

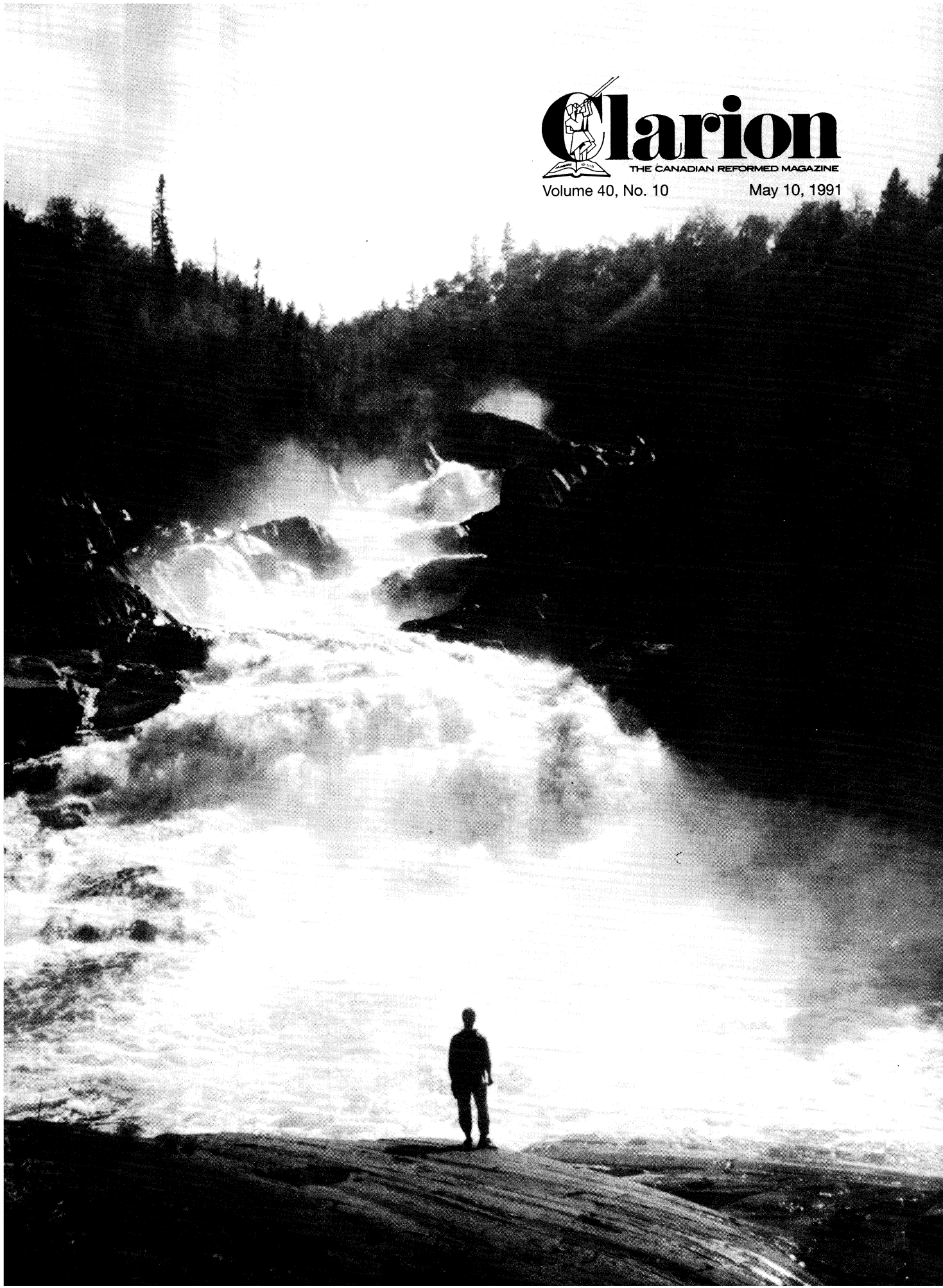


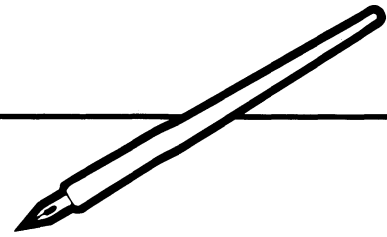
Clarion

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Covenant and School Education

Cause and motivation

Recently I attended a membership meeting of one of our school societies. One of the points on the agenda was the budget. As with most of our school societies, the members are placed in different categories, divided into two main groups, with their subdivisions. The first group is that of parents who have children in one school, an elementary or high school, or in both. The second main group of members is that of those who have no children in either school. Here the subdivision is that of members in general and of members who either are seniors or students.

Brothers and sisters, parents with growing children (and therefore often with the most expensive families, being in the highest category), have a tuition fee to contribute to the school of almost five hundred dollars per month. This occurs in a time of recession. It must not be easy for the school boards to present such budgets, while being aware of the economic situation. Hours of labor, of calculating and thinking, are involved here. Looking around at that meeting, I saw a number of older members who have no children at home anymore. It was good to see these older members there who belong to the second main group. They care for the school education of the youth of the church. They see the plight of the parents with children, and continue to place their shoulders under the load with their brothers and sisters.

Together the members adopted the budget. It is with thankfulness to the Lord, who provides the willingness and the means, that I write these lines. It is only through Him, through His grace that the fees are paid. We call the LORD our faithful covenant God. Allow me to make a few remarks here on one aspect of the biblical concept of the covenant in connection with Reformed school education. The covenant aspect is very important in leading us in our life, also regarding the schools. We confess that the youth of the church belongs to the covenant. They belong to the Lord Who says also to them: I claim you for My own. I put My seal on you. That is why we have our Reformed schools, set up for covenant children.

Covenant means people, community, for in the covenant we find two parties: God and His people. The apostle Paul, e.g., speaks of the church, the community of believers in Christ, as a household, a family of God. Therefore, when we say covenant we say family, brothers and sisters, who are there to help and support each other. It is a joy to see the covenant at work at such a school meeting: brothers and sisters in all membership categories come together to discuss matters pertaining to the school of God's covenant children: the youth of the church(es). Those who do not have children in school anymore maintain their membership, gladly contributing to the cause of covenant children. They accept their responsibility and calling to support their brothers and sisters in the Family of God.

The financial situation becomes a little easier when your youngest child has finished high school. Going down from almost five hundred dollars per month for one school, beside the church and other schools, to about one hundred dollars lightens the "burden." Of course, it was first of all my own responsibility, as parent, to provide, to the utmost of my ability, Reformed education for my children. If need would be, I had to sacrifice for it. If I were to take this responsibility easy and rely on others because I was not willing to pay the full amount, I would be unreliable and unfaithful.

Thus, it was my responsibility before the God of my children to give them and have them receive a faithful covenantal education, not only at home, and in the church, but also in school, to the utmost of my ability. I owed it to them. But also the other children in the church belong to God's covenant. As their brother, I am also responsible for them and their parents. For a number of years, I contributed some five hundred dollars per month for my own children first of all, but together with other members of the societies, and in that way I gave support for other parents and children at the same time. If I now were to stop supporting the others in the Family, since my children do not need this education anymore, I would be covenantally unfaithful to them, parents and children. There would be with me a lack of care for my brothers and sisters, parents and children, with whom I belong to the same church and covenant. In a certain way, I would say: you should give a Reformed school education to your children in the sense of James 2:14-17. I would say to my brothers and sisters for whom it is not easy to contribute their five hundred dollars month after month, "Go in peace, be warm and filled." Or, in this case: "Go in peace, and provide the proper education for your children."

Therefore, if I was able to contribute four hundred or more, it certainly is still possible to contribute one hundred or a little more. How can I, before God's face, look the others straight in the face when I would quit being a member and not helping them out? How could I justify before our God in heaven, before whom I live and who places me in the covenant and church beside the others, that I would forsake them? No, I could not justify this for the LORD, who so faithfully cared for me and my children during the past twenty and more years. No, I do not want to forsake my brothers and sisters in the church whom God gave me as my fellow Family members and who during those years set their shoulders with me under the task and calling to provide Reformed education to the children of the church. Therefore, I gladly continue my membership and contribute my fees with which I can support the others in the fulfillment of their task and calling and so lighten their "burden" somewhat.

The reader understands that continued membership is for me a matter of obedient love to our Father in heaven and of faithfulness and reliability toward my brothers and sisters in the Family. God is pleased when His children love Him

and care for each other. He has promised to bless this. He tells me too that if I do not love Him and do not show my loving care for the other members of the Family, He will get angry with me and could take His blessings away from me. I trust Him. I believe that His Word is true. What God has given in His grace, I cheerfully, in thankfulness, share with my brothers and sisters, small and great.

Sharing with others

There is another important matter in connection with our Canadian Reformed schools. It is a matter with which the different boards are regularly confronted. Should we share the Reformed school education for our children with others who are not Canadian Reformed? I am convinced we should, although with restrictions. Let me first mention these restrictions. I am not in favour of using the school for evangelistic purposes and allow any parents for any reason to have their children enrolled in our Canadian Reformed schools, on the basis of some hope that those children might become believers, or Reformed believers. The school is simply not a means for evangelism, just as courtship and marriage are not instituted for that purpose. The apostle Paul is very clear on this point in 1 Cor. 7:12-16. This means also that we should not open our schools for people in general, nor for Christians in general. We have a basis for our schools. It is the same truth which we also confess as churches, namely Scripture with its summary stated in the Three Forms of Unity, the Reformed Confession. We are to maintain this basis. Parents who are granted a request to enroll their children in a Reformed school should agree with this basis.

There are other Christian schools. Quite a number of them have their origin in the Christian Reformed Church. However, many have abandoned the Three Forms of Unity from the basis, replacing them by a kind of school creed. Further, they have opened their doors not only to non-Reformed children, but to non-Reformed teachers as well. However, a Reformed school, based upon the Reformed Standards, is to maintain that basis, otherwise it loses its Reformed character and can become a general, kind of evangelical, more or less liberal Christian school.

However, having made this restriction, we should not become exclusivistic. When non-Canadian Reformed parents agree with the Reformed Standards and precisely because of the Reformed foundation seek such education for their children, we should not refuse them, but, on the contrary, gladly receive them. It is my conviction that such receiving of children from outside our churches is the will of our Lord.

Christ tells us in Matthew 5:42 "Give to him who asks you (for something), and do not refuse him who wants to borrow from you." This text deals in the first place with money. However, Christ shows us here what our Christian attitude should be in all of life. As His disciples, we are called to be living letters of Him, that is, of the truth of the gospel which reveals Him. The gospel reveals Him as giving, sacrificing Himself in order to give us His grace. It is in us as people who give, who share, and thus show our care, that others are to recognize the Christ of the Scriptures. We are to show the image of Christ in giving the gospel itself, but also other gifts of God's grace. We are to do that, as said above, bound to the truth of Scripture and confession.

Now, the schools we may have are God's gift of pure grace, just as the gospel itself is. We do not deserve these schools, just as we do not deserve anything. Also the fact that we pay for them does not change this character of grace, at all. The ability and willingness to build and maintain these schools comes from God's grace alone. Therefore, just like we are called to share the gospel itself with others, we should also be willing to share God's grace in our schools with those who ask it for the proper reasons. When fellow believers of Reformed persuasion, for reason of this Reformed character of the education, seek enrollment of their children at one of our schools, and ask for it, it is our biblical and Christian calling and joy to share with them the grace given to us.

The commandment of Christ quoted from Matthew 5 can be found in Luke 6:30, too. In the next verse, v. 31, the Lord continues to say, "As you wish that men would do to you, do so to them." In verse 38ff, Christ adds the promise: "Give, and it will be given to you, . . . for the measure you give will be the measure you get back." It is, therefore, the will of our Saviour and Lord that we are willing to share His grace with others who ask us for it, when they want to stand with us on the same basis of the biblical truth as confessed in the Reformed Standards. We can compare here also Matthew 15:21-28 where we hear Christ first say to a Canaanite woman that He was "sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" but then granted her request when she pointed to the fact that "dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table."

To avoid misunderstanding, the point of comparison is not that a non-Israelite is called a dog, a Gentile; the point is here the act of mercy of Christ, of His giving what was asked for, when the woman showed that she had the faith which the Israelite covenant children, the Jews and their leaders, were called to show but did not.

As far as I know, the constitutions of all the Canadian Reformed schools state that only those who are members of a Canadian Reformed Church can be members of such a school society. I agree with this. It means that non-Canadian Reformed parents, who stand with us on the basis of the Confession, have to accept this situation. They are to abide by the constitution, when it says that they cannot become members and that they do not have the privilege to vote when decisions are to be made. If there is this willingness to comply with the constitution, such parents show that they are truly serious in seeking Reformed education for their children. And we should be glad to grant their request, in obedient love to Christ and His cause.

The present situation

Again as far as I know, such requests have come from, and have been granted to, first of all parents in the Free Reformed churches. Requests have also come from parents in the Christian Reformed Church who are fighting to remain faithful to the Lord, and therefore to His Word and to the Reformed Creeds; who, for that reason, no longer want to enroll their children in a general Christian school. A number of these concerned people are on their way out of the Christian Reformed Church. They are looking toward us and our churches for possible union in the future. Contacts are made. A negative response to requests as discussed here will (easily) be a stumbling block on the way toward the unity which


"The school is simply not a means for evangelism"

Christ wants there to be between those who are of the same faith, cf e.g. John 17, Ephesians 2:11-21, 4:1-16, and Article 28 of the Belgic Confession.

I would like to illustrate what I mean with a positive example. I know about a concerned Christian Reformed family somewhere in this country, who learned that a teacher in their Christian high school, attended by their children, taught against the historicity of certain passages in the Scriptures. Objections had no result. They requested the board of the Canadian Reformed high school to have their children enrolled. The board granted their request. This brought them in contact with our Canadian Reformed school and people. They experienced here what they were looking for: faithfulness to Scripture and the Reformed Standards, and a welcoming attitude. After about half a year the family had joined the local Canadian Reformed Church. A refusal of their request would have prevented a getting acquainted and, humanly speaking, the unity of faith around the same Lord's Supper table. It would have obstructed the unity according to the texts mentioned above.

An argument against allowing children of non-Canadian Reformed parents in our schools is the danger of mixed courtships and the possible consequences of it. It is true that all kinds of things can happen. They can also not happen. It is also true that we have all our responsibility. However, when there are clear words of Christ about our conduct in the Scriptures, they form the basis for our conduct. Not the things that can happen or cannot happen are for us the norm, but God's revealed Word is. This is Reformed thinking. Not election, not providence, but what is written is to guide us in our thinking and acting. Hereby, obedience in love means trusting the LORD.

Let us go on in humble prayer with thanksgiving, working with the gracious gifts of our covenant God for the children of the covenant. We may live not for our cause, but for His.

LORD, bless our schools, the teachers and the children, and not less the parents and their supporting brothers and sisters, as well as the boards; bless us all with Thy wisdom and strength and faithfulness, that we may go Thy way in the joy of faith and in love for Thee and the neighbor. 

The RCUS, a View from the Inside

The following article is in response to the article entitled "Contact with the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)" by Rev. P.K.A. de Boer in the January 4, 1991 issue of the *Clarion*. This writer, along with many other members of the RCUS, welcomes the interest of our brothers and sisters in the Canadian Reformed Churches. We have in recent years become appreciative acquaintances of Rev. Kingma through his visits to several of our synod meetings. This writer has come to know Dr. Van Dam of your Seminary, and has been a subscriber to *Reformed Perspective* for a number of years. He has also had extended contacts with your sister churches, the Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (Vrijgemaakt), over the past six years.

We appreciate Rev. de Boer's article, including those somewhat critical areas. It shows a sincere interest in seeking to know those whom he believes to be brethren in the Lord, as well as a strong commitment to maintaining the truth according to the Word of God. We are going to point out some errors of fact, which no doubt are almost inevitable in attempting to introduce someone we ourselves do not know too well; and we are going to take issue with some of his conclusions. However, we do this in a brotherly manner as those who respect high-

ly that which we have found among you, and as those who know that our RCUS is, like every other denomination or federation of churches, somewhat less than perfect.

It will be good if readers of this article have the January 4 issue of the *Clarion* at hand to better place in context the things we will refer to in Rev. de Boer's article. We will first mention a number of matters of factual inaccuracy which may have little impact on the matter of relations between our churches, but which are important from an historical point of view.

First of all, the idea expressed on page 5 of the *Clarion* article that the union of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches in Prussia in 1817 under one administration (it was not actually a merger) resulted in a new constitution being adopted by the North American German Reformed Synod in 1819 in which the Heidelberg Catechism was received as the exclusive confessional standard, is mistaken at several points. It was not a "constitution" that was adopted in 1819 but rather a "definition of the rights and activities of the Synod in its relations to the Classes" (H.M.J. Klein, *History of the Eastern Synod of the RCUS*, p. 106). Such material might rightly be seen as part of a "constitution," but it was

by actual content and purpose a good bit less than a "new constitution."

Furthermore, there is no evidence whatsoever that the naming of the Heidelberg Catechism alone among the church's creeds in these articles was in any way related to the Prussian church union of 1817. First, there was not enough time between 1817 and 1819 for such pressure to arise, cross the ocean, and bear such fruit. Second, just one year later the 1820 German Reformed Synod rejected a plan for a union seminary with the Lutherans in North America, even though they had had discussions with the Lutherans about this idea before 1817. Third, the German Reformed continued discussions about merger with the Dutch Reformed in North America in the years following 1819, while at the same time they drifted farther from the Lutherans, with whom they had earlier agreed in rejecting the overtures of Count Zinzendorf for merger under the Moravian banner.

Real influence from the Prussian church union of 1817 came to the German Reformed Church in the U.S. in 1844 with the importation of the Rev. Philip Schaff of Germany to teach in the denominational seminary.

Even the statement that the Catechism was here received "as the exclusive confessional standard," needs

some clarification. One of the 1819 articles states that Synod may make rules "that conform to the Word of God and are not contrary to the Heidelberg Catechism and the Ordinances of the Synod." While this indicates that the operating confession in view in 1819 was the Catechism, this is not the language of creedal adoption, excluding all others. This is particularly important in view of the fact that from 1748 to 1792 the annual minutes of the German Reformed Coetus speak often of the Catechism without mentioning the other creeds. This is so even though the Coetus until 1793 was under the direct control of the Classis Amsterdam and its own Constitution of 1748, both of which required subscription to "the Heidelberg Catechism, all the formulas of unity and the Synod of Dordt." As noted above, what was adopted in 1819 was not an entire new constitution, but an addition to earlier regulations for synod, which some have argued would include the Constitution of 1748.

Another historical lapse is found on page 6 of this *Clarion* issue. The Mersersberg Theology, which arose from 1844-1850, was a kind of high-church liturgicalism, developed by Drs. Philip Schaff and John Nevin some 60 years before Barthian theology was known even to Karl Barth (who was born in 1886). Schaff and Nevin had rationalist tendencies but they were not the secret inventors of Neo-orthodoxy.

Again, the statement on this page that all the "classes of the RCUS had voted in favour" of the 1934 Evangelical and Reformed merger is mistaken. Four RCUS classes had voted to oppose the merger before the General Synod adopted it. But after the General Synod vote, the merger was accepted without vote by all of the classes as an accomplished fact, except for the Eureka Classis which alone decided to vote on and then to reject this merger. Also, the next sentence implying that the name "Eureka Classis" was borrowed from the name of the city of Eureka, South Dakota, is historically inaccurate. This name, "Eureka Classis," was chosen from the Greek perfect form of the word *euriskoo* (meaning "I find") to express satisfaction that the conservative Reformed party in the Dakotas had found in 1910 a constitutional way to maintain a conservative ecclesiastical life within a liberal denomination. This provision allowed a different language classis, Classis Eureka, to be formed on the ground of the already established Dakota Classis.

Important detail corrections to note are on page 6, that Manitowoc is in Wisconsin, not Pennsylvania, and on page

7, that the pastor who recently left the RCUS for another denomination has been elected president of his Classis, and not of the RCUS Synod.

Unfortunately the inaccuracy contained in this article does not end with matters of only historical interest. The contention, also on page 6, that the ministers and teachers of theology of the RCUS make no further subscription to the creed than the one made by licentiates is in error. Ministers and teachers of theology are required at ordination to make a considerably stronger subscription than this. The form for the ordination of a minister requires an oath binding him to "honestly and without reservation embrace the Heidelberg Catechism with the conviction that the same is an exact summary of the system of truth of Holy Scripture," and to "promise to teach and defend the same in good faith and reject all doctrines conflicting therewith" (*Directory of Worship of the RCUS*). Not only is this a good bit stronger than the subscription of licentiates, our Church in recent years has deposed a minister for not agreeing to the words of Question 115 of the Catechism that God "so strictly enjoins the Ten Commandments" upon His people. This man held that the Fourth Commandment has been abrogated. We would reject the

idea that this subscription is "weak," or, for that matter, that our Church's holding to the creed ought to be suspect.

Another mistaken impression is left by the point made about the subscription of elders and deacons. Indeed these office bearers do not "sign" a form of subscription, but they are required by verbal oath to take the same form of subscription as that taken by licentiates. Thus the impression given that no subscription is required is misleading.

On the issue of Theonomy, we would like to comment that it is difficult at this stage of the development of that school of thought to define "Theonomy" to everyone's satisfaction. Thus it is difficult to discipline those who might call themselves "Theonomists." Discipline should be applied for substantive denial of the creeds, not for the use of a label.

On the doctrine of the church we will doubtless have to carry on discussions. We have not come to the unique view of the use of the word "church" that is held among you. However, we do have much in common in our views of the marks of the church, etc. Your view also raises some questions. If those who hold to many biblical teachings but who are not entirely Reformed may not be called "church," what are they? Scripture uses the Greek word *ekklesia* to refer to an



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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial – Covenant and School Education — J. Geertsema	226
The RCUS, a View from the Inside — R. Grossmann	228
RCUS, Response — P.K.A. de Boer	231
The Inauguration and Dedication of the Pascal Centre — C. Van Dam	231
Remember Your Creator – For Those Who Drink — R. Schouten	233
The Role of the Church with Victims and Abusers — R. Gleason	235
A Golden Anniversary – Professor L. Selles — B.J. Berends	237
Retirement of Rev. P. Kingma — W. Chase	240
27th Annual Women's League Day — J.C.M. Thalen	240
School Crossing — When Your Child Tells About Moses — A. Witten	241
Book Review — <i>Satan Cast out: A study in Biblical Demonology</i> — G. Nederveen	242
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	243

assembly of unbelievers in Acts 19:32, 39. We have no problem using the marks of the church to identify the true and the false churches, however we find it somewhat difficult to attempt to neatly pigeon-hole every body containing Christians into either of those categories. What about other federations of churches with which you are in a sister-church relation, do you know in detail the faithfulness of each congregation? We would say, for example, that your churches are evidently "less faithful" in obedience to the Second Commandment than are our churches. Does this mean we must reject you as "churches?"

We are surprised to find reference in Rev. de Boer's article to "easy transfer" to other denominations. There is more or less easy transfer to denominations we know to be conservatively Reformed, and with whom we have fraternal relations. On the other hand, the definition of an "orthodox Protestant Church" is to our knowledge and practice not a wide open door to our Spiritual Councils for easy transfer to unfaithful "churches," but a recognition that an "orthodox Protestant Church" might carry the name "Presbyterian," or omit the name "Reformed" or "Presbyterian" entirely, even while holding to biblical doctrine. Our Constitution and practice require that persons who join other denominations without approval be disciplined, not given certificates of dismission. We believe that the conclusion that our teaching about the church "leads one to go to the church one's own choice rather than where the Lord calls His people together," is quite misleading. Our pastors preach and work against this very idea regularly.

Further in this line of thinking, the idea that "erasure" of name is part of an easy transfer picture is in our view mistaken. Erasure is clearly labeled in our Constitution as an act of discipline, never to be taken lightly, and never to be applied without a good deal of pastoral contact and care, even as the constitutional articles quoted in the *Clarion* article indicate. Erasure, like excommunication, does end one's position under the care of the Spiritual Council of the church. However, we do live in a world where sometimes pastoral care cannot in God's providence bring the straying sheep into obedience. We would be most interested to hear what your elders do with respect to a member excommunicated or reluctantly erased. Do you then proceed to other steps of pastoral care? Or do you also see that person as having left God's church and kingdom? We would argue that our Constitution does require the elders to call a person back through church discipline in the way which the Lord has instituted it,

quite in contrast to Rev. de Boer's statement on page 8. Indeed, his statement that Matthew 18 is mentioned only in an article of our Constitution dealing with "personal injuries" fails to note that this part of Scripture is also referred to in another article on the general discipline of members.

Again, the constitutional provision for the resignation of ministers and approval of such by their classis mentioned on page 8 of the *Clarion* is directed to the acceptance of calls, not to the handling of "difficulties in the congregation." Doubtless there have been times when ministers unfortunately have taken this "easy way out" when they have faced difficulties, and doubtless there are times when ministers ought to leave their present place of service. But we are at a loss to imagine where Rev. de Boer got information leading him to say, "When there are difficulties in the congregation this is a course of action that is usually followed." During the past thirty years we ourselves have encountered, and seen fellow pastors encounter, many difficulties in congregations which were handled by pastoral care and discipline without ever a thought of the pastor resigning. We can think of only one or two instances in which a pastor resigned because of such difficulties.

We must not prolong this response but a few additional observations need to be made. We find the statement on page 8 that "The emphasis is that one is saved by God's providence and therefore the hearing and knowing of God's Word is considered to be less important," to be inaccurate and somewhat insulting. We know of no RCUS minister who does

not seek to make the accurate preaching of God's Word the heart of his ministry, and of no congregation that does not glory in good preaching. In practice, not every pastor is always entirely satisfied with the response of his congregation, nor are all congregations entirely satisfied that their pastors always employ the most effective methods. But to conclude that hearing and knowing God's Word is unimportant to either pastors or people is contradictory to our own lifelong knowledge of the churches.

The further conclusion that our churches are filled with old people and very few young, is contradicted by the statistics from 1990 which show that more than one-fourth of our members are baptized children who have not yet made profession of faith (which is usually made between the ages of 14-16). We do have rural congregations where economic conditions and an at-times weakened ministry have left mostly older people. However, most of our congregations include many babies, children and young people. Furthermore over the years we have attracted substantial numbers of people to our churches who are not of our own background or not of Christian background at all. These are not signs of dying churches.

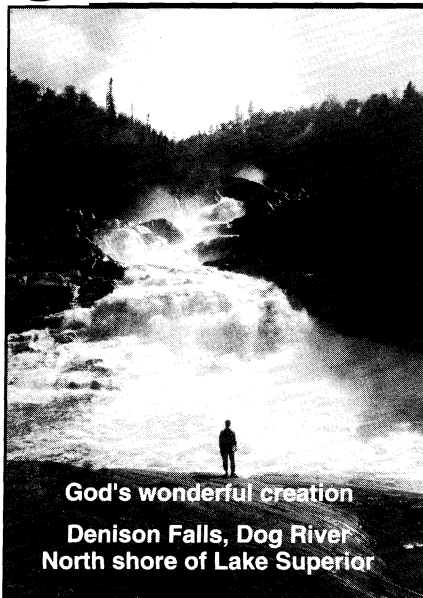
We might also note matters of terminology, such as our use of the word "judicatory" to refer to ruling assemblies as differences perhaps more of wording than of function. Other issues might be raised, but before closing we wish to note what we see as a tendency in this *Clarion* article to look at all things through the spectacles of the history, practices and terminology of the Canadian Reformed Churches. This is to some extent unavoidable. We all come from somewhere, but we do not believe that our unique situation should become a controlling interest in examining others. Rather we believe that a living adherence to the doctrines of Scripture, and to worship and fellowship based on those doctrines should be our major criteria. Acts 2:42 describes what we take to be the organic life of a true church.

Our hearty greetings to the readers of the *Clarion* and our best wishes to Rev. de Boer. We realize our brother did not mean to give a distorted view of the RCUS and that his sources of information within the RCUS were perhaps not as well-informed as they might be. We trust that this response may improve your knowledge of the RCUS. May God grant us a growing and unifying relationship as churches of Jesus Christ.

Rev. Robert Grossmann
Orange City, Iowa

(See response next page)

OUR COVER



God's wonderful creation

Denison Falls, Dog River
North shore of Lake Superior

RCUS, Response

I would like to thank Rev. R. Grossmann for his article and the corrections he gives. These kind of responses help to make us known to each other. Let me make a few small remarks.

1. I am thankful that Rev. Grossmann noticed that my look on things are "through the spectacles of the history, practices and terminology of the Canadian Reformed Churches." It reflects my conviction that the Lord has granted, with many weaknesses, the Canadian Reformed Churches to be faithful to His Word. If we are to find unity, and this is my desire, it must be on the foundation of God's Word.

2. I am also thankful that Rev. Grossmann found the sentence he mentions "somewhat insulting." It shows that he would not want this kind of tendency in the RCUS. Perhaps it was not phrased

well enough, but it was not my intention to make this a kind of accusation. In the context, I expressed appreciation for RCUS ministers who see the need for and promote a second worship service. I was contemplating reasons why these attempts are resisted. Perhaps Rev. Grossmann could give his opinion on why a second worship service is resisted by members in the RCUS.

3. Concerning erasure, I would like to point out that there was a request at Northern Plains Classis to their synod recently held at Garner Iowa to change the constitution article(s) concerning this point. I understand the reason for this request was in line with what I had written. I feel disappointed that the synod did not think it necessary to look further into whether these changes should be made.

4. Concerning the subscription form, I am still not sure from Rev. Grossmann's article nor from the ministers I spoke to,

whether its intention is, like that in the presbyterian system to be bound to "the system of doctrine as found in the (confession)" or, like (continental) reformed, to be "bound to the Word of God as confessed in the (confession)." I am not sure whether those asked really understood the difference. Perhaps Rev. Grossmann can inform us more clearly some day.

All this shows that much more discussion is still necessary on these and other points not mentioned. Again, a thank-you to Rev. Grossmann, and may the Lord grant the strength to continue these discussions in a brotherly way. We will not hide the differences but openly talk about them so that, the Lord willing, we together may stand on the one foundation which is laid, namely Christ and His work as revealed in Scripture.

Rev. P.K.A. de Boer



The Inauguration and Dedication of the Pascal Centre

By C. Van Dam

On February 22 the Pascal Centre, a new research centre for advanced studies in faith and science at Redeemer College (Ancaster, Ontario) was officially inaugurated. Dr. J.M. Van Der Meer, director, gave the opening address while the inaugural speech was given by Dr. Alvin Plantinga on the topic: "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible." The festive evening was officially closed by Dr. Donald H. McNally, Assistant Director of the Pascal Centre.

Advanced studies in faith and science

Dr. Van Der Meer introduced the Pascal Centre by noting that continued study on the relation of faith and science is needed for our mind is included in the redeeming and sanctifying work of Christ. We need to be "re-minded" that the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. The sanctification of the mind includes understanding the history of errors made by those who took up the cause before us. We also need ongoing study because of our missionary mandate, namely, to help Christians give an account of their

intellectual life to God, to themselves and to others. Through this work others can be attracted to the Christian faith. Because beliefs are inherent in all academic work, the Centre hopes to contribute to scholarship by uncovering the directing role of beliefs in the natural sciences. For the Pascal Centre the Bible is central for the understanding of the cosmos. Faith in the Word of God can guide our scientific investigations for the triune God is both the creator of the cosmos and the author of Scripture.

Dr. Van Der Meer also noted that there are few centres that integrate the study of science with faith. We are interested in the meaning of Scripture for the understanding of nature, and in the meaning of nature for the understanding of Scripture. The authority of natural science has come to replace the authority of Scripture. It is time to redress the balance.

The opening address was concluded with the words: "I pray that in this endeavour we may be blessed with wisdom from the Lord. This is the wisdom of which the book of Proverbs tells us that it was with God from eternity, and that it

was the craftsman at his side when he created the cosmos. With that prayer I declare the Pascal Centre opened."

Faith and reason

Dr. Alvin Plantinga, Professor of Philosophy at Notre Dame University in Indiana, gave the inaugural address on "When Faith and Reason Clash: Evolution and the Bible." He raised the question how Christians are to deal with the apparent conflict between what the Bible teaches and what science says. Is this conflict to be resolved by limiting ahead of time the material that the Bible and science speak on with authority? No, for the Lord speaks to us in Scripture on a tremendous variety of topics and questions. It is possible that when there is a conflict situation that our understanding of Scripture is incorrect, or it is just as well possible that science has it wrong. To help sort out the issues, Professor Plantinga noted first of all that the theory of evolution is by no means religiously neutral. Its popularity is in large measure due to the fact that the atheist is given an apparently intellectually satisfying

explanation of origins without having to believe in God, the Creator. Secondly, Dr. Plantinga dealt with the likelihood of evolution. From the standpoint of naturalism as espoused by current science, evolution is the best hypothesis overall. However, for a believer in God, the implied strictures are unacceptable. The Christian knows that creation is the Lord's and is not blinkered by a priori dogmas as to how the Lord must have accomplished it. A broader inquiry is needed than that which appears to be possible for natural science, an inquiry which takes into consideration the fact that God has created life on earth. Thirdly, Dr. Plantinga, noted that academics can serve the Christian community in this area by helping to test the spirits and to promote science that includes God. Christianity is engaged in a conflict and battle against unbelief, also in scientific endeavour. This struggle is enormously difficult for secularism rules supreme at the typical university and graduate school. It is, however, a matter of absolutely crucial importance for the health of the Christian community. It needs to be done. "I commend you to it."

History and commitment of the Pascal Centre

The official inauguration of the Pascal Centre culminates a long period of preparation. In 1987 Dr. Donald McNally (of the University of Toronto) and Dr. Jitse M. Van Der Meer (of Redeemer College) proposed to Redeemer College the establishment of a centre for Reformed studies in science and faith. After a committee fully endorsed this proposal, the Centre itself was established in 1988. This was done in the recognition that there was no post-secondary academic institution in the Reformed tradition that specialized in biblical studies on the nature and content of the natural sciences. Such studies are needed for healing the growing rift between theology and the natural sciences, as well as for counteracting the pervasive secularization of western thought and culture. Furthermore, it is necessary to ensure that there is a continued availability of scholars who are trained in the natural sciences from a biblical and Reformed perspective.

The Pascal Centre is convinced that reason and experience are not neutral sources of knowledge. Religious and metaphysical presuppositions have a profound influence on the marshalling of facts, the selection of evidence, and the construction of theories. Contrary to much popular perception, scientists and the science they pursue are not neutral. This research centre, therefore, seeks guidance in the Scriptures for they are

the Word of God and are thus completely trustworthy. Those associated with the Pascal Centre are committed to expand old horizons and explore new views of the coherence of faith and reason within the context of the teaching of the Lord in His Word and as has been articulated in the Ecumenical Creeds and elaborated in the creeds of the Calvinist Reformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which are the basis of Redeemer College and the Pascal Centre.

Purpose

The stated purpose of the Pascal Centre is as follows. Firstly, to study and develop the implications of the biblical teachings on creation for understanding the origin and nature of the physical and biological worlds. Secondly, to understand in the light of Scripture, the coherence of our knowledge of God, humanity and the cosmos. Thirdly, to conduct research in line with the Centre's goals in the fields of philosophy, theology, history of science, mathematics, psychology, anthropology, and the natural sciences, both theoretical and experimental. Fourthly, to promote an awareness among Christians that a biblical approach to scholarship in the natural sciences goes beyond an examination of ethical and social issues and must include bringing our knowledge of the subject matter itself under the lordship of Christ. Finally, to serve like-minded Christians world-wide by communicating the work of the Centre in any appropriate form.

The emphasis in the Centre will be on research rather than on teaching. At present, Dr. D.H. McNally is studying the British philosopher William Whewell, a contemporary of Charles Darwin in order to learn more about the beliefs that form the background of Darwin's scientific

thought. Dr. J.M. Van Der Meer is developing a philosophical model for the relation between biblical beliefs, observation, and theory in the natural sciences, especially biology.

Collaboration by scholars outside the Centre is sought and research can be done either at the Centre or elsewhere. Research programs are being developed in several areas. Since all work at the Pascal Centre is intended to occur under the guidance of the Bible, seeking scriptural direction is a key concern. To this end, research is being planned on the exegesis of relevant passages of Scripture regarding creation and providence, the questions of interpretation that are involved, as well as on the larger question of how faith, theology and the sciences should interact.

Other research projects in a wide variety of areas are in various stages of preparation. This includes mathematics, logic, biology and several interdisciplinary areas.

Seminars are held regularly on a variety of topics with speakers holding diverse views to stimulate discussion and interdisciplinary dialogue.

Facilities and resources

The Pascal Centre is housed on the campus of Redeemer College, in Ancaster, just outside Hamilton. Library facilities, clerical help, study space and standard laboratory equipment are available for researchers and others associated with the Centre. Besides Redeemer's library, the Centre has its own research collection including the Arthur C. Custance Collection. The latter contains specialized books and files of the late Dr. Custance, a Canadian anthropologist and linguist who published on topics of interest to the Pascal Centre.



HYMN 36:4

Spirit of all understanding,
Of all grace, of truth, and prayer,
Show the paths of life unending;
Always guide us, everywhere.
May we say, yes, "Abba, Father,"
Say of Jesus, "Thou art Lord,"
And praise Thee with one accord.
Be where Christ His Churches gathers,
Take the off'rings that they bring,
Hear Thou when Thy praise they sing.

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R. Schouten

For Those Who Drink

What's wrong with drinking? The answer is: nothing. The Bible never forbids people to drink alcoholic beverages. Some fundamentalist Christians of various stripes may be appalled to see any believer drink, but the fact is that Scripture has not blanket prohibition of drinking.

According to the Bible, the problem with alcohol is not its use, but its abuse. We may not call sin what the Bible does not call sin.

One abuse of alcohol clearly forbidden is drunkenness. To be drunk is to be so affected by alcoholic drink that you lose normal control over bodily and mental faculties. The Bible views drunkenness as a real threat for all believers. That's why there are so many warnings against it. In 1 Cor. 6, Paul says that drunkards will not inherit the Kingdom of God (v. 10). The church is even warned to be careful not to appoint leaders who are addicted to wine (1 Tim. 3:38). Drunkenness is typical of the old Gentile way of life, and must be avoided (1 Pet. 4:3).

Proverbs 23 contains a famous description of the drunkard.

Who has woe? Who has sorrow?
Who has strife? Who has complaining?
Who has wounds without cause?
Who has redness of eyes?
Those who tarry long over wine,
those who go to try mixed wine.
Do not look at wine, when it is red,
when it sparkles in the cup
and goes down smoothly.
At last it bites like a serpent,
and stings like an adder.
Your eyes will see strange things,
and your mind perverse things.
You will be like one who lies down
in the midst of the sea,
like one who lies on the top of a mast.
"They struck me," you will say,
"but I was not hurt;
they beat me, but I did not feel it.
When shall I awake?
I will seek another drink."

This passage describes the deceit of alcohol. It goes down smooth and feels so good. But it leads to delirium, to the spinning of the head, to wounds (caused by bar fights etc.). Drunk people lurch about in an utterly degrading manner. Verse 35 is the saddest part of all. When the drunk comes to his senses, he is so depressed that all he can say is: "Get me another drink." He resubmerges himself in alcohol.

These verses speak then about the habitual drunkard at the party or bar and about the wino, the alcoholic, about people who have a passionate, slavish desire for wine and yet more wine (or beer or rye etc.).

But what about the more sophisticated uses of alcohol? There are many people who have never (or only rarely) engaged in a wild drinking bout. They don't lurch and stagger about, they don't get super aggressive or noisy, and they don't vomit on the table.

Yet they drink. They drink regularly. Each weekend find them at home with friends and the inevitable case of beer. Or else they while away many valuable hours at the lounge or bar. If we are honest, we will admit that these practices have become common in our circles.

Why has this happened? For one thing, people have more money than in previous times. Even in the Bible, most warnings against drunkenness are directed against rulers and aristocrats, since only they could afford the habit. Even today, however, alcoholic beverages are expensive. Widespread usage by young people reflects poor stewardship. Proverbs 20:20, 21 warn us of a frequent connection between drinking and poverty. Drinking empties our pockets and can kill drive and ambition.

But still, why is drinking so popular amongst young people? Why can many hardly imagine a get together without some form of booze? Is the answer not to be found in the mood-altering power of alcohol? Alcohol is a drug. It changes the way we feel about ourselves. It can tem-

porarily reduce tension. It makes people feel looser, at ease and more able to enjoy a social gathering.

In addition, a few drinks can make contact with the other sex a little smoother. Booze unseals the lips. It can make you feel more confident! Of course, the alcohol industry contributes to our attitudes concerning alcohol. Their ads display drinkers in a fun-filled environment. We see beautiful men and women laughing and joking, being close to each other and seemingly on top of the world in every respect.

It's pretty clear then, that not too many people drink alcoholic beverages because they are thirsty. They drink instead, because alcohol has a pleasant short-term impact on their state of mind.

Is this permissible? Are we allowed to enjoy the effects of alcohol? I think the answer is that, in moderation, we may. Psalm 104:15, for example, states that God gives wine "to gladden the heart of man." A glass of wine or a mug of beer can be enjoyed as a created gift and can refresh and cheer us – as does a good slice of bread. Our Lord also drank wine. Although some may choose to abstain, this may not be enforced as a rule.

But still, our drinking habits are very much open to question. First of all, there is the question of environment. If you are going to drink, you must ensure that you do so as a Spirit-filled believer. Remember that the Spirit is Holy. This means that He is grieved when you choose to go to an unholy place, for example, to the bar which caters to a completely worldly life of excess and debauchery. It may be safely said that as you walk into the bar, the Holy Spirit walks out on you.

Secondly, ask yourself why you drink. The man who drinks because he feels he must to be a man among men, or to be accepted, or to project the kind of image he wants to have, or who drinks to deal with his problems of loneliness and anxiety, is a person headed for trouble and possibly to a lifetime dependen-



cy on alcohol. Teenage alcoholism is a rampant social plague in North America. Some of you may be a lot closer to this nightmare than you think.

Ask yourself these questions: Are you looking forward to your next drink already, even though you won't have it for another hour or two? Do you drink to overcome shyness? Is drinking affecting your reputation? Have you gotten into financial difficulties because of drinking? Has drinking decreased your ambition? Do you crave a drink at a definite time every day? Do you want a drink the next morning? Do you drink to escape worries or troubles? Do you drink to boost self-confidence? Do you turn to unsuitable companions and an inferior environment when drinking? Do you drink alone? Do you drink because of peer pressure?

If you answer yes to a few of these questions you are almost certainly on the road to alcoholism! Of course, you may have said "no" to all the questions. Even then, you may still be in the grip of alcohol, since alcoholics notoriously deny they have a problem. Even as slaves of liquor, they maintain they are "in control." And often they'll keep saying that until they die an alcohol-related death. In the end alcohol "bites like a snake and poisons like a viper."

So the rule must be: "Let the User Beware." Think of the tens of thousands who die each year in North America in alcohol-related traffic deaths (not to mention the hundreds of thousands who are injured). Talk to the police and ask how much crime is alcohol-related. This is what they say: 80% of murders; 70% of assaults; 60% of child abuse; 50% of rapes; 50% of fires and drownings; 40% of home accidents; 33% of suicides are alcohol-related.

And think also of the damage to the alcoholic himself: wasted health, reduced efficiency and drive, broken relationships and constant guilt. (By the way, if you find yourself in this portrayal of the alcoholic, please call your elder or minister and have him get you in touch with necessary help. You're not going to win the battle alone.)

But let's look at some other effects of alcohol which can hurt even if you don't drink a lot and even if you are convinced that you are not on the road to alcoholism. First of all, even in smaller amounts, alcohol robs you of a clear mind. Professional counsellors have concluded that after one or two beer or drinks, gaiety increases and inhibitions begin to recede. After 3-4 beer or drinks, judgment is slower, coordination is off and you get a little giddy. After 5-6 drinks,

vision gets blurred, speech is fuzzy and reaction time is slower. After 6-8 drinks, people start staggering, they see double and lose their sense of balance.

Obviously, people fall "under the influence" long before they are stone drunk. We can summarize the effects of alcohol by saying that when you drink you almost immediately begin to lose some control over yourself.

Such loss of self-control is forbidden in Scripture. In Eph. 5:17, 18, the apostle Paul writes as follows:

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit.

Drinking causes us to lose self-control. It robs people of the keen edge of Christian discernment. Many people have to live with life long consequences of a single instance of abusing alcohol. We don't need to seek excitement and "freedom" from the excessive use of alcohol, for that leads to debauchery, that is, to recklessness and unrestrained behaviour. And we don't need the cheap high of alcohol. It ends quickly and usually leaves us feeling worse than before.

What we need is the Holy Spirit. We need to beg God unceasingly to fill us with His Holy Spirit. When He dwells in us, we don't lose, but gain self-control. Drinking can cause us to lose inhibitions. We forget the will of the Lord. Our intelligence is diminished. But when we are filled with the Holy Spirit, then our minds are sharpened. Our sensitivity is enhanced. We gain a finely-tuned sense of knowing God's will. Our spirits are lifted in true, Christian exhilaration.

In conclusion, if you are going to drink, remember that you are dealing with a dangerous substance. Every beer can and every bottle should be marked with a skull and crossbones. Even as you drink you may never allow those bottled spirits to drive out the Holy Spirit!

Practically speaking, this means avoiding the bar and lounge scene. It means that you consume no more than one or at the very most two drinks on any one occasion. And as a final point, Spirit-filled believers do not feel the need to always have alcohol on hand whenever they come together as young people. If alcohol is always present, that is in itself a clear sign of abuse, and it must be stopped. (It may also be appropriate to mention that drinking by minors is illegal in all public places. And even in private homes, minors may only drink if the liquor is provided under supervision of a parent or guardian.)

The Role of the Church with Victims and Abusers⁶

By R. Gleason

This is the final part in the series on sexual abuse.

In this concluding installment we want to consider this question: What is the role of the church of Jesus Christ as she is confronted by incestuous relationships? One of the greatest roles is to ensure that God is glorified in the way each individual case is handled. The other roles have to do with the victim, the abuser and those who know the story and believe it.

We have already seen what the Word of God has to say about these relationships. Our task is to be obedient children and to walk humbly before our God.²⁰

We must also become more informed of the plight of victims and more aware of how we can best speak to them from the Bible. I am very pleased that the deacons in Toronto have sponsored a counselor to come to speak to the Council of the Church about this problem and how the office bearers can best deal with it if they encounter it.

There are many books appearing currently as well as tapes which are being produced by victims who are prepared to tell their story. Their stories often reveal a certain "cycle" through which many victims live. Those cycles vary in detail, but seem to have several common denominators. It is not my intention to give an exhaustive list of them, but I would like to mention just a few.

Abuse causes confusion

In this part of the cycle many questions arise in the mind of the victim as the abuser perpetrates his or her sin. Questions such as "What's (s)he doing?" "I don't like this but how can I stop it?" "What is normal?" "Where can I be safe?" go through the victim's mind in a more or less sophisticated manner. In addition, they may think, "I don't understand what is happening to me," "I can't do anything right" and "I don't know what's real, what's right."

This is particularly a problem for those from Christian homes. There exists a blatant contradiction between what the Word of God says and the actions of the abuser. There is a great cover up and the victim is aware of this contradiction. The problem for the victim is that quite often they have neither the maturity nor field of reference or experience to know what to do about the situation. This is further complicated when other adults are made aware of the abusive situation and do nothing about it.

This confusion becomes more and more complex and eventually gives rise to what might be called self-estrangement.

Self-estrangement

This phase of the cycle is the one that "turns the guns inward." That is, the victims have very negative thoughts about themselves and often do not like themselves. In this phase of the cycle they might say things like, "I'm always wrong. I can't be like everyone else," "I'm not normal," "I'm not important," "No one cares how I feel," "My feelings don't count," "What I want doesn't matter" or "I don't want to be me."

Certainly, it can be argued that everyone experiences these types of thoughts at one time or another. That is not the point, however. Victims experience these thoughts over a long period of time in an intense manner.

Feeling this way is not healthy. Intuitively, the victim knows this and begins to develop certain "survival skills." They develop defence mechanisms to enable them to cope with their life.

Survival skills

This begins a very serious aspect of the victim's life for it begins to close the door on trust and vulnerability. In this phase the victims feel that they have to hide and to protect themselves. They tell themselves, "I can't let people see

who/how I really am." They ask themselves, "How can I keep from exposing the real me?"

Their solution is to put up a (good) front. By looking at a victim living in this way and conversing with them one might never know they are in the presence of a victim of sexual abuse. In certain circles where a certain code of behaviour is required, victims can "fit in" and "play the game." They can "tow the party line," as it were. We might ask ourselves whether this is true of us. Certainly, God gives man a divine standard of measure to which everyone is required to conform their thoughts, words and deeds. What I mean here is this, however: Over and above God's divine directives to man is it possible that we add another level of "expected" actions and behaviour?

The victims have learned that they must bury their secret. If we create a spiritual atmosphere where we pretend that everything is fine with us and we have no problems, no major shortcomings and sin we simultaneously create a set of circumstances where it will be almost impossible for a victim to come forward and tell what has happened to them.

Some victims have learned to keep their secret so effectively that they truly block it out of their memory. If asked – and they would truly think themselves to be open and honest – they will not even remember the situations.

No survival skill is "foolproof," however. Everyone who lives a lie knows how difficult it is to sustain the front over a long period of time without it taking its toll. Psychological suppression cannot last forever. At some of the most inopportune moments the recollection of the abuse will resurface. Sometimes this will happen with a victim in their fifties or sixties. The events and circumstances that trigger such recollection are quite varied but the results are devastating and exceedingly traumatic for the victim.

Even though the survival skills are there to protect and defend the victim there is also a feeling of being trapped.

I'm trapped!

As the cycle progresses there is one thought that keeps cropping up in the victim's mind. This is a thought that is very, very difficult to get rid of because of its psychological power. The victim feels that what has happened in the past is their fault. When one talks with victims the one dominant, recurring sentence is, "It's my fault."

Of course, it is not. To all victims I say, "It was not your fault!" You were cheated, tricked and duped by an insensitive, disobedient adult. Part of the steps to healing is the realization that the sexual contact was not and is not your fault.

Harbouring this myth, however, many victims are convinced that they *must* keep their secret to survive. What a horrible burden they bear in the church where we are called upon to bear each other's burdens. If we are not loving Christians who are willing to share the burdens of the victims, they will be left with the thought that they are responsible for what happened to them; that they are responsible for not changing the situation.

So many victims would have loved for the abuse to have stopped. Many tried in vain to stop it. Many prayed that God would intervene and put an end to shame and guilt they felt. Many asked the abusers to stop so that they would not feel so dirty. Many were too confused to know how to stop it. Many were simply overpowered and humiliated against their wills. Many are convinced that they cannot change their lives or themselves.

The biblical truth is that God has a way for spiritually healing for abuse victims. God is both willing and able to provide each victim with all things necessary to be restored. The path back to wholeness and spiritual health is not always easy as all of us who have to wrestle with our sins well know. It contains difficulties and fervent, prevailing prayer, but God provides us with spiritual power and healing that makes us all more than conquerors in Christ. Lives can change; lives can be made new, for Christ makes all things new.²¹

If no biblical help is given or received, however, there is another phase to the cycle. It is another negative step beyond self-estrangement. For want of better words we shall call this part of the cycle intensified negative sense of self.

Intensified negative sense of self

It is not uncommon that victims will entertain thoughts of suicide during this

phase. Their mind is full of thoughts such as, "I'm a bad person. Everyone is better than I," "I'm a phoney," "If they really knew me they'd dislike and be disgusted by me," "I deserve whatever I get," "I don't know who I am" and "I wish I were dead." A person has to be in very dire straits to contemplate taking their own life. Yet, this seems to be a common thought among victims.

It is not uncommon that the victim will be troubled by "flashbacks" throughout the cycle as well. A flashback is just what the word says. The victim is taken back to the times of abuse and relives them *vividly*. They smell the smells. They feel the hands wandering all over them. They are sickened, repulsed, humiliated and shamed all over again.

This entire cycle and much much more has been triggered and sustained by the abuser's violation of the victim. If we can read about such things and not be moved deeply we have to have hearts of stone! How can we not reach out to these victims? How can we not have a burning desire to love them, be sensitive to their many needs and to pray for them.

I do pray for them. I pray that they will be willing to come forward and tell their stories. I pray that God will take their shame from them and envelope them in His everlasting arms. I pray that they may know the sweetness and intimacy of Christ in a very special way and that they may experience the healing power of the Holy Spirit of God in their lives. I ask every reader to join in those prayers.

I pray that God will reveal to them in and through Scripture the steps that they are to take toward spiritual healing and renewal. I pray that they may find themselves in the presence of brothers and sisters in Christ who want to be part of the *healing church*.

I urge all victims to tell their story to their pastor or to an office bearer. If you are a victim I realize that these are very

difficult words for you. Most of the abusers are males. All of the office bearers are males. There is a certain association between the abuser and males that is difficult for the victims. It might very well have been the case that the abuser was, himself, an office bearer, which, quite obviously, further complicates the matter.

Even though all this might be true, I appeal to you to make your story known. In a previous article I have addressed the matter of strict confidentiality in these matters. Recognizing the difficulties which might be attendant with speaking to an office bearer, I want to strongly maintain that position.

These are men who are called by God and are called to give account to God for the well-being of your soul. They should be informed. They should counsel you from the Word of God. They should direct you to the immeasurable riches and treasures of Christ. They should earnestly and continuously pray with you and for you. Office bearers must bear in mind that this type of situation is very volatile and a very high degree of sensitivity, love and patience is necessary.

In all instances, I would encourage victims to seek professional Christian counseling. Trained professionals can be used mightily by the Lord to help Christians come to a deeper understanding of what has happened to them. This is not to be in lieu of pastoral care, but in addition to it.

One example must suffice here. I do not intend to take matters out of the hands of the office bearers. Quite the contrary. But there are some problems that arise for which the office bearers might not be equipped to deal with. One fairly prevalent occurrence with victims is the development of multiple personalities. Most office bearers are not equipped to properly handle this development. Therefore, a trusted and trustworthy Christian counselor can be invaluable in these cases.

What about the abusers?

Perhaps much of what I am about to say is going to sound somewhat harsh and unloving. Let me state at the outset that it is by no means my intention to be either. What I am about to say has the good of the abuser as well as his or her victim(s) at heart.

In the first place, abusers must be disciplined by the church. I have alluded to that several times in this series of articles, but now let me state it unequivocally. This is a necessary biblical corrective. Proverbs 11:29 states, "*He who troubles his household will inherit wind . . .*" What we want for the abuser is spiritual health, spiritual healing.

CHURCH NEWS



ACCEPTED TO:

Lincoln, ON
Rev. G.A. Snip
of Langeslag, OV,
the Netherlands

CALLED BY:

Burlington East
Rev. G. Nederveen
of Brampton, ON

For that reason, the abuser must come forward and corroborate the story of the victim. Again, in Proverbs 28:13 we read, "He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy." These are divine words which we can and must take to heart. I have often strongly appealed to the victims to come forward and tell their stories. I just as strongly urge the abusers to come forward and tell theirs.

In the first place, this will provide some very positive steps in restoring the spiritual well-being of the victims. Someone will be corroborating their story. This could very well be the first step on the road to recovery for the victim.

In the second place, it will work spiritual healing for the abuser, as well. The abuser is also living a lie. The abuser is living with a heinous hypocrisy. Confessing our sins to each other is spiritually healthy.

In the third place, abusers might have been turned over to the proper civil authorities. This will have to be discussed among the network of those involved. Sometimes teachers or principals will come to know about the abuse before the office bearers. Sometimes friends and counselors will know before office bearers. In these cases a great deal of consultation will have to take

place with God's Word open to decide which course of action to take.

If the decision is made to involve the civil authorities they will be able to point the abusers to proper help. In some cases, the abusers are guilty of abusing a minor and must be charged for that crime as the law dictates. Not only does the Bible speak against incest, but the civil authorities do as well.

I recognize that this will mean some serious situations in homes. Fathers, mothers, grandparents, uncles, aunts, other close relatives will have to be charged for their offence(s). But this is a much healthier manner of dealing with this violation than covering it up.

These are matters which we must take exceedingly seriously precisely because God does. We must treat them biblically to the honour and glory of God. We are confronted here with the seriousness of sin. We are confronted here with households where confessing Christians have sexually violated their (grand)children or close relatives. We are confronted here with households where psychological destruction has taken place and has not been confessed as an abomination in God's sight. Brothers and sisters, this cannot and may not be!

There is a great deal more I could say. There has been much left unsaid. Yet it is my concerted prayer that these

articles have served in some small way to bring us closer to an understanding of God's will for His people with regard to incest. In addition, it is my prayer that this has brought God's people closer to understanding the victims.

To the abusers I say that you must remember the words of 1 John 1:9.²² What you have done is wrong, heinous and against the Word of the Lord God Almighty. It is not, however, the unforgivable sin. God can and will forgive you. There is a positive, biblical path laid out by God for you to follow. It is the path of life which is full of forgiving grace.

To the victims I say, "Please tell your story. Please know that God loves you deeply and especially because of your grief, deep secrets and shame and wants you to be spiritually whole, renewed and a new creation in Christ.

"Please let us know your pain. Please let us learn to love you and be sensitive to you as we should be in Christ's church. Please teach us how we can best pray for you and with you. Please."



²⁰Micah 6:8

²¹1I Corinthians 5:17ff.; Revelations 21:5

²²If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

A Golden Anniversary Professor L. Selles (1941-1991)

By B.J. Berends

On Saturday afternoon, April 20, we had the opportunity to meet Prof. Selles and congratulate him on his fiftieth anniversary as Verbi Domini Minister, minister of the Word of the Lord. It was good to meet him, to reminisce with him about the past, and to commemorate that the Lord has granted him a long life of "diakonia" in the midst of His church.

Upon entering the meeting hall in the basement of the "Cornerstone" Canadian Reformed Church at 10 minutes before two, we positioned ourselves in the long lineup of people, patiently waiting their turn to press the hand of our beloved professor. They had come from all directions, from far and near, even from the far West.

Just as Prof. Selles came in sight, the Master of Ceremonies, br. A.L. VanderHout, announced that the time had come to start with the official procedures. After those who could still find chairs were seated, we sang Psalm 146:1 and 3 and listened to the reading of 2 Corinthians 12:1-10, the passage from which the text (verse 9) was taken for Prof. Selles' ordination to the office of minister of the Word some fifty years ago.

After a word of prayer, br. VanderHout addressed us as follows, "Esteemed Professor Selles and family, members of the Board of Governors and Senate, Faculty of our Theological College, students and former students, brothers and sisters: It is indeed a great

pleasure that on behalf of the Board of Governors, I may welcome you this afternoon to this reception in honour of our beloved brother, the Reverend Professor Lubbertus Selles, at the occasion of his 50th anniversary as Minister of the Word. Prof. Selles, we want to do so in gratitude to our Lord and Saviour, who called you and enabled you to be a faithful servant in obedience to His Word by His wonderful grace and mercy."

Br. VanderHout proceeded by giving a short summary of Prof. Selles' ministry (the content of which is similar to what can be found in the *Clarion* of April 12, p. 182). After remembering with thankfulness the work of the late Sr. Selles, her dedication to our College as charter mem-



Prof. L. Selles flanked by a son and daughter

ber and founder of the Women's Savings Action for the benefit of the College library, he concluded with, "Professor, this afternoon, we want to honour the Head of the Church in remembering what He has given us in you for 50 years now. Prof. Schilder once said that to celebrate is always, on earth and in heaven, to confess, to give thanks, and to give praise in singing. This is what we want to do together with you, who was ordained, and thus by God Himself, placed in office, and who encouraged you at the time of your ordination with: 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

Br. M. VanderWel was given the floor as Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors, to present Prof. Selles with a gift. Rev. VanderWel reminisced about the time when he was minister at London/Watford, and Prof. Selles' nearest colleague, and shared this personal note, "Soon after their arrival into Canada, the Rev. Selles and his beloved wife appeared to be real friends to us. It was on a Sunday evening, in this beginning period, that we met at the Selles's, and that you, Rev. Selles said to me (in Dutch), 'Zo, jongentje, heb je weer mooi gepreekt vandaag?' At first hearing I thought to myself, does the Rev. Selles really think that I, with my little command of the English language, already would be able to deliver a beautiful sermon? But then I came to think of the fact that, how ever haltingly one expressed himself, it is always beautiful to pass on the Word of the Lord, our God. Does the prophet Isaiah (ch. 52) not say, 'How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings?'"

After a beautiful clock was presented to Prof. Selles, our M.C. read congratulatory messages sent by the churches of Edmonton Immanuel, Neerlandia, Chilliwack, Albany WA, and Kelmscott WA. (No doubt, many were charged by the churches to pass on similar congratulatory messages in person, the undersigned being one of them.)

Professor Dr. J. Faber was given the floor as Principal emeritus and as member of the Senate. He informed us that he had a difficulty. He did not know what to say. He had already spoken so often at commemorations and occasions in which his dear colleague had been in the limelight. Therefore, at this occasion he suggested that a "sermonette" was called for, on the theme "diakonia" (service), and

consisting of three points (naturally!). In short, Prof. Faber pointed to the work of Prof. Selles as deaconry. He has worked and still is working in the midst of the churches as a deacon, i.e., as a servant of Christ, as a servant of the Gospel, and as a servant of the church, the Body of Christ. It is this acute sense of "diakonia" which has characterized the work of his colleague, and for which the churches as well as the college community want to express gratitude to the Lord.

Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam, the present Principal of our Theological College, drew attention to what a whole generation of church members had received from Rev. Selles a generation of which Prof. Van Dam knew himself very much a part. On behalf of this generation, he expressed gratitude for what Prof. Selles in more than twenty-five years has been allowed to contribute in one way or another. He reminisced about the summer camps Prof. Selles organized for young people (CRYPS), in which especially the organizational talents of his late wife were shown to full advantage. A reference was made to his much appreciated display of chairmanship at the annual league meetings of the men's societies. Dr. Van Dam pointed to his journalistic contributions as well. He drew specific attention to the study outlines he has prepared for the study societies. We were informed that Prof. Selles is still often seen at 110 West 27th Street, not only to express his ongoing interest in his beloved College, but also to take up further studies. Already quite an expert in one of the original languages (Greek), he wants to become



Rev. M. VanderWel presenting a gift on behalf of the Board of Governors of the Theological College

more proficient in the other as well (Hebrew). To that end, you can find him from time to time at the "feet" of his former student, and with the underlying purpose: to be of even greater service ("diakonia") to the churches, not only to the past but also to the present generation, to old and young alike.

Rev. J. Van Rietschoten spoke on behalf of the congregation of Chatham, the congregation of which Prof. Selles is Minister emeritus. He informed us that he wanted to confine himself, since he was expected to address Prof. Selles also at a special commemorative gathering in Chatham. In a few words he gave expression to the love the Church of Chatham has for Prof. Selles, and how much the members have appreciated the visits paid to their homes by him and his wife, visits which did not cease after he and his family had moved to Hamilton. Special gratitude was expressed for Prof. Selles' ongoing pastoral interest in the weal and woe of his one-time congregation.

As soon as the congratulatory speeches were finished, the floor was asked by and given to Prof. Selles. After telling us that he had not really expected anyone to remember this anniversary, and that he only reluctantly had agreed to an open house, in order to meet those who wanted to come, he expressed his gratitude that so many had turned out. In fact, in a typical Selles' fashion, he proceeded by expressing pity for the many who had been unable to find a seat, and assured them that he would keep it short. In a few words he sketched his life and his fifty years as minister of the Word as an eventful one. He pointed to the First and Second World Wars, and to the recent Gulf War, a war which involved the whole world as well. These were times of great uncertainty, as well as times of personal danger. He recalled the time of his Steenwijk period, where Nazi's kept close track of every word proclaimed and prayed. Then there was the time of the Liberation, a liberation he had never foreseen or expected. Yet, the Lord demanded choices, demanded faithfulness. And it was nothing but the grace of God that he still was what he was, a Minister of that infallible Word of God.


He also expressed agreement with those who had emphasized the importance of the Pastoral side to this ministry, and expressed his concern about the growing tendency to approach this ministry as a mere job, in which a day off was considered a necessary part of the regular order of things. He warned against this trend, and stressed that



Prof. L. Selles addressing the audience

the ministry of the Word (other than annual holidays), called for a day to day commitment and an ongoing involvement with the weal and woe of the congregation."

Prof. Selles reminded us also of his inaugural text, taken from the gospel of John, part of which reads: "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears my word and believes Him who sent me, has eternal life; he does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." He expressed thankfulness to the Lord that he had been allowed to be minister of

this gospel, a gospel of complete salvation. He was thankful that the Lord has made use of his ministry for such a long time, even though it had been carried out in much weakness, and even though he had often felt a "stumper," especially in view of the seeming ease with which some of his colleagues had mastered the art of sermonizing. Humble words, which endeared him even more to all those who had the privilege to be present at this memorable event, which event was officially closed by the singing of Psalm 146:4 and 5. 

PSALM 146:1

Praise the LORD, who reigns forever!
O my soul, bring Him your praise.
I will bless my God and Maker
And exalt Him all my days.
Praises to my God I'll sing;
While I live, I'll laud my King.

Retirement of Rev. P. Kingma

By W. Chase

The congregation of the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids, Michigan wishes to congratulate their minister, the Rev. P. Kingma, upon his completion of nearly 35 years of faithful service in the ministry. Having completed his course of study at the Theologische Hogeschool at Kampen, the Netherlands, under the tutelage of Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, Prof. B. Holwerda, and others, he received a call to Noord Bergum, Friesland, where he served for three years. Following this, he accepted the call extended to him in 1959 by the Canadian Reformed congregation of what was then known as Fergus-Guelph. Subsequently, he has served in the Canadian Reformed congregation of Smithers, BC and Smithville, ON. In 1978, he accepted the call to the American Reformed congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he has served for the past 13 years.

The service of Rev. P. Kingma has been characterized by great dedication to the task and role of shepherd of the congregation. Both the congregations

at Smithers and at Grand Rapids retain the evidence of his great concern for the establishment of Reformed elementary and secondary day schools. He has as well demonstrated concern for the establishment of a Canadian/American Reformed school of higher education, and has actively served on the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches in Hamilton, Ontario.

His concern for the honour of the cause of the LORD of the covenant in the propagation of the Reformed faith has led him to undertake the initial, groundbreaking work of the Ministry-at-Large Project, in which the growing interest in the Reformed faith evident in the United States has been channeled towards the Canadian and American Reformed churches. In all of his efforts, he has been faithfully assisted in his labours by his wife for 35 years.

In the years of his ministry, the Lord has in His gracious providence, given to



the Rev. and Mrs. P. Kingma both patience in times of adversity, and thankfulness in prosperity. They readily acknowledge His good and gracious hand in the affairs of their life.

The congregation at Grand Rapids may give thanks to our faithful Covenant God for His gracious provision of such a pastor and bishop. We wish to congratulate both him and his wife upon the most honourable release granted him, and wish them the strength of the Lord as he retired from active service as minister of the Word of God. A Farewell Evening is scheduled, D.V., May 27, 1991, in honour of this occasion.

*How blest are those whose strength
Thou art, who on Thy ways have set
their heart.*

Psalm 84:3 (rhymed version) ©

27th Annual Women's League Day

By J.C.M. Thalen

October 11, 1990 marked the 27th Annual League Day for the Women's Society's of the Fraser Valley. Hosted by Lynden, Washington, it was held in Langley.

At 9:30 the hustle and bustle of women arriving could be heard in the front hall. Refreshments were being served and women were chatting and getting acquainted. Those who had not registered had a chance to do so.

The morning session was called to order shortly after 10:00 by Mrs. E.B. Bosscher. We sang from Hymn 3:1 and

2. The Scripture reading was from Proverbs 1:1-19 after which Mrs. Bosscher led in prayer.

After a word of welcome had been extended to all those present, especially those visiting from far, the speaker for the morning session was introduced. Rev. J. Visscher was to speak on "The Family in Crisis." Much could be learned about relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, etc. Why do difficulties arise in the families? There are changes in family roles. Liberalism among women causes men to become

insecure in their role as head of the family. Other causes of family disruption is alcoholism, abuse, etc.

Why this dismal picture?

1) "The demise of biblical norms. Humanism is overriding philosophy. Man creates his own laws. The right of God to lay the law is gone. Man plays his own drum.

2) The sacredness of marriage is gone. Materialism has set in and man has lost sight of God. Everyone wants their material needs fulfilled. God is no longer the centre of life.

3) Identity Crisis – The roles of men and women in the family have changed.

Once the speaker had finished his introduction, we sang from Psalm 51:1 and 3. The floor was then open for discussion.

Many interesting questions came up. A few of them were:

“How strongly does Rev. Visscher feel about the T.V.? Is it playing with the devil, seeing how close we can get to the fire of hell without getting burned?” “Article 36 – Does the government really have any business in our bedrooms?” “What is the role of women who have grown children (married children)?”

In summary the conclusion was: if you have television in your home, it should be carefully controlled. Especially when you notice negative feedback from your children. The television is a negative role model, because there are so many disruptive programs.

As far as the government having business in our bedrooms – well, they have not straightened out their own

house as far as discussion on abortion, etc., are concerned.

The family is a dynamic unit. It has many stages. This presents a whole new question which women have to work out for themselves to fulfil their own task on earth.

As usual time ran out, and the discussion had to come to an end. But it left us all with much to think about for sure.

The morning session was concluded. The floor was then given to Mrs. P. Boot, who did a reading on behalf of the Abbotsford Women's Society.

The chairlady then thanked Rev. Visscher for providing such an interesting topic and all those who participated in a fruitful and enlightening discussion.

After an eventful morning, it was time for lunch. While the ladies were busy settling into seats beside old friends, the Lynden ladies were busy getting lunch together.

The lunch hour devotions were lead by yours truly (J. Thalen).

During the lunch hour we found out we had some guests in our midst from

Hamilton, Burlington and all the way from Holland. I hope they enjoyed themselves at our League day as much as we did.

It was time once again to head into the church auditorium for the afternoon session. The chairlady for this was Mr. K. Le Grande. We sang from Hymn 45:1-4. Entertainment was then provided for us by Cloverdale Women. “Women through the years,” from marriage to grandmother. It was quite a sight to see.

Next was the Scripture reading of Psalm 23 from which Mrs. A. Krabben-dam gave her introduction. It was a beautiful introduction, and left everybody thinking, I'm sure.

Then it was time for the business. The biggest question was whether to keep the League Day in October or to change it again until June. Well, it was decided for now to host it again in the fall.

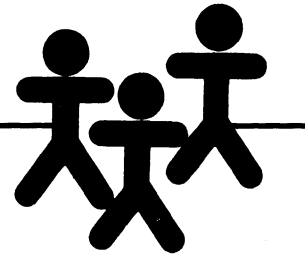
Mr. K. Le Grande then closed in prayer. And we all sang once again, this time from Hymn 63.

The ladies said their farewells over coffee and it was time to head back home to the husbands and children



SCHOOL CROSSING

By A. Witten



When Your Child Tells About Moses

In a Reformed elementary school especially in primary and junior division (grades 1-6) the Bible story is an intricate part of the school day. The teacher who, each morning, is able to tell the Bible story well often sets a positive tone with his/her students for the remainder of the day. Many students, in the primary grades, can recall verbatim the facts and theme of the previous day's story. Detailed biblical information recalled within the context of Christ centred themes will long be remembered. In this manner teachers assist parents in helping to shape and nurture the sure knowledge and firm confidence that the catechism speaks of in Lord's Day 7. Telling the next generation the glorious deeds of the Lord and His might, and the wonders which He has wrought (Ps.78) also takes place, of course, in the remainder of the school's curriculum when we show God's handiwork in creation. However, it is especially the Bible story, which puts our work as nurturing teachers and our

work as maturing students in perspective. The following translation by colleague K. Sikkema from A. Janse, *Het Eigen Karakter der Christelijke School* (1935, pp. 98-99) is shared to assist us in reflecting how we at home speak about the teacher's Bible story.

“Mom, the teacher had such a fine story this morning. It was about Moses, he was such a sweet little brother, and they laid him in a tiny basket in the water between the reeds and er...they should have thrown that dear little brother in the water that wicked king had said, but they didn't do it, and er...they were scared, were they ever, because he cried so much... what if the soldiers would hear it? And you know what? The princess came by that place. The Lord made it that way. He took care of that little baby. And then the baby just started to cry, and then the princess said, “What do I hear? What is that in the reeds?” She then sent one of her girls into the

water to get out the basket and when they took off the lid the baby cried so hard and the princess felt sorry for it...”

Mother said, “Dear child, did you ever listen well,” and she thought, “Isn't my little Betty smart, and amazing what a little child picks up already (she even noticed that the Lord took care of Moses), and what a thinker that child of mine...,” and quietly she prayed, “Lord, make my little girl devout...”

But least of all, or not at all, did she think of Moses.

The child thought of Moses, of God's wonderful deeds, like He told them to us in His Word. But mother thought of Betty, and she prayed that Betty would be pious. Really, Betty was more pious here than her mother!

Oh, dear parents, if your children come and tell a thing or two about Moses, think along with them for a few moments. Don't start talking about something else. Your child was not talking about how well she listened or about

being smart or pious, but about Moses. Rather, say something about that little baby also. Something like, "Moses must have been just as small as our baby in the cradle," or "The Lord still takes care of His people today." And then when father comes home and after supper he also happens to read about Moses, don't say how well Betty listened, but say something about Moses again; even something very plain and simple, even if it is not pious at all – even if all you ask is what kind of pitch they used for the basket.

Sure you can talk about your child when the time is there. For instance, when your child excitedly comes home from school saying, "Mom, I tried so hard today," say "Good, child, that makes me happy." Or when your child says, "Mom, I prayed to the Lord!," feel free to show your love for Christ's sake, and for your joy.

But if your child tells something about the Word of God, don't talk about your child, and don't think of his piety

right away, for that would be a very impious thing for you to do as a parent.

In reflecting upon what this Reformed forbear noted one is reminded of what schooling is all about. Schooling or education includes our whole being. We learn using head, heart and hands. We need all three! We increase in understanding, knowing that our life of service involves factual "head" knowledge, a "heartfelt" assurance and "active" participation. ©

BOOK REVIEW

By G. Nederveen

The Banner of Truth Trust has reprinted a book first published in 1975. The title is Satan Cast out: A study in Biblical Demonology. Author: Frederick S. Leahy. Price: \$6.95 U.S.

This is a worthwhile book. Initially it was written as a guide to help missionaries who are frequently confronted with the phenomenon of demon-possession (p. 7). The current renewed interest in the occult prompted the reprint and makes this book worthwhile reading for today. I share the author's view that especially young people are at great risk. Countless books and television programmes dish up a poisonous cocktail of sex, violence and occultism. He calls this "spiritually and morally lethal" (p. 10).

The first chapter is a study on the origin and place of the angels in God's creation. It deals with the nature and tasks of both good and evil angels. The author has much to say on this subject. Careful reading gives much food for thought and will be rewarding.

Leahy has many good insights. For example, he points out that there is no biblical support for the idea that each Christian has a guardian angel. Christians have something better, he says. "Each Christian enjoys the guardianship of angels as a whole" (p. 18).

In the following chapters he deals extensively with Satan's present position in the world. In a time in which sin and evil are no longer taken seriously, it is refreshing to read that someone still maintains the definite link between the evil which is in Satan and the evil which is in man.

Encouraging and stimulating is Leahy's treatment about the reign of Satan. In his treatment on the subject the author is level headed. He clearly demonstrates how on the one hand Satan is the clever foe against whom we must be on guard because he is prowling around like a roaring lion (1 Peter 5:8, 9). On the

other hand he cautions not to hold an exaggerated view of Satan's authority and power. Satan is bound. This binding of Satan refers to his inability to act without the permissive will of God (p. 47).

Let me give you a flavour of Leahy's thoughts and views. He writes,

"Satan is not the present ruler of the world with Christ as the predicted future Lord. The binding of Satan does not belong to the 'not yet' of eschatology. By no means! The New Testament proclamation is that the sentence passed upon Satan *has been executed*" (p. 25).

Another beautiful insight appears on page 62.

"The doom of Satan is a concomitant of the second coming of Christ. Then we shall see Satan's defeat at the Cross and his actual downfall as one. We shall see the lightening flash and hear the thunder simultaneously. We shall see the Cross in relation to time from God's standpoint; not at a point along a line with the past behind us and the future before us, but at the centre of a circle where the whole circumference may be viewed and where past and future are alike."

Leahy's thesis is that in a regenerate person the "Holy Spirit and an evil spirit cannot be joint occupants of the same heart" (p. 96). He makes a distinction between a *professing* Christian and a regenerate person. I doubt whether this distinction is scripturally warranted. In any case, the position the author has taken explains his forceful statement made earlier when he claims, "To acknowledge Satan's right to rule on any sphere whatsoever is treason to the Christ of God and an expression of unbelief" (p. 46). True, Satan does not have the *right* to rule, but he definitely has a terrible influence, also on true

Christians. Is that treason or unbelief on the part of the Christian? It is an effect of the brokenness of life due to sin.

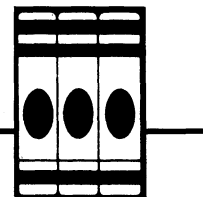
I also put a question mark beside the words, "when, in the New Testament, *flesh* stands opposed to *spirit*, it means the physical body" (p. 50). Not always. This statement is too general. Scripture uses *flesh* also to underscore the sinful nature of man. I sense in Leahy's treatment of 1 Cor. 5:1-5, a dichotomy, a division between body and soul.

The author's personal view is that demon-possession still exists. I am thankful for his sensible approach to the matter of exorcism. He rightly rejects "sacerdotal exorcism" where holy water is supposed to make the demon cringe and disappear as if by magic (p. 137). The remedy is found in the preached Word (p. 106). "When we face Satan with the sword of the Spirit, we do so with the weapon he dreads most" (p. 168).

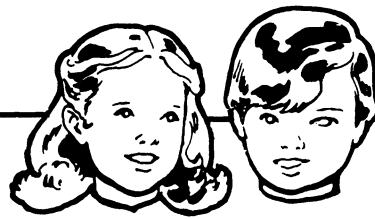
The strength of the book lies in the first seven chapters. In these pages many Scripture passages are reviewed. Leahy bases all his conclusions on the Word of God. The eighth chapter is a historical survey of demonic activity since New Testament times. I found this section the least useful part of the book. The whole matter of occultism receives little separate treatment.

Apart from some critical notes you will surmise that I recommend this book. In general it is easy reading. But it is also a solid study which tries to do full justice to God's revelation. Since it is a study it contains footnotes with sources and comments. The book also has a useful index at the back.

It is a sober book. Sensationalism which often surrounds treatment of demonism and occultism is absent. Yet it is an uplifting and encouraging book because the author strives to do full justice to what God's Word has to say. ©



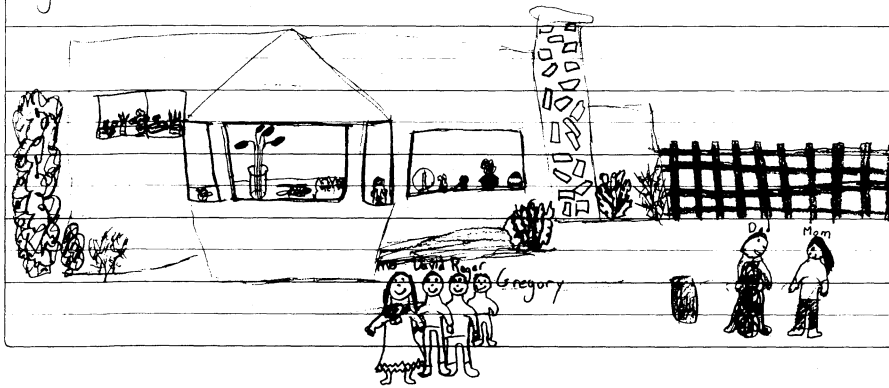
By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

Let's start with the story and picture from Busy Beaver *Vickie Aikema*. Does it remind you of your own family?

Our family activity is gardening. When the weather allows us we start gardening together. Dad digs up the ground. David likes to help. I help my mom move some new plants around. When I am not helping my mom, I take care of my little brothers. Roger and Gregory like to help everybody. But sometimes it is hard for them so they just watch us. My dad and mom move bushes and trees to a suitable place together while we watch.



FOR STAMP COLLECTORS!

Do you have stamps you would like to show off?

Here is a great suggestion from Busy Beavers *Erika and Tesha Hopman*.



ZIG-ZAG STAMP FOLDER

1. Fold a 50 cm by 20 cm strip of stiff cardboard (neatly) in half.
2. Fold one half backward in half again.
3. Fold the other half neatly backward the same way. Stand the cardboard up in a zig-zag.
4. Stick your stamps to stamp hinges and fix on the folder.

Erika and Tesha found this idea in a book. Another Busy Beaver suggested keeping your stamps organized in a *stamp album*.

Do you have more stamp collecting ideas? We would love to hear them!

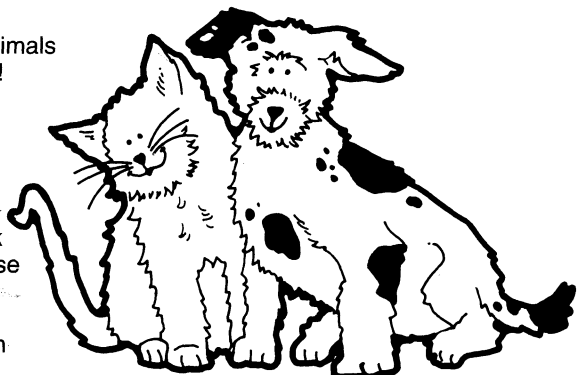
Animal Word Search

by Busy Beaver *Colin Vandergaag*

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

These tricky animals are hiding here!

mole
 crow
 pig
 chick
 moose
 deer
 duck
 worm



Quiz Time!

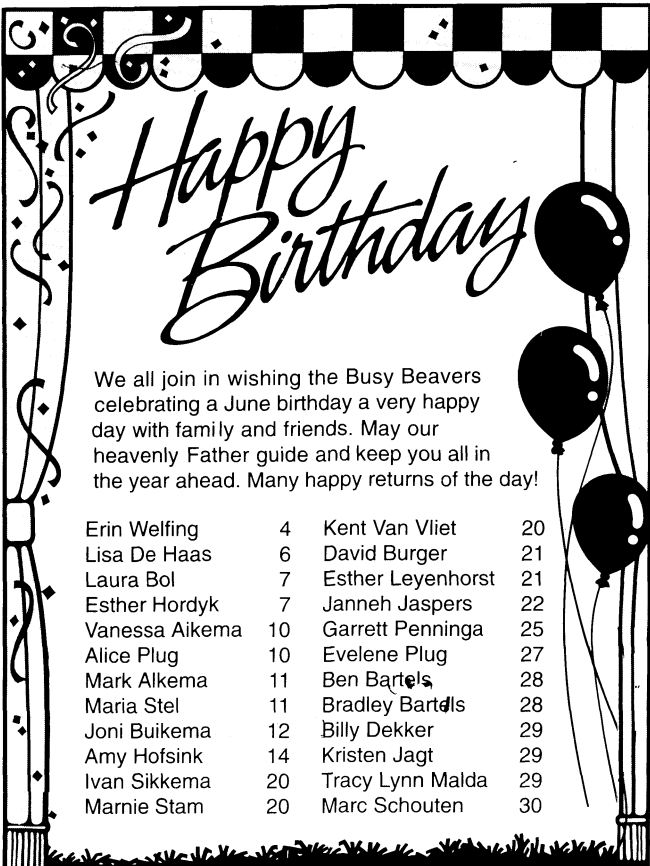
Furniture

Homes in biblical times had few pieces of furniture.

Can you fill the blanks with the names of the pieces of furniture mentioned?

1. A man on a _____ was let down through a roof to see Jesus. Luke 5:19
2. A beggar desired to eat crumbs which fell from a rich man's _____. Luke 16:21
3. Jehoiadah made a bank from a _____ to hold the offerings. 2 Kings 12:9
4. A great woman of Shunem and her husband prepared a room with a _____, _____, and _____ for Elisha to use. 2 Kings 4:8
5. Jesus told a paralytic to take up his _____ and walk. Matthew 9:6
6. God said the Egyptians would have frogs everywhere, even in their _____. Exodus 8:3
7. Solomon said the virtuous woman "puts her hands to the _____." Proverbs 31:19
8. To protect David, Michal placed an image in a _____ and said David was sick. 1 Samuel 19:13
9. Seven men were chosen to work at _____ to free the disciples to study and preach. Acts 6:2
10. No one would put a _____ under a bushel. Matthew 5:15

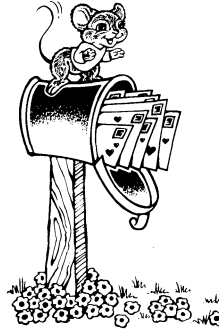
(See answers)



Riddles

1. They have tongues but do not talk. You tie them up when you go for a walk! What are they?
2. You throw away the outside – cook the inside. Eat the outside, and throw away the inside. What is it?
3. What comes after both “a” and “u”?
4. What can you hold but never touch?
5. What has a neck and body, but no arms and legs?
6. Where do you buy water pistols?
7. Why does a golfer wear two pairs of pants?
8. How do you pick up a mail order catalog?
9. Why does a horse have six legs?

(See answers)



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Joanne Jans*. We are very happy to have you join us. If you want to write to a pen pal, look in some back issues of Our Little Magazine (especially #24 of 1990, dated Nov. 24, 1990) for addresses. Have fun, Joanne!

A big welcome to you, too, *Colin Vandergaag*. Where have you taken your new bike, Colin? And how did you enjoy the skiing? Thank you for the puzzles! Will you write and tell me your birthday, Colin, please?

Hello, *Crystal DeJong*. I'm glad you have a pen pal. Do you answer her letters soon after she writes? Thank you for sending your new address, Crystal. And what grade are you in now?

Thank you for compiling that list of knock-knock jokes, *Elisa and Karen Vandergaag*. How long did it keep you busy? How did you enjoy your fine arts programme? Did you girls win some prizes? Write again soon!

Congratulations on your baby brother, *Andrea Feenstra*. Are you allowed to help look after him? Does he smile at you? Are you sleeping in your fort again, Andrea? Thank you for the puzzles!

I see you've been very busy, *Vickie Aikema*. Thank you for sharing all those "goodies" with the other Busy Beavers. How is your garden coming along, Vickie? And what are the girls in your class playing at recess?

Hello, *Michelle Hordyk*. I see you are a good puzzler! And I like the border you made around the Easter hymn. Keep up the good work! Do you play sports outside now that it's spring, Michelle?

Answers:

Furniture

1. bed
2. table
3. chest
4. table
5. bed
6. ovens
7. distaff
8. bed
9. table
10. lamp

Riddle Fun!

1. shoes
2. corn-on-the-cob
3. B (bee)
4. your breath
5. a violin
6. in the sporting goods department
7. in case he gets a hole-in-one!
8. by its Sears!
9. It has forelegs and back legs!

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Hope to "see" you all next time!

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

With great joy and thankfulness to the Lord who has blessed us with our first child, we are proud to announce the birth of

MARLA RUBY

Born April 10, 1991

Clarence and Jeanette Togeretz
(nee Harke)

2138 Ghent Avenue 1
Burlington, ON L7R 1Y3

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

KELLY ANNE

Born April 9, 1991

A sister for Jason

James and Yolanda De Boer
(nee Jongsma)

RR 2
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

Our gracious God has blessed us with the birth of another covenant child, a son

JOEL RYAN

March 11, 1991

Rick and Audrey Gritter
(nee Van Andel)

Jaron and Rachel

258 Harmony Road
Ancaster, ON L9G 2T2

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord who has made all things well, we announce the birth of our daughter

JESSICA LYNNE

Born April 12, 1991

A sister for Nicole, Mark, Katie
and Tonia

Nick and Wilma Torenvliet
(nee Jelsma)

27 Algonquin Avenue
Dundas, ON L9J 1A2

And above all these put love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3:14

With thankfulness to God who brought us together, we

ANDREW KIEFT

and

MARIE KEGEL

announce our engagement.

April 19, 1991

250 "C" Line
Orangeville, ON L9W 2Y9

With thankfulness to the Lord, we wish to announce our engagement

SONJA VANDERWOUDE

and

JAMES HEERINGA

April 12, 1991

7055 Airport Road
Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0

A man's mind plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.

Proverbs 16:9

God be praised for the love He has placed in our hearts.

With thankfulness we wish to announce our engagement

CHRISTINA TAMS and WAYNE PLEITER

Good Friday, March 29, 1991

6269 Blackburn Road
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Western Australia

MARTEN RIEPEMA

and

HENRIETTA DE WITT

are pleased to announce their forthcoming marriage, D.V., on June 7, 1991 at 7 o'clock in the Maranatha Canadian Reformed Church of Fergus.

Rev. J. Huijgen officiating.

Address:

410 Hill Street E., Apt. 12
Fergus, ON N1M 1H7



The Lord has blessed

ANDRIANUS

and

ANNECHIEN BERGSMA (nee vanSydenborgh)

with 55 years of marriage on May 27, 1991.

I will extol Thee, my God and King, and bless Thy name for ever and ever...Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.

Psalm 145:1,3

Their thankful children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren.

Box 423, Carman, MB R0G 0J0

1956 – June 5 – 1991

I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Psalm 32:8b

Thankful to the Lord, who has spared them for us and for each other, we hope to celebrate, D.V., the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents

JOHN TEN BRINKE

and

FIMKE TEN BRINKE (nee Meints)

Smithers, BC: Hennie and Harry Leffers
Daryl, Tracy, Rodney, Kelly and Rachel

Houston, BC: Clara and John Brien
Arthur, Kimberly, Cheri and Brittany

Site 1, SS 1, Comp 10
Houston, BC V0J 1Z0

1956 – June 5 – 1991

I will counsel you with my eye upon you. Psalm 32:8b

AUKE MEINTS

and

FENNIE MEINTS (nee Post)

With joy and thanks to the Lord, who has kept them in His care, we hope to celebrate the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our Dad and Mom, and Grandpa and Grandma.

Their children and grandchildren:

Andy and Jan Meints
Tanya, Brenda, Marcel
Jack and Regina Meints
Jesse, Brett, Byron, Cody
Clarence and Sharon Meints
Justin, Dwayne
Henry and Bonnie Meints
Tiemo and Shelly Meints
Courtney
Jane Meints
Clarinda Meints

Box 121
Houston, BC V0J 1Z0

Proverbs 4:18

1951 – May 12 – 1991

With joy and thankfulness to the LORD, the Giver and Sustainer of life, we could celebrate with our beloved parents

JOHANNES JAN KNEGT

and

GEERTRUIDA KNEGT-HART

their Fourtieth Wedding Anniversary.

Bert and Elsa Hopman, *Theo, Gus, Erika, Tesha*
John and Karen Knegt, *Sarah, Amy*
Gary and Corinne Aikema, *Angelina, John, Tracy,*
Julia, Lisa, Kyle

Ted and Connie Knegt, *Ted, Trisha, Jodi,*
Amanda, Chadwick

Tony and Ninette Lodder, *Adam, Cody, Mark*
Ralph and Kathleen Knegt, *Matthew*
Jacqueline Knegt

127 York Street

Eden Mills, ON N0B 1P0

1966 – May 20 – 1991

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Joshua 24:15b

With joy and thankfulness to our heavenly Father who has kept them in His care, we announce the 25th Wedding Anniversary of our parents

HENRY VAN DELDEN

and

JEANETTE VAN DELDEN (nee Huttema)

Surrey, BC: Kevin van Delden and
Kandy Arondus

Surrey, BC: Rhonda and Evert Hollaar
Michael

Smithers, BC: Wayne van Delden

17244-61B Avenue
Surrey, BC V3S 5M7

We know that in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose.

Romans 8:28

On March 2, 1991 it pleased the Lord to take unto Himself, our daughter, sister, sister-in-law, and aunt

MAAIKE BOES (nee Kamminga)

at the age of 59.

Carman, MB: Mrs. A. Kamminga

Winnipeg, MB: Betty and Sy Raap

Carman, MB: Terry Termeer

Sue and Terry Veenendaal

Winnipeg, MB: George Kamminga

Dora Kamminga

Carman, MB: Hank and Mary Kamminga

and nieces and nephews.

The Canadian Reformed School Society of Coaldale, operating the

COALDALE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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and

ONE HALF-TIME TEACHER

The school has a projected enrollment of 109 in K-9 for September 1991. For further information, contact

Mr. R. Versteeg, acting principal.

School phone: (403) 345-4055

Home: (403) 345-2471

Applications may be sent to:

The Education Committee

Box 1479

Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

The Canadian Reformed School Society of Burlington, Inc. operating

JOHN CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

is in need of

TEACHERS

for its Junior Division. Some expertise in the teaching of FRENCH would be a considerable asset.

Inquiries regarding this position may be made of the Principal:

Mr. F.C. Ludwig

at (416) 634-8015 (school)

or (416) 335-8311 (home)

Applications should be addressed to his attention at the school:

607 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON L7N 2V4

**THE COVENANT CANADIAN REFORMED
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requires

TEACHERS

Preference will be given to those with a major in Language Arts.

Duties to commence at the beginning of the 1991-92 school year.

For more information please contact the principal:

Mr. J. Harthoorn

Phone: (403) 674-4774 (school)

(403) 674-6457 (home)

Please send applications to:

Mr. Dave Terpsma

c/o Covenant Canadian Reformed School

Box 67

Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0

Come to the beautiful Bulkley Valley

The Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School in Smithers will have a possible opening for an

ELEMENTARY

and a

HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

for the 1991/1992 school year.

The successful applicant for the elementary school is interested in teaching one of the primary grades and in working with special needs children.

The successful applicant for the high school is preferably qualified to teach English and/or Business but otherwise qualified applicants will be seriously considered.

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- a team approach

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For more information call the principal,

Henk VanBeelen

at (604) 847-3492 (school)

or (604) 847-5924

Applications should be directed to

John Van Veen

Secretary of the Board of the Canadian Reformed
School Association of Smithers, BC,
P.O. Box 3700, V0J 2N0

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TEACHER

for the elementary grades one/two as well as a

PART-TIME HIGH SCHOOL TEACHER

preferably for the Mathematics/Science subject areas as of September 1991.

Our school has:

- Kindergarten to Grade 12
- an enrollment of about 110
- 8 full-time staff members

The successful applicants should have a B.Ed. or be willing to work towards it, and must be members of the Canadian Reformed Churches or sister churches.

For more information, we invite you to contact the principal:

Mr. A. Kingma

Phone: (204) 661-8937 (school)

(204) 663-9069 (home)

Applications may be submitted to:

Education Committee
Immanuel Christian School
215 Rougeau Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R2C 3Z9

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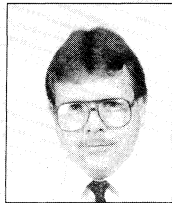
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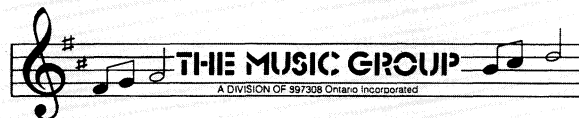
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