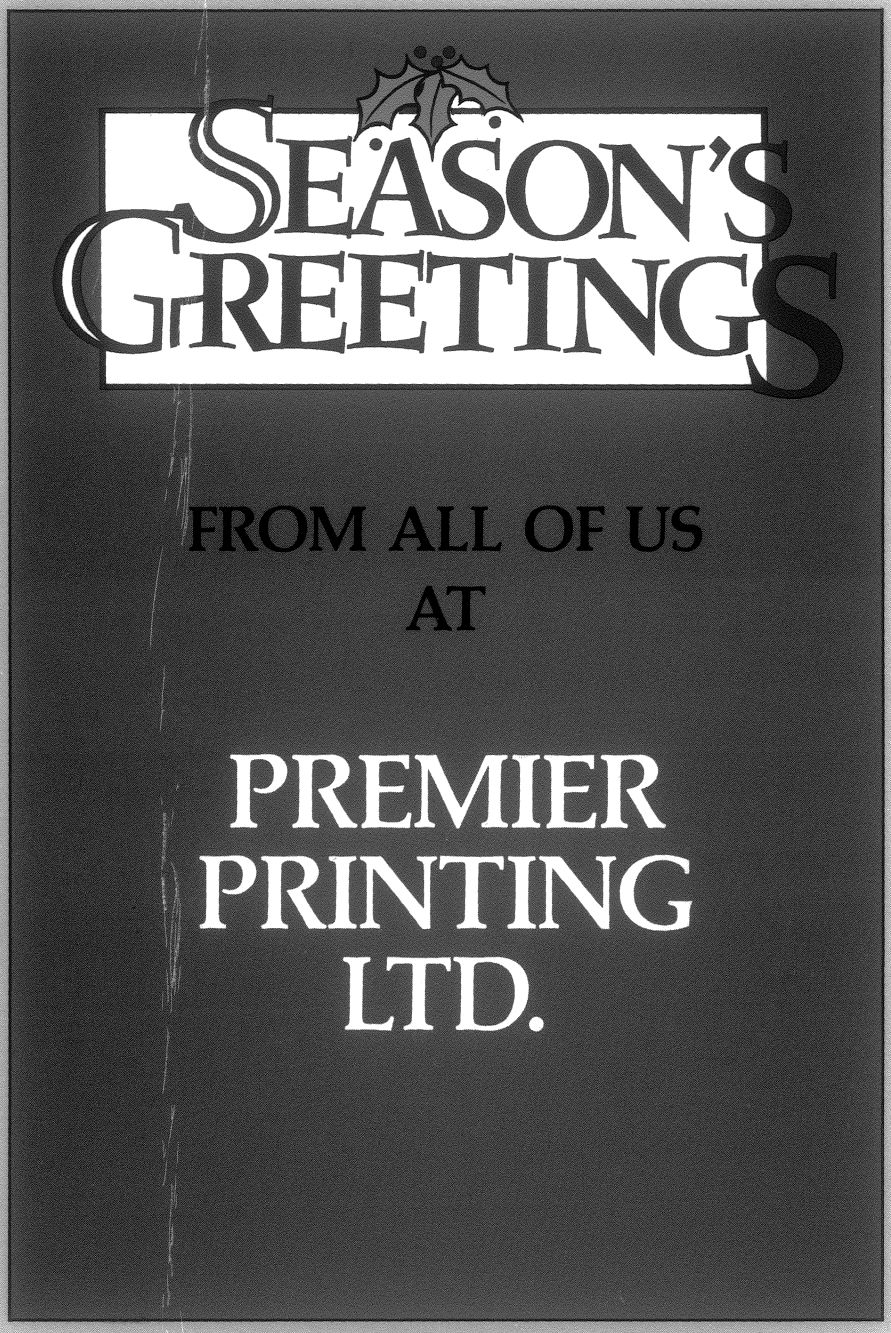
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