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Current Issues in Church History₂

The Divine Hand in World History

By J. De Jong

From the vantage point sketched in the first article I move to the second issue: the relevance of the past and our view of the past for our church life today. If we can discern in a concrete way the hand of God in history, then we can apply the promises of Scripture to events in our own history. For example, we acknowledge the Reformation to be a great gift of God, leading His church back to His truth of His word. And we share the same sentiment with regard to the other major reformations in our history as well. The Secession was a return to the confessional basis of the church. The Doleantie can only be seen in the same light. And the Liberation of 1944, which we commemorate this year, was simply a return to the principles which had been won for the churches again in the Doleantie and the Secession. Thus, we find in the events of church history clear indications of the presence of the hand of God. He fulfills His covenant promises, despite the weaknesses and shortcomings of men.

Recognizing the divine hand

With regard to this history, the shades of doubt always seem to rise with respect to the most recent past. Few deny that the Reformation of the 16th Century was a work of God. But whether the Liberation of 1944 may be seen as such has been and still is a debated issue. So we are led back to the problem raised by Dr. Leigh. He insisted that God's hand could not be discerned in such a direct way in church history. Indeed, – so this view holds – some people may have experienced the Liberation of 1944 (or 1945 as well!) as an act of God for the salvation of His people, but these are simply personal expressions of individual experiences. They are not to be transferred to the realm of objective history, that is, history that is verifiable for Christians and non-Christians alike.

Other churches

Another factor which must be considered in this regard is the history of the Presbyterian Churches in Canada and the USA, and in particular, the Orthodox churches. If we are insistent that God's hand is present in our history in such a way that we must see Secession, Doleantie, Union and Liberation as events showing us clearly the saving hand of God, can we say the same of the Disruption of 1843 in Scotland? Or of the schism that led to the formation of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1936? In teaching church history, we are faced not only with a broader family of Reformed churches, but with a wider body of Presbyterian churches as well.

The confessional approach

Here the teacher must draw a fine line between Reformed identity and Reformed ecumenicity. This requires

that we unreservedly recognize and confess the hand of God in the events of our own history, including the Liberation of 1944. No one planned or organized the Liberation. Rather, it came about. As a breach in the church it was painful, but as a reformatory event it worked in a healing way in the church. Any commemoration worthy of the name must begin with this truth!

At the same time we cannot automatically discount the history of other churches in which the struggle for the faithfulness and the purity of the church has manifested itself. This requires a qualified recognition of churches that clearly seek to be faithful to God's word. The recognition of such churches should remain qualified as long as there are issues outstanding. At the same time, we must portray a sincere willingness to work for unity, insisting that no one history is sacrosanct above others.

Some examples

Perhaps some concrete examples can make clear what we mean. Take first of all the Presbyterian tradition. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church celebrate its 50th Anniversary in 1986. Can we deny them the right to see the struggle of Machen against liberalism as an indication of the hand of God in their history, leading them from the clutches of liberalism and higher criticism, and preserving them in the way of a true recognition of the authority of Scripture? At the same time, we must be frank in the admission that through the Liberation we have inherited some essential elements of Reformed church life, as for example, confession membership and the Doleantie church polity, which we could never readily sacrifice. therefore, our discussions should always presuppose qualified recognition, which makes these outstanding points the object of continued discussion.

Among the churches of the Reformed camp we are faced with a similar mandate. Take, for example, our discussions with the Independent churches. Those churches have not gone through the Liberation as our churches have. Many of their members and officers are not familiar with the struggle of 1944. And, we, from our side are perhaps not as appreciative of their struggles as we could be. what approach do we take? We cannot put up for negotiation a past which we see as given by God! We must hold firm to what God has given us. Yet we must always recognize that it can please God at any time to bring others back to the recognition of the true service of His name. Therefore we can only reach out and accept others in the unity if a true faith if they agree to live by the confessional standards that we have adopted.

In such a situation I would only suggest one prerequisite in our discussions with the Independent churches. Here we

can and should follow the example of our forefathers in the discussions leading to the Union of 1892. Although we should allow each other the freedom to form various opinions as to the doctrinal questions involved, the Canadian Reformed churches should insist that one requirement for union which is non-negotiable is that the Liberation was legitimate according to the requirements of Scripture and confession in the situation with which the churches were confronted at that time.

This is not adding a requirement to the essential requirement of a unity based on the confession of the Three Forms of Unity. However, it places that confessional unity in a certain historical context. You cannot engage in discussion concerning the gathering of church of the future without a link to the past. One cannot discuss and negotiate on unity without recognizing an historical context. And I do not think it is a correct course to simply erase the past from the negotiating table. If we truly wish to commemorate what the Lord gave us in the Liberation fifty years ago, then which must see our duty to build on the struggles of the past in our conduct and decision-making today. Therefore, our discussion (whether at a local or any other level) must insist on the validity of the Liberation as a principle which cannot be open to dispute.¹²

As another example we may take the Protestant Reformed or the Free Reformed Churches. The Protestant Reformed view of the events of the past is rather different than our own, at least if we can take the line of Gertrude Hoeksema as a guide to the view of church history in that church. For Mrs. Hoeksema insists that the Secession was not really a genuine reformation, but it was the Doleantie that represented the essential reformation from the Dutch state church.¹³ The reason for this negative assessment of the Secession appears to lie in the fact that Dr. K. Schilder, whose views according to Mrs. Hoeksema were suspect as far as the doctrine of the covenant was concerned, stemmed from the Secession.¹⁴ Rev. Herman Hoeksema, on the other hand, stemmed from the Doleantie! Thus, even though Kuyper was wrong on the matter of common grace, yet his reformation still represents the essential reformation in the history of the Dutch churches!

Here history becomes skewed in the interest of rationalizing the existence of a specific group. The Free Reformed do the same with respect to the Union of 1892.¹⁵ But this raises the question "are we all reading history through our own glasses? Does each church group in the Reformed camp claim its own events as the hand of God?"

That is the scepter of relativism in a new form! To the threat of a relativism of this form we can only reply: let the facts speak for themselves! Teaching Church History properly also requires honesty and objectivity with respect to the facts! The teach of church history is certainly not "value free." But a teacher will also not colour the facts to suit one's own personal or "denominational" interest. Indeed, one must allow the facts to speak critically to one's tradition and one's person. If we can trace the hand of God in history, we must at the same time allow ourselves to be corrected and led by that very hand of God with regard to the present and the future!

The approach to the past

The examples above give an indication of how important a correct approach to church history is, and how important the correct teaching of church history is. In sum, – to bor-



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row a phrase from K. Schilder – one might call the approach that I defend: a sympathetic-critical approach to church-historical events, including the events in one's own ecclesiastical tradition. Everything must stand the scrutiny and test of the Word of God. By applying this standard in an independent way in the classroom, in the light of the Reformed confession, the Reformed teacher will also instill in his students an appreciation for their responsibilities as fellow workers in the future of kingdom work that God grants to them, and to all His children.

¹²I first made this point in my address to the Ministers' Conference in 1992, "The Union of 1892 and its Implications for Today," *Clarion* Vol. 41, #12, (June 19, 1992) p. 254.

¹³See G. Hoeksema, *A Watered Garden. A Brief History of the Protestant Reformed churches in America*. (Reformed Free Publishing Association, Grand Rapids, 1992), p. 4.

¹⁴Hoeksema, pp. 137-138. Mrs. Hoeksema says: "Dr. Schilder was a descendant of the Afscheiding of 1834, led by Hendrik de Cock. This wing of the Dutch churches was doctrinally weaker than the group which came from the Kuyperean reformation." Aside from this misinformation, Mrs. Hoeksema's book is replete with factual errors concerning the Dutch churches. For example, she says that Dr. V. Hepp came from the Free University, "which was the theological school developed from the Secession of 1834." then she says, "Dr. K. Schilder...was the professor of dogmatics at the Free University of Kampen, the school developed from the Doleantie of 1887," p. 106. This is such a conflagration of confusion with respect to historical facts that one does not know where to begin to correct matters. Clearly, Mrs. Hoeksema had no idea of where Schilder was from or what his views were. However, from her (Protestant Reformed) perspective, his views were 'non-reformed,' cf. p. 137.

¹⁵For example, see the speech of Rev. C. Pronk in C. Van Dam. (ed.) *The Challenge of Church Union. Speeches and Discussions on Reformed Identity and Ecumenicity* (Premier Printing, Winnipeg, 1993), pp. 22-35. 

Schilder's instruction₂

By C. Trimp

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The active Lord of the church

It cannot be our intention to give a complete picture of Schilder's understanding of the church in a single article. We are incapable of doing that and it is not necessary either.¹ We are concerned with the heart of Schilder's instruction. In our estimation, this heart is located in the conviction that to speak of the church always means to speak of the living, active, glorified Christ.

When one starts with the available institutions and continues to argue from there, one starts from the end point. Then a person looks at what is at hand and so has in effect made further reflection impossible. The church belongs to Christ. All theorizing about the church must, therefore, start with *him*. For that simple reason already, it cannot be true that Schilder was intent on proclaiming the institution of the Reformed

churches in the Netherlands as the "only true" or "saving" church.²

For decades on end Schilder asked attention for the continual activity of Christ in gathering, protecting, and preserving his church on earth (cf. HC answer 54). For Schilder, this meant very concretely that by his Spirit Christ can create new life at any moment, at any place. Christ's Spirit is mobile, and he never binds himself to the boundaries of any institution. Therefore, this Spirit is able to make boundary corrections and to cross boundaries. At the very moment that the Spirit awakens new life in institution A, he causes a "crisis" in institutions B and C; a "crisis," that is, with regard to the question of its own legitimacy as a church which has not united with church A.

The provisional character of the church

It is perfectly clear that Schilder has come to the defense of the "institution." He did so against all attempts to delegate the institution to a lower level ("its only and institution") in the shadow of the highly praised church as organism. He experienced the division among

the institutions as sin before God, and he refused to decorate this wrongful situation with the beautiful name "pluriformity of the church." In his eyes, this was an easy out. He announced loudly throughout Holland that the unity of the church ought to be a unity in faith, and that this unity must not simply to be mystical, but ought to present itself also institutionally. This explains his protests against breaking easily with the church in case of personal conflict, dissatisfaction or difference in theological climate, taste, book of praise, or otherwise. Where does a person get the right to "set up little churches" of one's own accord? Does anybody have the right to separate himself from the church of Christ?

It is well possible to criticize Schilder's pleas for the institution of the church. But it is impossible to say that Schilder ever shut in or locked up the living Christ and his Spirit in any institution. Precisely with regard to the institution he kept repeating that without interruption Christ is busy instituting the church, in the progressive present tense. Therefore, every institution is placed under the critique of Christ's

norm, – first of all the Reformed churches with their confession of Christ's name and presence. Precisely in this way, Schilder was able to speak of a "provisional institution."

This provisional character is not motivated by a groping search by people with a particular human search plan in the direction of God's ultimate truth. The source and the background of Schilder's idea concerning the "provisional institution" lie in the activity of Christ, who does not bind himself to the boundaries of our institution. The church is a church under construction. Therefore, we may never speak about the church and its characteristics in a static way (cf. I.205f.), also not in our explanation of the old expression "no salvation outside the church."³

Degeneration of ecclesiastical thinking

But, a reader may ask, if the above is all true, how does one explain the reproach that Schilder has propagated the Reformed church as "only true church"? Which misunderstanding has led to such a far-reaching reproach? In our view, this is due to a lack of insight in Schilder's clear intention. If, in one town, God's children go to church every Sunday in all kinds of directions, and they cross each other's ways, then this is something atrocious, something by which we grieve the Holy Spirit, oppose the glory of God, and neglect the command of Christ. We may not cover the scandal of this situation with nice words, such as "pluriformity" or "plurality." The *unity* of the church is one of its *characteristics*. It is one of its mysteries by virtue of its communion with Christ. Nothing is more self-evident than that this unity be also presented visibly and institutionally before the eyes of God and man.

If this line of thinking leads to the conclusion: "there may only be one (true) church (institution) in one place" then this is a statement which has deep roots. It can only be understood from the knowledge of the will and the course of action of Christ. If someone rejects that statement because it is unsettling or destroys the peace, he might want to seriously examine himself as to the state of his faith in the living Christ, who gathers and preserves one catholic church, as the beginning of BC article 27 reminds us (cf. I.57, 86).

"There may only be one church of Christ in one place." This is a deeply rooted statement of faith. If one were to

pull it loose from its roots, one would only have a withered stinging nettle left. Therefore, the statement that "there may only be one church of Christ in one place" is at the same time an extremely vulnerable statement. It is open to all kinds of abuse, both by us as well as against us.

* He who bends this word in the direction of human complacency has never known the Lord of the church. He makes that statement into a word of selfish pride. At catechism, he has heard the minister say that there can only be one true church, and that happens to be "his" church. So, he is safe.

* He who manipulates this word in such a way that "his" church has the monopoly in town should not think that this idea has anything at all to do with the Reformed confession. For such a person, Schilder has written in vain about the mobile Spirit and about the "crisis" experienced by his own institution.

* He who thinks that by saying "one true church in one place" now has the right to ignore or to disqualify as false church all other institutions that present themselves, is simply acting like a wholesaler of fines and penalties. This triumphalist does not fear God and imagines himself to be a high ranking officer at the central office for ecclesiastical drivers' licenses.⁴

On the other hand:

* He who has no interest whatsoever in the assertion that there may only be one church of Christ in one place,

should seriously wonder whether he knows the meaning of the word "church of Christ."

* He who is never bothered by all those church paths that cross one another, because he thinks, "each to his own," also in religiosity, lives nearer to the sect than to the church. The confession of the catholicity of the church must urge every church member to consider *his* church as *the* (salutary) choice for all people. If that is not the case, he is in principle sectarian. Such a person is happy if only he gets to hear his pet ideas in a certain lingo that is dear to him and in a particular meeting place that is familiar to him.

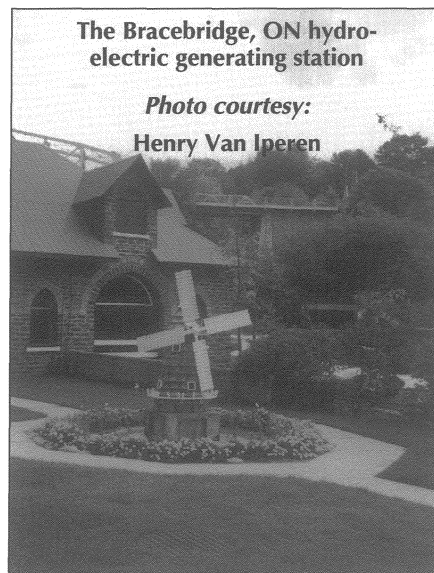
Schilder protested against all these forms of degeneration of ecclesiastical thinking. The fact that this was not appreciated only proves the need of his protest. Was Schilder sectarian ("een kerkist")? The idea immediately becomes ridiculous if one takes only half an hour to read Schilder's criticisms (both to the inside and the outside) of all ecclesiastical complacency which people might dare to flaunt before the eyes of Christ.

Let me give some assistance in reading Schilder. In more than one place, Schilder writes about God's work outside the Reformed churches (see e.g. I.406; III.76). In his article "There are still believers there." (March 1, 1940, see III.73ff.) he speaks of Reformed confessions which praise the grace of God, who also elects and saves outside one's own institution.

In 1935, Schilder wrote about the Roman Catholic Church that there is an innumerable multitude of children of God there. "Someone who is a child of God in the Roman Catholic church is a child of God despite his disobedience to God with regard to the right way of instituting the church. Just as we ourselves are children of God despite many sins in this or that area" (I.406).

In the press review of September 24, 1934, Schilder wrote that absolutism and relativism with regard to the institution of the church are "both equally unfortunate." Then he continues: "I do not know any church, apart from the Reformed, which preaches God's Word faithfully, administers the sacraments purely, and maintains discipline. I admit that the Reformed Church also does not do it the way it should

OUR COVER



be done. But this church is not prevented from doing it" (I.373f.).

In 1935 Schilder wrote with regard to the "confessionelen" in the Dutch Reformed Church that for ecclesiastically Reformed people it is an act of obedience "to be open, every day, for every well-founded attempt for reunion with those believers of other church formations who repent to obey in instituting; and continuously correcting one's own church life" (II.208; cf. also p. 206).

Schilder has also written about the mobility of the Spirit (II.415) and the mobility of the institution (II.434). Already in 1932 Schilder states clearly that the Reformed churches are not the only ones that saving ("alleen zaligmakende," I.208), and in 1948 he repeats his comment that the boundaries of the church are not static for a moment (III.238).

"Ecumenical Needs"

When we view Schilder's contribution to the never ending reflections on the nature and the way of the church on earth in the broad perspective of the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, then we see him at this juncture as the great opponent of H. Bavinck and A. Kuyper. Schilder defended the norm of BC article 28 over against various attempts to derail that norm. In eloquent terms he formulated the right of the Secession of 1834, and he defended it with the help of the Reformed sources. He realized that it is impossible to commemorate the First and the Second Secessions ("Afscheiding" and "Doleantie") under titles such as *Of the Lord's Ways (Van 's Heeren wegen)* and *The Reformation of '86 (De reformatie van '86)* while at the same time casting doubt on the present validity of BC article 28. Meanwhile, he realized the effect of the romantic theory of pluriformity. It threatens proper ecclesiastical thinking and eliminates the call to the fight for the truth of God's Word which is near to us.

We owe it especially to Schilder that we and our children have not fallen victim to the movement which today calls itself "the Common Road."⁵ Meanwhile, the theory of pluriformity has been replaced by a plurality concept in which confessional unity of faith is given up in favor of a church of dialogue. Spokesmen of what once

used to be the state church (Dutch Reformed) and of what once used to be a confessional church (Reformed Churches in the Netherlands) apparently recognize each other in this new type of a church. Toward the end of his life, Schilder predicted these developments in plain terms: Kuyper is being buried by his own sons and with his own shovel (III.445).

It seems impossible to find someone in this century who has loved the Reformed churches with so much devotion, energy and patience, and who precisely for that reason placed it under the critique of its own confession. How he has suffered under the "ecumenical character of the ecclesiastical needs," especially also in our Reformed life (II.150)! There must be an awful lot of unwillingness, misunderstanding, and ignorance if people want to characterize *this* particular man as sectarian and in that way disqualify him.

It will be clear that Schilder did not design a tight system which would enable us to come up with an answer to each question that we might run across in connection with complicated ecclesiastical situations. Naturally, Schilder did not speak, or even want to speak, the last word in any area at all. But he did want to remove a great deal of barriers which might hinder us in the concrete, timely understanding of God's Word. He has devoted himself to giving us clear insight in the Word of God and in the real situation of the church.

Schilder could speak about the complicated character of the issue of the church and of the diversity of interpretations surrounding it (II.438), and he spoke of a "difficult matter," for instance with regard to the open wound of the sixteenth century: the apparently irreparable breach between Lutherans and Reformed (I.407). In this connection, Schilder spoke of "a discovery that the *Reformation had not been finished*, a discovery which (still today) is *astounding, shameful*, and calls for humiliation and repentance" (I.405, 407). Schilder's objection was exactly that such problems were covered with a nice word ("pluriformity"). The "idealism" lay, as far as that is concerned, more with Kuyper than with Schilder!

We come across a number of characteristics in Schilder's approach of these types of issues: Christ's activity in the continual gathering and instituting of the church; a dynamic concept of the church; man as fellow worker of God:

the liability of man due to his responsibility before God; and the obedience which God asks from man because of the absolute imperative to look for ecclesiastical unity. In this connection, he could also speak about "that wonderful, mobile covenantal tension between God's work and that which is human." "A person who does not strenuously keep up with the current of the Spirit and does not want to serve him as river bed in unity with the church and according to the mobility of the Spirit himself, runs the danger that the current will leave 'his' river bed and will make for Himself a different one" (II.415).

All of this is part of Schilder's gigantic attempt to restore normativity within a church communion in which many were reasonably satisfied with the ecclesiastical status quo. Discord within the "institution" could not and was not allowed to hinder the activities in the "organism." Meanwhile, each person remained where he was.

¹See J.J.C. Dee, *K. Schilder: Zijn leven en werk* (Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, 1990), I, 229-39, 265-70; J.J.C. Dee, in J. de Bruijn and G. Harinck, eds., *Geen duimbreed: Facetten van leven en werk van Prof. dr. K. Schilder 1890-1952* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1990), pp. 132-37; H.J.D. Smit, "Gehoorzamen: Achter Christus aan! Schilder over de kerk," in *Aspecten*, pp. 66-89; C. Trimp, in W. van 't Spijker et al., eds., *De kerk: Wezen, weg en werk van de kerk naar reformatorische opvatting* (Kampen: De Groot Goudriaan, 1990), pp. 193-201; G. C. Berkouwer, *De kerk* (Kampen: Kok, 1970), pp. 19ff.

²In fact, Schilder has clearly rejected suggestions in this direction (see I.198, 208; II.41; III.73, 76; cf. also G.C. Berkouwer, *Op. cit.*, I, 22). I have not been able to find the expression "only true church" anywhere in Schilder, also not in the places mentioned by H.J.D. Smit (*Op. cit.*, 69, 78, 79). In those places, one indeed finds a man who is amazed and thankful for God's guidance in the history of the church in the Netherlands, up to and including the event of the Liberation. We are also hearing a song of praise on the "catholic church" which does not hide in that which is invisible, but which can be pointed out on earth. But nowhere do we hear an eulogy on the "liberated institution" as if it were not subject to the "mobility of the Spirit."

It would be worthwhile to analyze together the texts mentioned by Smit. I am convinced that there will not be a smug Schilder, but that there will indeed be an enthusiastic Schilder coming into the picture. That enthusiasm is an experiential gladness before the face of God, whose work is recognized by faith and love.

This does not mean that there are no questions left with regard to Schilder's reasoning. But it does mean that Schilder lived with heart and soul out of the faith that Christ's church is "catholic" (see esp. III.445-49 and 467-79).

³It would be rewarding to make a theological excursion into the various types of speaking about the "provisional character" of the institution of the church. In our search, we would certainly come across Luther ("provisional character" in connection with the "hiddenness" of the church) and Calvin ("provisional character" due to the doctrine of election). In modern times, we would see Vatican II ("provisional character" because

of eschatology) and K. Barth ("provisional character" in connection with the relation between church and world). Cf. U. Kühn, *Kirche* (Gütersloh, 1980 [2nd ed. 1990]), pp. 151, 159; P. Steinacker, *Die Kennzeichen der Kirche: Eine Studie zu ihrer Einheit, Heiligkeit, Katholizität und Apostolizität* (Berlin, 1982), pp. 40, 135.

⁴We must never for an instant "lose sight of the fact that 'false church' is an awesome word, which is only justified if it records a *judgement of faith*. The word should not be abolished; neither should it be devaluated; if it must be uttered because of God's Word, then only before his face. Otherwise, fleshly passions (which may be observed in the

historical phenomenon of anti-papism) take the place of holy wrath. Even though the Reformers have also at times succumbed to the temptations of fleshly passions, they were no anti-papists when they spoke of the false church. According to God's Word, they only issued the demand of a *return*. More was not necessary; less would not do!" (J. Kamphuis, *Verkenningen* [Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre], I, 37)

⁵Translator's note: "Samen-op-weg" is the name of the process intended to lead to a fusion of the Dutch Reformed Church (NHK), the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (synodical), and the Evangelical Lutheran Church. C

Meditation

By G.Ph. van Popta

Read Acts 2:14-21

"... I will pour out my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

PROPHETS

The apostle Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, opened the scriptures. Many who want to follow the leading of the Spirit want to do so with a closed Bible. Some even suppose that the Holy Spirit will speak to them differently today than He did to God's people ages ago through the holy scriptures. Peter opened the Bible.

Many of those who had heard the disciples speaking in other languages supposed that they were drunk. They were wrong, of course. It was only 9 a.m. Rather, this was something the prophet Joel had spoken about. Joel had said that God would pour out His Spirit upon men and women, boys and girls. He would make prophets out of all His people.

We are prophets. We speak prophetically. Prophets speak about the great things God has done and the great things God is yet going to do. We must speak about these things:

It is important that we speak prophetically because the day of judgment is almost upon us. Peter's quotation from Joel speaks about the day of judgment as well. Joel spoke about the day of Pentecost and the day of judgment almost as if they were the same day. Our Lord's stay in heaven is a very temporary one. The day of Pentecost and the great day of judgment both belong to "the last days." We, prophets and prophetesses, live in the last days. These last days will end with judgment of the living and the dead.

Judgment is coming. It will begin with the household of God, wrote the same Peter in his first letter, 4:17. Judg-

ment begins with the church, with you and me. If it begins with us, what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel? "If the righteous man is scarcely saved, where will the impious and sinner appear?"

Critical days. Days for prophesying.

Let us speak prophetically to one another. Let us speak about the great things God has done and is yet going to do. In this way, let us prepare ourselves and each other for the day of judgment. For, as Paul said in 1 Cor. 14:3ff, he who prophesies builds up and encourages others. One who prophesies edifies the church.

We also speak prophetically in the world, so that those who do not yet belong to the household of God may be saved from the coming day of wrath. Sinners dangle above the fires of hell by a disintegrating, unravelling thread. The fire of God's wrath is licking the thread. When the thread breaks, sinners will plunge into the everlasting fire of hell.

However, there is an escape. The day of wrath is coming, said Peter. But whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.

Call upon the Lord's name, and you shall be saved. Flee from the coming wrath to Jesus Christ. Speak prophetically. Encourage each other to embrace God's free salvation. Speak about judgment and salvation to others who are in danger of plunging into hell.

We live in critical days. These are days for prophesying.

Middle East Reformed Fellowship Canada

Interview with Rev. V. Atallah

1. *You are currently a minister in the OPC. Please explain something of your background and how you came to be associated with MERF.*

I came in contact with the Reformed doctrine via a group of people in Beirut, Lebanon. There we organized a Lebanese Reformed Fellowship. From study groups to public lectures we gradually progressed to Sunday worship services. One of our associates there was the son of an OPC minister, and so the OPC became involved, first by sending a retired minister to help us. By this time our name had changed to Middle East Reformed Fellowship (MERF) and we had grown to about sixty people. When civil war broke out in 1975 in Lebanon, Beirut was no longer a viable base. The OPC minister went to Egypt, and I was licensed by the OPC to serve the Reformed Church in Lebanon.

I had to leave Lebanon because of the American nationality of my wife. The Americans were ordered out. The congregation was dispersed. I went to the United States from 1976-1977, studied under Dr. C. van Til, was examined there by the OPC and ordained as minister. I then went back to Lebanon, but now as an OPC missionary.

The OPC also sent another man to help me in Lebanon. But again war broke out, and we were called back to the United States. By this time MERF had established contacts especially in Egypt and Sudan, and so I worked via correspondence, short visits and telephone with these contacts.

In 1979 I conducted home mission work in central Illinois. From 1980-1984 I worked with the "Back to God Hour," loaned by the OPC Foreign Missions Committee, and so became interested in broadcasting work. During this time I travelled regularly to the Middle East.

In 1984 MERF was reorganized as a larger mission organization. We moved to Cyprus in 1984, and settled in Larnaca because of the airport, available



Rev. V. Atallah, director of MERF

study centre, and schools. I worked on organizing the (Arab) board of MERF.

2. *How is MERF organized?*

The first board was a committee of four men, myself and three others, of whom I mention Dr. Istafanous, head of the Systematic Theology Department at the Evangelical Seminary in Cairo. This ad hoc board later appointed a larger board, with Dr. Istafanous as chairman and myself as secretary. Since I also became "general director," I am no longer a voting member of the Board. The members of the Board are presently in Egypt, Lebanon, Iraq, Kuwait, Sudan and Syria. This Board meets once yearly to decide on major policy while an executive committee runs the daily affairs.

The OPC entered into a cooperative agreement for working in the Middle East in which MERF is recognized as the principle operative agency for the Arab world. This is regulated via the Foreign Missions Committee of the OPC.

3. *What is the main purpose of MERF?*

MERF is an indigenous Reformed organization with a four-fold ministry: evangelism, church extension, Biblical training, and diaconal aid. We follow a holistic, intertwined approach. Everything must have an ecclesiastical oversight. MERF serves through churches, on behalf of churches, and does not want to be a para-church organization. In the English world, we are officially connected to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In the Arabic world we have ties with the Presbyterian Church of Egypt (Evangelical Synod of the Nile).

4. *How has the work expanded?*

Since 1984, when we based ourselves in Cyprus, the work has expanded in every way. Three times per week we have radio broadcasts in Arabic, by which we reach the entire Middle East. Soon we will transmit four times per week. In 1986 the Study Centre was established, and since then over 1,300 people have been trained in the Au-

gustine Program (the advanced program). This is the backbone of MERF. We also have a simpler program for less advanced students, called the Athanasius Program.

Training is also done in Egypt. Conferences are held in various cities in arrangement with local ecclesiastical sources, because MERF is recognized by the Evangelical Synod of the Nile as a bona fide mission organization. We also support six Reformed congregations in Iraq, and have extensive contacts with the Presbyterian Church in Southern Sudan.

The Augustine Program also sponsors "research" terms for more in-depth training. The student then has a personal tutor for a number of months. We are looking for another full-time instructor, and this time not from the OPC, because there is already ample OPC representation in MERF. We'd like other Reformed churches to become more directly involved in the training program. Dr. Istafanous is the principal of the training program, while Rev. Poundstone is the coordinator (almost like a "dean" in the American situation).

5. *What are the main problems facing MERF on the "home front?"*

Unfortunately we must content with opposition to the Reformed faith within some churches. There is the influence of the World Council, liberal theology, and para-church groups who all like to get involved. We have to move cautiously to preserve the Reformed character of our organization.

When an organization functions well, everyone wants to jump on the bandwagon, but we are very particular

about whom we allow to be involved in this work.

6. *What are some of the problems you face in the mission work itself?*

With respect to the Muslim world, we must constantly realize that the MERF leaders have their lives on the line. We must always be extremely cautious. Recently our main MERF contact in Iraq was murdered, and we experienced great sorrow over this.

There is always danger for reprisals. Therefore much of the work must remain anonymous. Thousands of families have been helped, especially in Sudan, Iraq, and Lebanon, but we must do this very carefully. Following up the contacts gained through broadcasting is very dangerous for the writers and for ourselves. But the responses to the broadcasts are growing. I am convinced that the Muslim grip on the people is crumbling. The fanatics about which you read so much are only a vocal minority. Many people are utterly frustrated with Islam.

7. *What do you see as the possible involvement of the Canadian Reformed churches and other Reformed churches in Canada?*

These are precisely the churches which we want to have involved with the work of MERF. Only churches truly committed to the Reformed faith are welcome. It must be understood by the Reformed churches in Canada that the method of MERF is the only way presently to reach Muslims. No expatriate missionaries can function here. Muslim governments will never allow them into their territories. So we have to work with those living inside these countries.

We must also realize that the Reformed faith is the only real and viable answer to Islam. Do not come with a soft, liberal Gospel. Modern theology makes no impact on Islam, but the Reformed faith alone makes inroads!

It is time for Reformed people to say: what is the Lord doing in the Middle East? Is there any opening for us in the vast Muslim world? Yes, there is. Can we trust MERF? Yes, look at its standards, policies, and strategies. Let us not lag behind. Reformed churches in Canada can actually participate in the work through MERF. You can be there and help to make a difference under God's blessing. This is not something that is far away from you. This is our work. Together.

Perhaps you can organize in Canada a national committee so that all the churches become more involved. In addition to the Ramakers, who are from the Reformed Churches-Liberated in the Netherlands, we would like to see somebody on our staff from the Liberated churches in English-speaking countries. From temporary instructors, we may come to full-time instructors. Then you have direct involvement via your own people through the services of MERF.

By God's grace MERF has persevered, despite pressures from e.g. the Christian Reformed Church and the Presbyterian Church of America. We do not want help from churches not committed to the Reformed faith. My goal is to make MERF a service organization for the entire ICRC family of churches committed to the Reformed standards.

Eighty percent of our current support comes from individuals, and this is not the way it should be: the churches must get involved, for mission work is the task of the churches together. **C**

Interview with Rev. D. Poundstone (OPC), program coordinator for MERF.

1. *How did you come to be involved with MERF?*

As a pastor in the U.S., I have followed the work of Viktor Atallah and MERF for at least ten years. When in 1991 an elder from our congregation in Oregon became director of our denomination's foreign mission work, he began urging me to visit Cyprus to teach at a

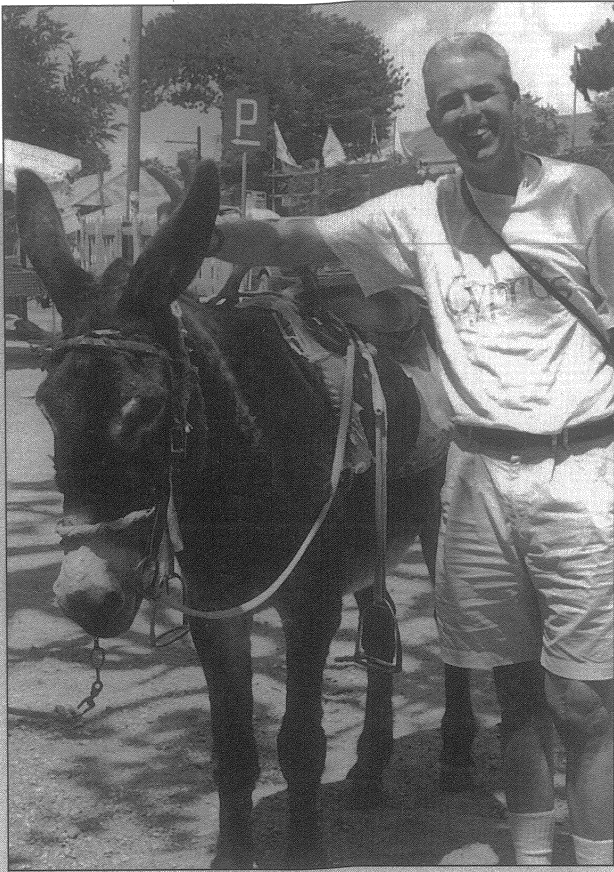
two-week study term. This I did in March 1993.

During my stay in Larnaca, he and Viktor discussed with me the possibility of my coming to help with the work full-time. When I returned to the States, I talked it over with my wife and family. After much prayer and thought, we decided to accept the call of our church

to serve in the Middle East. We arrived here in March 1994.

2. *What do you see as your task here?*

Officially I am the Coordinator of Training at the Evangelical Study Centre. In this role I seek to relieve Viktor of as much of the administrative work



*Two cypriots,
Rev. Poundstone
is on the right*

as I can. Under the direction of MERF leadership, I help arrange for instructors to come from various Reformed churches world-wide, and oversee the activities here during 9-12 study terms each year. In addition, I am the missionary-pastor of the English-language congregation of the International Evangelical Church in Larnaca.

3. How have you experienced the work here in Cyprus?

I have found the work to be most enjoyable and even exciting. Through the Evangelical Study Centre, Reformed churches in the West have a good opportunity to give Biblical doctrinal and practical assistance to ordained and

lay leaders of the indigenous Evangelical (i.e. Presbyterian) churches of the Middle East. There is real openness to the doctrine of God's sovereign grace and the historic faith of the Reformation. At the same time, we from the West can learn to appreciate the vitality and the struggle of believers in the Middle East and benefit from their insights and experience.

4. What contribution would you like to see from the Reformed churches in Canada?

We need your prayers for the blessing of God on the ministry both to the Arabic-speaking Christian leaders, and through radio in Arabic, to millions of Muslims in the region. Rev. Atallah has a fifteen-minute Gospel broadcast in Arabic three times per week. By this means, thousands of people hear the message of Christ, a truth of which most are entirely ignorant. Many responses by mail indicate that the Word is bearing fruit.

Your churches and consistories can help MERF by encouraging your pastors and other ministers to consider coming to Cyprus for two week sessions to teach at the Evangelical Study Centre. We value the solid and distinctive teaching and preaching of the Canadian Reformed churches.

Since broadcast time and program production costs are substantial, your gifts to MERF will facilitate and hasten the proclamation of the Gospel in its purity and power to the needy millions in the Arabic-speaking world. **C**

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R. Schouten

Young Offenders Act in the Church

Recently I heard from the police about a gang working my neighbourhood. The gang specializes in stealing electronic appliances from homes when the owners are away at work. The leader of this gang is a middle-age male. The interesting thing is that all the other

members of the gang are under the age of sixteen. The leader never steals a thing himself. Instead, he sends out the young people to do this work for him.

This gang leader has intelligent reasons for recruiting young people to do the actual stealing. He knows that the

young people really have nothing to lose if they are caught. Under the Young Offenders' Act (YOA) of Canada, the young thieves are largely immune from serious penalty.

In recent months, much has been written in the Canadian press about the

YOA in Canada. Notably the Reform Party of Canada has focused the spotlight on the problem of youth crime. This problem, say the Reform MPs is getting worse due to the lack of a sufficient deterrent. Young people, they say, can commit crimes without fear of consequences. They are protected by the umbrella of the YOA.

It's not my interest to now address youth crime. I would only like to ask: Is there a kind of spiritual Young Offenders' Act in the church? Do young people sometimes live in sin because they think there will not be any consequences? Is it the belief of some that they can sin with impunity because they will not have to deal with the repercussions of their behaviour?

It may even be that older folks in the church sometimes encourage this Young Offender mentality. Sometimes we hear people say things like, "O well, they have to have their fun when they are young," or, "O well, they'll change when they get older." I've even heard this line: "Maybe if he finds a good wife he'll straighten out."

With this kind of talk, the youth can hardly be blamed if they come to see their teen-age years as a time of irresponsibility. They can live as they please without being held accountable. They know that their sinful deeds will be whitewashed with the explanation that they are still young.

Insulting to teens

As a young person, don't you feel insulted to have your sins excused simply because you are young? Why should your sinful weaknesses be taken for granted because you happen to be, say, less than 20 years old? As if youth guarantees sinful living!

Indeed, it needs to be stressed that the Lord does not allow youth to serve as an excuse for sin. The Lord always deals seriously with His covenant youth. He isn't kidding around when He declares to them His promises and commandments. Because the Lord is always serious in what He says, no young person is ever exempted from the responsibility of believing His promises. Nor are they at any moment free from the obligation to obey the Lord. Not when I'm thirteen and not when I'm sixteen or nineteen can I pretend I'm not responsible to keep the holy commandments of God.

I think young people should resent anyone, whether parent or elder or teacher or friend condoning their sins

just because they are young. This sort of attitude degrades young people! As if young people don't know the Lord's promises and commandments! As if they don't know the calling to believe and obey! As a young person, I would demand that people honour my position in the church by insisting that I show consistent obedience to God.

On the other hand, if people fully expect me to behave irresponsibly, perhaps I will. If there really is an unspoken Young Offenders' Act in the church, what is there to lose? If sin has no consequences, why strive for purity and holiness? I can do what I want and nothing happens anyway. I can do what I want and all will still be well with God, with parents and with church. Especially young people might say: "O, I plan to live quite differently when I'm twenty or when I get married."

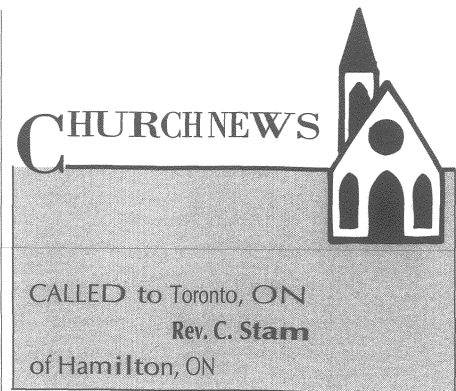
No exemptions for youth

From Scripture, it is very clear that the Lord does hold young people responsible for the way they live before Him. The youth are not exempt in any way from the calling to obey their God. If a person is old enough to understand the promises of the covenant and the commandments, then that person is responsible to believe and obey. The more you know, the more responsible you become.

And the truth is that, as Reformed young people, we know quite a lot. From earliest childhood, we hear about the incredible works of the Lord for our salvation. From day one, we are confronted by His will for our lives. With our parents, we attend worship services in which the promises of the Gospel are spelled out to us in great detail. We also attend catechism classes in which the Scriptures are further explained to us. In addition, many of us are able to attend Christian schools in which we receive further encouragement and instruction to walk in holiness.

In all these ways, the Lord addresses us as young people. He deals with us seriously. He calls us to believe and urges us to obey. Faith and repentance: this is what God demands of young people. Nor does the Lord give any indication that a failure to repent and believe will be excused for some years, say until age 25 or so.

The consequences of unbelief and sin are the same whether a person is 16 or 30 or 100. In the first place, the



sinner makes God angry. He offends God by his sin. As long as there is unrepented sin, the sinner can have no joy in God. He cannot experience any sense of the nearness of God. In addition, the unrepentant sinner, young or old, injures his conscience. A person who excuses his sin on the grounds that he is young and therefore prone to error, makes it all the easier to commit further sin. Soon a process of hardening sets in with the result that the sinner becomes completely insensitive to the will of God.

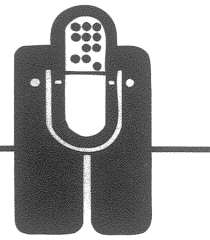
It is true that consistories are usually more patient with a young member who is blatantly disobedient than with an older brother or sister in the congregation who lives in sin. As far as official discipline is concerned, the churches tend to wait for the young person to come to maturity before they would think about excommunicating such a person.

However, in terms of consequences for God and self, there is no delay. Young offenders as well as older ones incur God's anger and risk His judgment. They also rob the themselves of much comfort and joy.

No delay

The Bible says: "Today when you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Ps. 95:7, Heb. 3:7). Today, not tomorrow. The Scriptures also say: "Seek the Lord while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near" (Isa. 55:6). Delay is dangerous. There may be no chance tomorrow. Procrastinating in faith and repentance is the devil's favourite way of taking people to hell. Before God, nobody will be able to claim the protection of a Young Offenders' Act. The excuse, "But I was only eighteen" won't stand before the holy God. **C**

By W.W.J. VanOene



This time the news will be dominated by expansion plans or plans to make changes in the place used for worship services.

We start with this in Ontario.

Our first stop is in Brampton, where the consistory received a "proposal for building expansion. The committee is requested to continue, and work out the proposal in greater detail." That is all we can report at the moment.

And now that we are in Brampton anyway, we might as well pass on that some "Guidelines for Emergency Evacuation" were given. That is a wise measure. Every congregation should do this.

Fortunately we do not have too many of such emergencies, but it is certainly mandatory that the congregation knows how to exit in case of an emergency. There is a big chance that various streams of people hastening towards an exit will collide: the one goes one way in an aisle, but mothers rushing towards the nursery bump into them, going into the opposite direction, and so cause confusion and, worse, delay in the process of evacuation. In the Langley church building arrows are affixed to the pews, showing the direction into which this particular section should go when leaving the auditorium.

My advice: Draw up a plan without delay, if you don't have one yet!

In Burlington West "the request was made whether we should not be giving consideration to the question whether we should be calling a second minister and placing this matter on the budget for 1995." This request was made during the question period at the consistory meeting.

I shall not repeat what I wrote before about the size of this congregation and the need for action. But in this connection I do want to pass on what I read in the West Australian District bulletin under "Byford."

"The last two weeks the Free Reformed Churches of West Australia have made history again. First of all a second church was instituted in our 'Great South West' with the name West Albany. . . . We congratulate the members of this new church with this institution and we pray that the office-bearers in the new congregation may be strengthened to be able to do their work in God's Church. The institution of another church means also that more members get involved with various tasks. More office-bearers are needed most likely, another Committee of Management, etc. This is stimulating for all."

It is especially to the last few sentences that I should like to draw the attention. Experience teaches us that when a new church is instituted, this is good for the "enthusiasm" of the members and also for the promotion of activity in every respect. The larger the congregation, the larger also the number of members who, although not indifferent, yet leave things up to others, and do not take part in many activities, if in any.

When a new church is instituted, more people become directly involved, and this draws more members out of their "lethargy" as they see that everyone's cooperation is needed and appreciated.

One of the greatest dangers threatening our church-life is the feeling of having arrived.: things are going well, are

running smoothly, and we can take it easy; why should we be bothered? This is detrimental.

At the same consistory meeting in Burlington West "The Future Planning Committee of *Burlington South* requested information about the availability of our facilities for worship services and other activities."

One more item from Burlington West.

"A proposal to send the same elder as delegate to classis for a period of two years was discussed and passed."

I don't know whether it is such a wise decision. Or rather, I think that it is *not* a wise decision.

According to our Church Order even when two ministers are serving a church, it is mandatory that they should be delegated alternately, not the same one for two consecutive classes or for a year. This is to prevent that the same persons always decide about things brought to a classis. It also prevents the impression that a classis is a more or less permanent "college" with the same members.

We have the good custom that as soon as a church becomes too large for one minister to serve it adequately, a split takes place so that there are two churches instead of one. Or, if a second minister is called, this is a preparatory step for a splitting up of the congregation into two autonomous churches.

Since we have no churches with two ministers, the same ministers are always at a classis. If each church delegates also the same elder every time, this prevents the infusion of "new blood," so to speak, and gives to the classes more an aura of permanent institutions with all the dangers connected with that. They are just meetings, and the more different the membership of the following classis is from that of the previous one, the better it is for the churches and for maintaining the Reformed concept of these broader assemblies.

The Burlington East consistory discussed "the subject of youth elder. After considerable discussion, concerns regarding lack of direction for the youth are clearly recognized. Consistory, however, does not feel that a youth elder is appropriate. Future discussions will be held regarding the concerns expressed."

At another occasion I already wrote about the idea of a "youth elder," and I don't want to repeat that here.

What I become more and more convinced of is that more attention should be paid to the *families*. **That's** where the problems start and are to be solved as well. If the parents do not fulfil their obligations towards their children and if they do not keep and fulfil their vows made at the baptismal font by allowing their children to do what these children should not be doing, or by allowing them to come home at any time of the night, then the *parents* should be admonished and pointed to their obligations.

It is the task of neither the office-bearers nor the schools to correct the failure of the parents to fulfil their vows and to bring up their children in the fear and discipline of the Lord.

We continue our journey, and come to Rockway.

"The Corporation of St John's Anglican served the Consistory notice to cancel the rental agreement, effective December 30, 1994. As Elders, Deacons, and Administrative Committee we met last Friday evening to begin looking for an alternative meetingplace and/or our own facilities. We

inform you of this so that as congregation everyone may be involved and help with bright ideas to find first of all an alternative meeting place."

Watford apparently did not make a firm decision regarding a new place of worship. "The great majority favour a new building, and favour the area between Watford and Kerwood." Various possibilities are still being investigated.

Although in the past I was accused of playing off the West against the East, I cannot but pass on what I found in the *Vineyard* in the report of the Local Board Teachers' College.

"Western Canada supports a major part of the College though they do not receive many benefits. 90% of graduates have taught at John Calvin School. The only school society in Ontario that supports the College directly is Orangetown. Most societies in the West support our College."

We in Abbotsford c.a. do so as a society, while also personal donations are sent from here. I see the same discrepancy when looking at the amounts that are being collected for the Women's Savings Action for the Theological College. This ought not to be so. Are we taking things for granted? I hope not.

Lincoln's consistory reported: "Collections: a letter was received from a brother and sister about the Thanksgiving collection for CRWRF. It was decided that collections during the worship services will only be for ecclesiastical matters. The great need for the work of CRWRF is acknowledged and the congregation is urged to support this important work every Sunday with the door collection."

At a subsequent meeting the above decision was upheld.

I can well find myself in this decision. More and more causes are put before us and more and more frequently our donations are requested for things that certainly are worthwhile and important, but that are not ecclesiastical matters.

Time and again I read about such requests, and no one doubts the importance of the causes presented or the great need there is in this whole world. But now there is another light at the horizon: London received a "Letter requesting support from Foundation Support Reformation Austria."

When I read this, I felt the urge to scan all the bulletins again and to make up a list of all requests received by the churches thus far, but I resisted this urge. It reminded me, however, of the famous flour bag: even when it has been emptied and you hit it with a stick, still some flour flies out into all directions. In other words: Knock at the door of the churches, beat their wallets with another stick, and you get something out of it again.

In practically every bulletin I read that the voluntary contributions were so much behind the budget that urgent appeals had to be issued to the members to be faithful in contributing. At the moment of this writing there are still two months to go till the end of the year, but I have my doubts regarding the meeting of the budgets in several congregations.

And then there are the schools. Especially in Ontario the financial burdens which the parents have taken upon themselves are heavy, as no subsidy whatsoever is received. The bulletins contain urgent requests to help work away the many thousands of dollars the societies are "in the hole." To me that comes first. As long as parents have to pay anywhere from six to ten thousand dollars per year to have their children receive Reformed instruction, the majority of the requests for financial support should be returned with enclosures: the budgets of some of our schools, plus the fee-structure.

Before we go to London again, we mention that in Grand Rapids "The question of the handshake before and after the worship service will require further discussion on a latter date."

In the *Pilgrim's Voice* I read something I never heard of before: that a minister was summoned for possible jury duty. I always thought that ministers were exempt from that because of their office. Rev. Ludwig, however, did receive a summons.

"On Tuesday (Sept. 6) it looks as though I may not be available at the manse seeing that I have received a summons to juror."

And in the next issue we read "This Monday I will not be available again seeing that my summons for jury duty extends over three consecutive Mondays. Up to this point I have not been chosen but all potential jurors are still required to be present in the courtroom in case that should happen yet. As the Justice put it: 'Your tour of duty is not yet over.'"

A final note from Ontario: Elora's "consistory decides to sing the Apostles' Creed twice a month." May the congregation join the consistory in this?

Returning to the building activities, we learned from the Taber bulletin that "Church Council strongly feels that we do need facilities of our own and Church Council is thankful for the large amount pledged; however, it does not feel that this amount is adequate to immediately proceed building as the amount to be borrowed would raise our future budgets by at least \$ 15,000.00 per year."

Aldergrove has succeeded in finding suitable property. "We are thankful to be able to find a property outside of the A.L.R. (Agricultural Land Reserve, VO) of two-and-a-half acres and a suitable home for a future pastor. We can possibly build a church on this property in the future."

At the moment there are no concrete plans for building, as far as I know.

Expansion of another kind can be reported from Vernon. Rev. Moes wrote:

"The summer holidays are over and school has once again begun. We wish both teachers and students the blessing of the Lord as they embark on a new school year together. In this connection, we congratulate the Canadian Reformed School Society of Vernon with the official opening of the new school (at this time still in the Seventh Day Adventist School)."

We complete our journey in the Maranatha Church of Surrey. During the Question Period a suggestion "that the deacons keep a register of 'Job Postings' was received favourably. Congregational members are encouraged to inform the deacons of any available positions. Others can in this way register for possible employment."

I would like to close with a quotation from the Providence Edmonton bulletin.

"It is better to be despised for the right than praised for the wrong."

Faithfully Yours
VO

P.S. This is one of the last newsmedleys that will appear. Our contributions will come to an end when the new year begins. Perhaps one will not come in in time for the last issue of 1994, depending on the number of bulletins I will still receive, and therefore find a place yet in a 1995 issue. We'll see.

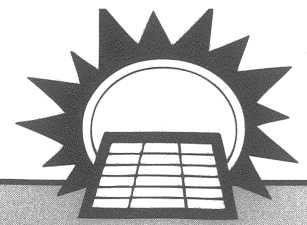
I wish to thank wholeheartedly all who for more than twenty years sent me faithfully or occasionally the material for this column. I am also most grateful for the personal messages that sometimes were enclosed.

What I'll miss most of all is the opportunity to "live along" with the weal and woe of the churches, seeing that we have so many bonds with so many members in so many different places. But to all things there is an end.

This is an advance warning. I'll save my last remarks for the last time.

VO 

RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving;

1 Timothy 4:4a

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

God created the heaven and the earth. This is a long time ago. With the fall into sin the life in paradise came to an end. The perfect happiness that had been there got lost. Sin came into the world, with all its consequences.

That does not mean that there is nothing life of all the beautiful things that the Lord had created. There are still many things left that we may enjoy. And those are not only the things in nature, the plant life, the wildlife, the mountains and the rivers. There is much more than that. For in the way the Lord created man, He gave him the possibilities to explore and to invent. We can see that today. There are cars, fast airplanes, beautiful ships, and all kinds of sophisticated equipment. Time and again people are sent into space, we can use telephone and fax machines. In a matter of seconds messages are sent all over the world. In the computer we can put so much information that it almost scares us.

When you serve the Lord with all your heart, it is not so difficult to see God, the Creator in all the beautiful nature around us. But when we look at all the technical things, then it becomes a little more difficult. Especially when the people of the world give all the credit to the smart people who invented it all. It becomes more difficult yet, when we see or read about all the wicked things that are done through all these inventions. We all know that in the movies and on the TV things happen that are not pleasing to the Lord. It is not pleasing to the Lord either when we watch programs like that. There are many ways in which the world abuses the modern inventions because they do not want to see God, the Creator, as the real Inventor of everything.

So what does that mean for us? Do we have to stay away from everything that is available in the world to make our work easier, or to spend our leisure time? No, that is not what the Lord tells us. But we have to be very careful. It is sometimes very tempting to do something of which we know we do not have much to do at night, it is sometimes so tempting to turn on the TV or rent a video and watch something in which the commandments of the Lord are disobeyed.

Yet the Lord gives guidelines on how we have to live, and what we are allowed to do. Paul tells us those guidelines in this Bible verse. He says everything is good "if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." When

we remember those words, it becomes much easier to make decisions. When we can thank the Lord for what we are going at work, or at home, for what we are reading and watching and saying, then it is consecrated, that means it is blessed. When we know that our actions of the day are blessed by the Lord, then we can also pray to the Lord before we go to sleep at night. Then we ask Him for His blessing, and thank Him for all the things we were allowed to do. But if we do things for which we cannot thank the Lord, how can we pray to Him? If we know that we do not deserve His blessing, how can we go to sleep at night?

Let us thank the Lord for the life He gave us. Let us thank Him for His beautiful creation, and for the possibilities of all the impressive inventions. Let us thank Him for the talents which He gave to us, and let us try to find ways to use those talents in His service. Everyone of us has some special talent. Everyone of us can do something, even if it is hardly noticed by most people around us. Even if it is only that we show to the people with whom we are in contact that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. And that all those who acknowledge that, and who receive everything with thanksgiving to Him, do not have a worry in their lives. For God sent His Son down to the earth. And the Son restored the creation into perfection again. It will be there for all those who serve Him. On the day of His return we will be with Him in eternal happiness.

*The LORD shows love to him
Who hates and flees from sin.
His saints the LORD will ever
From wicked men deliver.
Behold, both joy and light
Will dawn for the upright.
Thank Him with heart and voice,
In His great Name rejoice.
In His great Name rejoice,
And glory in His might.*

Psalm 97:6

December is still the month in which we do not have to send any birthday cards, for my December list is blank.

Until next month,

Mrs. R. Ravensbergen
7462 Hwy 20, RR 1
Smithville, ON, L0R 2A0

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Esteemed brother,

About a year ago an announcement was published in "Clarion" (November 19, 1993; page 500) from the American Reformed Fellowship under the heading "Church News" without a qualification from the editor. Seeing that it was printed under this heading ("Church News") the editor made it seem as if this announcement was of general interest to the churches and that the content met with the approval of editor.

I believe that the invitation "to worship" in Palmetto, Florida is not in the general interest of the churches. Neither is it in obedience to God's Word that brothers and sisters are invited to meet in a place where there is no church and are invited to forsake their task and duty in the church of which they ought to be a living member.

I like you to consider the following points and examine the invitation to worship in Palmetto in accordance with God's Word, the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order.

1. It is clear that what is called "Fellowship" may not be associated with "Church." We have agreed that there is no church where there is not a consistory (Art 38 Church Order). It is also highly unlikely that a church can be instituted there, seeing that those going to Palmetto are "snowbirds" and go home from April till October (according to the newsletter from these brothers and sisters as reported in "Clarion" Dec. 1992).

2. In the Church Order (Art. 52) we have agreed that **the consistory shall call the congregation together for worship twice on the Lord's Day.** This decision is based on our knowledge of God's Holy Word (Hebrews 10:24, 25) and follows proper Reformed tradition. The invitation in "Clarion" appears to be a call to disobey the consistories under whose supervision the brothers and sisters have been placed by Christ.

3. By not attending the worship services at home and being out of town for several months at the time, the brothers and sisters in Palmetto withdraw themselves from the supervision by the consistory and so in fact withdraw themselves from the church of which they are (were?) members; see Art. 28 Belgic Confession.

4. What about attending the Lord's Supper during the summer when the consistory cannot attest to the life and doctrine of the brothers and sisters for a good part of the year?

In the ongoing debate with the OPC and the Independent Churches we emphasize that it is the responsibility of the local consistory to decide who should be admitted to the Lord's Supper, based on either (1) the good life and doctrine of the member, as known by the elders, or (2) an attestation from a sister church. It seems to be unreasonable to expect from a consistory to make a decision regarding admittance to the Lord's Supper when dealing with a brother or sister who has chosen not to be a part of the congregation for several months so that neither of the above requirements for admittance can be met.

5. Those who can afford to choose living away from home for several months at the time, how do they employ their gifts among the fellow believers with whom they form one body? How to share their knowledge and experience when they are absent during the season when Bible Study societies meet? Does the church not need the expertise and knowledge of those who would have the time to instruct the young members of the church? How do they instruct your (grand)children and set an example to the rest of the (younger) members of the church? If it is OK for some older members not to attend church for several months, would they want that to be the norm for all the members of the church, leaving the minister and the elders potentially over-seeing and preaching to empty pews?

6. The brothers and sisters in Florida deprive themselves from the blessing that is received when the minister speaks the benediction; I trust you to agree that this blessing is an essential part of our worship. **The consistory calls** us to receive this blessing (Art. 52 Church Order); no group of people should invite church members to disobey this call from the consistory.

7. When not attending worship services one's faith will not be strengthened by the use of the sacraments. Someone may argue: "When we read a sermon or listen to a tape, the Holy Spirit will also work in our hearts." If that would be correct, then the church

has no reason anymore to exist. Such a position makes for the mixed (unbiblical) message to our children: "If you think you need a church for your Sunday worship, that's all right. For myself, I think I can do without." Please refer to Lord's Day 25; Question and Answer 65 Heidelberg Catechism. The message in this answer is:

A. If you do not attend the services where the gospel is preached you prevent the Holy Spirit from working faith in your heart. Therefore church attendance (sometimes referred to as: the workshop of the Holy Spirit) is of the utmost importance.

B. If you do not witness or take part in the sacraments, baptism and The Lord's Supper, you prevent the Holy Spirit from strengthening your faith.

It seems inconceivable that a living member of the church would choose to deprive him or herself from the blessings to be received on Sundays and would reject the gifts of the Holy Spirit who builds and strengthens one's faith.

Three "guest ministers" were scheduled to be in Palmetto in the spring of 1994, but regardless how many ministers will spend time in Palmetto and speak an edifying word, I believe that, based on the above, choosing to withdraw from one's "home-church" is contrary to what God demands from us. Hopefully those ministers would urge the brothers and sisters to be active members of the "church" rather than "experience fellowship" without church.

To make church membership a seasonal affair, listening to a minister, to tapes or reading sermons for several months, while paying regular contributions and appearing on the membership list does not make a person a living member of the church, the body of Christ. Instead, we are required to be living members of the church in full obedience to God's Word, letting the Holy Spirit work through the preaching and the sacraments and using one's gifts for the upbuilding of the congregation. That is the obedience required from us all. Such obedience out of faith will bear fruit and will benefit the church. Then worshipping will be to the glory of God's name.

Providing you agree that the above opinion is not a personal preference, but an opinion based on God's Word, it

would be edifying and of general interest to the churches to have a next announcement about Palmetto accompanied by a (biblical) editorial comment.

Yours sincerely,
J. Vanderveen
Houston, B.C.

Editor's reaction: *The announcement did not belong under "Church News."*

Dear Editor,

In the October 7th issue of Clarion you printed the letter of Dr. P. Janson with respect to the one cup at Holy Supper. He referred to Rev. Van Oene's remarks in a "News Medley," where this minister took the position that he would refuse to celebrate the Lord's Supper in any congregation where individual cups were used.

It is about time that we, in our Canadian Reformed churches get some sanity in this issue. Although Dr. Janson gave a well prepared presentation for the one cup, even to the extent that the individual cups were used to maintain apartheid in South Africa, every one of his arguments could be easily opposed from publications which would favour the individual cups.

We all know that the original Lord's Supper was attended only by about a dozen people, which since that time has grown into congregations of 500 or more. Most of our congregations which still celebrate the Lord's Supper with 6 or 7 table settings have at least 4 large silverplated cups to go around each table. So much then for the one cup! It becomes then a matter of numbers. Four is O.K., but forty or two hundred is

not? And the material used for the container is really of no consequence, whether it is metal or glass.

And if we must follow the first Lord's (or Last) Supper literally, why doesn't the minister break a piece off the whole loaf, and hand it to the individual members. I have never seen this happen, although I know that some churches to practice this custom, where the loaf of bread is passed around.

We should practice a bit of toleration within our Church Federation and leave the method of the celebration of the Lord's Supper up to the local congregation. I could give a number of reasons why I now like to stay in my pew. We now have a full sermon, and the celebration is very dignified and orderly. The whole congregation eats and drinks together. There are no 6 or 7 repetitions of the celebration, which may become very boring for small children. And again, this is a matter of local preference like in a good number of our sister churches in the northern part of the Netherlands. And the number is growing in the Canadian Reformed churches.

The only influence Rev. Van Oene or Dr. Janson should have is in their own respective congregations. There are much more urgent issues to talk or write about.

Sincerely,
Arie J. Hordyk

Dear Editor,

In response to "Giving thanks in the Fall," my question is: Why do we not give thanks to God on Thanksgiving Day in all the Canadian Reformed churches? The government of Canada

set that day aside to give us the opportunity to express our thanks to God for all the blessings received. Most churches in Canada come together on Thanksgiving Day to honour God in preaching, prayer, and songs of praise in gratitude to Him who blessed the land. What better Thanksgiving Day can we have than one with first the proclamation of God's Word and then to be united as a Christian family, together with children and grandparents, for a good dinner in thankfulness and joy?

The Canadian Reformed churches have made Thanksgiving Day into a sports day, a hunting and shooting day, a fish derby day, a car or bicycle racing day, a jogging day. The Christian Reformed churches keep to the tradition to honour God on Thanksgiving Day in preaching, prayer, and the singing of Psalms. Something is missing in the Canadian Reformed churches. There is a cold undercurrent of religious materialism. The Canadian Reformed people cannot be bothered by the fact that hundred years ago "Thanksgiving Day was set aside to honour God for all the blessings received and to express thanks and glory to God? It is now their sports day. You may hear a few words from the pulpit on Sunday. But the meaning of Thanksgiving Day is that God wants His honour on this day.

E.A. Numan

Editor's Comment: *I wholeheartedly agree with you that also the Canadian and American Reformed churches should give thanks to the Lord for harvest and labour in a worship service on Thanksgiving Day.* C

PRESS RELEASES



Classis Pacific, Oct. 4 and Oct. 25, 1994 held at Langley, B.C.

Opening: On behalf of the convening church, Port Kells, the Rev. E. Kampen requested that we sing Ps. 122:1,2,3, he read Dt. 16:16-20 and Dt. 17:8-13, after which he led in prayer.

Rev. Kampen then noted that the church at Houston called Candidate J. Louwse and that he accepted the call. He congratulated Aldergrove with the fact that Candidate Dr. J. Boersma ac-

cepted the call extended to him. He noted that Rev. D. VanderBoom recently celebrated forty years in the ministry. He observed that Rev. W.M. Wielenga was unable to attend, and welcomed Rev. J.D. Wielenga and Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer as delegates from Regional Synod West. He noted that Rev. DeBoer received a call from Byford, Australia.

Credentials: The church at Lynden noted that all the churches were duly

represented. There were three instructions, namely, from Surrey, Vernon and Smithers.

Constitution: Classis was constituted and the suggested officers took their places.

- Chairman: Rev. M.H. VanLuik
 - Vice-Chairman: Rev. C.J. VanderVelde
 - Clerk: Rev. J. Visscher
- Rev. VanLuik thanked the church at Port Kells for the preparatory work done.

Agenda: After some additions the agenda was adopted.

Peremptory examination: Candidate J. Louwerse delivered his sermon proposal on Ps. 122. After discussion it was decided that there were no objections to continuing with the examination. The examination continued with examination in the following fields: Old Testament by Rev. E. Kampen on Ps. 65 and Neh. 1; New Testament by Rev. M.H. VanLuik on Mt. 7:1-20 and 1 Cor. 1:1-17; Knowledge of Scripture by Rev. J. Visscher (using the material prepared by Rev. W.M. Wielenga); Doctrine and Creeds by Rev. J. Visscher; Church History by Rev. C.J. VanderVelde; Ethics by Rev. J. Moesker; Church Polity by Rev. D. Moes; Diaconology by Rev. C. VanSpronsen. After discussion it was decided that the examination was satisfactory.

Approbation of call and Subscription Forms: After scrutiny of the pertinent documents, the call was approbated. The chairman congratulated Candidate Louwerse with the outcome of the examination, after which the chairman read the Form for Subscription and Br. Louwerse promised to abide by it and to sign it at the next Classis. Rev. J. Moesker was appointed to represent the churches of Classis Pacific at the ordination of Br. Louwerse.

Correspondence Received:

- A letter from the church at Houston requesting the examination of Candidate J. Louwerse.
- A letter from the church at Aldergrove requesting the examination of Candidate Dr. J. Boersma. It was decided to reconvene Classis for that business on Oct. 25, 1994.
- Two appeals were dealt with. A response will be sent.

Instructions from churches:

- The church at Smithers requested another date and location for Classis Spring in connection with a mission meeting. It was decided that Smithers propose this matter again at Classis December. The church at Smithers requested pulpit supply one Sunday per month. This was granted.
- The church at Surrey requested that the spring Classis be held during the third week of April. This was granted.
- The church at Vernon asked for and received advice in its dealings with the Orthodox Reformed Church at Kelowna.

Reports:

- The church for auditing the books of the treasurer reported that the Clas-

sis fund and the needy churches fund were in good order.

- The Committee for financial aid to Students for the Ministry reported that there were no needy students.
- The Committee for Needy Churches reported that at this time there are no needy churches.
- A church visit report by Rev. Moesker and Rev. Visscher to the church at Vernon was read.
- The deputies for examinations reported on their activities.

Question Period ad Art 44: At this time advice was given to the church at Port Kells in the matter of attestations.

Appointments:

- Convening church for next Classis: Smithers
Place: Langley
Date: Dec. 13, 1994; alternate date: April 18, 1995
- Suggested officers: Chairman: Rev. C.J. VanderVelde
Vice-Chairman: Rev. J. Visscher
Clerk: Rev. J. Moesker
- Delegates to Regional Synod West Dec. 6, 1994 were appointed. As *primi* delegates the following brothers: H.A. Berends, T. VanPopta, J. Pruijm, L. Stam. As *secundi* delegates the following brothers in the following order: J. VanLaar, H. Schouten, H. Bosscher, P. deBoer.

The following ministers were appointed as *primi* delegates: J. Moesker, J. Visscher, E. Kampen, C. VanSpronsen. The following ministers were appointed in the following order as *secundi* delegates: M.H. VanLuik, W.M. Wielenga, D. Moes, C.J. VanderVelde.

Question Period: Several questions were raised.

Censure ad Art 44 CO: Opportunity was given for this.

The Acts of Classis were read and adopted. The Press Release was read and adopted. The chairman requested that Ps. 87:1,2 be sung, after which he led in prayer and adjourned the meeting.

Oct. 25

Opening: The chairman, Rev. VanLuik, reconvened Classis on Oct. 25 by requesting that we sing Ps. 147: 1,4, he then read Lk. 4:14-37, and led in prayer. He welcomed all the delegates, as well as the delegates from Regional Synod West, Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar and Rev. J.D. Wielenga. The moderamen noted that all the churches were duly represented.


Peremptory examination: Candidate J. Boersma delivered his sermon proposal on Mt. 11:2-6. After discussion it was decided that there were no objections to continuing with the examina-

tion. The examination continued with examination in the following fields: Old Testament by Rev. Kampen on Neh. 1 and Ps. 65; New Testament by Rev. VanLuik on 1 Cor. 1:1-17 and Mt. 7:1-20; Knowledge of Scripture by Rev. Visscher (using the material prepared by Rev. Wielenga); Doctrine and Creeds by Rev. Visscher; church History by Rev. VanderVelde; Ethics by Rev. Moesker; Church Polity by Rev. Moes; Diaconology by Rev. VanSpronsen. After discussion it was decided that the examination was satisfactory.

Approbation of Call and Signing of Subscription Form: After scrutiny of the pertinent documents, the call was approbated. The chairman congratulated Candidate Boersma with the outcome of the examination, after which the chairman read the Form for Subscription, and Br. Boersma signed it. The church at Langley was appointed to send a representative on behalf of Classis Pacific to the ordination of Br. Boersma.

Question Period: No questions were raised but at this time Br. H.A. Berends, on behalf of the church at Aldergrove, thanked Classis for the preaching arrangements during the time of vacancy, as did Br. Hansma on behalf of the church at Houston.

The Acts for the meeting of Oct. 25 were read and adopted; the Press Release for the meeting was read and adopted. The chairman requested that Ps. 149: 3,4 be sung, after which the vice-chairman led in prayer, and the chairman closed the meeting.

On behalf of Classis,
C.J. VanderVelde, vice-chairman. 

**Classis Ontario North,
June 10, 1994**

^{Sept. 16,} On behalf of the convening church of Grand Valley, Rev. P. Aasman opened the meeting. He asked the brothers to sing Ps. 29:1,3, read from Habakkuk 3, and led in prayer.

Since the credentials, examined by the delegates of the church at Fergus, were found to be in good order, Classis was constituted. The following officers were appointed to serve Classis: Chairman – Rev. J.G. Slaa, Clerk – Rev. J. Huijgen, Vice-Chairman – Rev. P.G. Feenstra.

In his opening notes Rev. Slaa thanked the convening church for the work done in preparation of Classis. The guests were welcomed. Rev. Pol, his wife and father were given a special word of welcome.

The chairman noted that since the last Classis several sad developments

had taken place. Rev. Gleason resigned as pastor of the church of Toronto and the church at Lower Sackville withdrew from the federation. He remembered those brothers and sisters who remain in the Sackville area and he wished the church at Toronto guidance in the course ahead of them.

Classis then proceeded to the colloquium with Rev. Pol. Since the relevant documents were found to be in good order Rev. Berends and Rev. Nederveen spoke with Rev. Pol about the doctrine and polity of the Canadian Reformed Churches (Article 5 C.O.). After reading the Form of Subscription, the chairman requested Rev. Pol to sign it. Rev. Pol agreed to do so. The Vice-Chairman led the brothers in prayer of thanksgiving and the members of Classis were given opportunity to congratulate Rev. Pol.

Since it was ascertained that the proper announcements had been made in Guelph and that the congregation had given its approval to the call, Classis formally approved the call of Rev. Pol to the church at Guelph. The church at Fergus was appointed to represent Classis at the installation service.

The following reports were received:

- a. From the church at Burlington West for auditing the books of the treasurer.
- b. From the church at Guelph regarding financial aid to students for the ministry.
- c. From the church at Fergus appointed to audit the books of the fund for needy students.
- d. From the Committee for Needy Churches
- e. From the church at Orangeville appointed to audit the books of the Committee for Needy Churches.

The Committee for Needy Churches recommended that Classis instruct the churches to budget for 1995 the amount of \$21.95 per communicant member to support the needy churches. This recommendation was approved.

A report from the brothers appointed by Classis to visit the church at Lower Sackville was read and discussed.

A church visitation report to the church at Grand Valley was read and received with thankfulness.

Question period according to Art. 44 of the Church Order was held. Several churches asked advice in matters of discipline.

The church at Toronto requested that Rev. Berends be appointed as their counsellor. This request was granted. Pulpit supply for one Sunday per month was approved upon Toronto's request. The church at Toronto also asked a question regarding the distribution of the Acts of Classis to members of the congregation. Classis gave the following advice:

1. Normally the Acts available upon request of any member.
2. Confidential Acts are distributed separately and are not meant for every member.

A letter from the church at Burlington East regarding invitations for observers from the Free Church of Scotland. Classis decided to establish the following guidelines:

1. Give the observers the floor sometime during the meeting to address Classis;
2. Allow the brothers to stay during closed sessions;
3. If an invitation from the Free Church of Scotland Presbytery for observers is extended to the Classis Ontario North, appoint an observer and an alternate to attend. This delegation should be done on a rotating basis.

Classis decided to include these guidelines in the regulations.

Letter from Burlington South regarding Lower Sackville was dealt with. After some discussion it was agreed unanimously that the clerk should write to the Covenant Church at Lower Sackville a letter containing:

- a. Expression of regret about the decision taken.
 - b. Attempt to come to reconciliation.
- Classis finished updating the Regulations.

The church at Guelph was appointed convening church for next Classis. The suggested date was set for December 9, 1994. The suggested officers for next Classis: J.L. Van Popta – Chairman; J.G. Slaa – Clerk; G. Nederveen – Vice-Chairman. Church visitors and examiners were appointed. Brother H. Bouwman of Fergus was appointed to the Committee for Needy Churches as treasurer. The church at Fergus was appointed to audit the books of the Committee for Needy Churches. All other appointments remained the same as in September 1993.

The following ministers were appointed as delegates to Regional Synod: C. Bosch, W. Den Hollander, J. Huijgen, G. Visscher. Alternates: P.G. Feenstra, B. Berends, G. Nederveen, A. Pol (in that order).

The following elders were appointed to Regional Synod: H. Harsevoort, L. Kampen, H. Scholtens, K. Sikkema. Alternates: C. Nobels, G. Nordeman, H. Bouwman, L. Lodder (in that order).

Question period was held. Censure was not necessary. The Acts were adopted and the press release was approved. The members of Classis were requested to sing Hy. 58:1,2 after which Rev. Huijgen closed in prayer. C

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

One grey day in November, you may like to try these fun and surprising science activities! Can you lift a floating ice cube out of a glass of water using just one end of a piece of string?

Can you pull two broomsticks together even if your strongest friends are trying to hold them apart?

Here are the instructions.

ICE FISHING

You need:
 a piece of string about 15 cm long
 salt
 a glass of cold water
 an ice cube

1. Lay one end of the string across the top of the ice cube and sprinkle a little bit of salt on it.

- Count slowly to 10, then gently lift the string. You have caught an ice cube!

How Does It Work?

Water freezes at 0* C. When you add salt to the water, the freezing temperature becomes lower than that. If there is a lot of salt in the water, it has to get quite a bit lower than 0*C before it will freeze. When you put salt on the ice cube, you lower the freezing temperature. The ice cube melts a little on the top, and a bit of water forms on the cube. The string sinks in the water. But now, salt and water are mixing together. So it doesn't have to be so cold to freeze. The ice refreezes, which traps the string. As soon as it's hard enough, you can lift out the ice cube by lifting the string. This all happens in the time it takes you to count slowly to ten!

STRONGMAN'S SECRET

(This would be great for at a birthday party!)

You need:

- 2 brooms
- a strong rope or piece of clothes line at least 3 m long.

- Ask two friends to hold the broomsticks about 30 cm apart, and challenge a third friend to pull them together. When your friend has admitted defeat, you try it.
- Tie one end of the rope securely around one broomstick.
- Wind the rope around the two broomsticks, back and forth like a zig zag, about four times.
- Pull the free end of the rope. No matter how hard your two friends pull, you can easily draw the broomsticks together.

How does it work?

By winding the rope around the broomsticks, you used technology. What does that big word mean?

It's the use of tools, materials, machines and techniques to make work easier. In this activity, wrapping the rope increases your pulling power. This system of using a rope to increase your strength is called a block and tackle. You may have seen a pulley being used at a construction site for lifting heavy things.

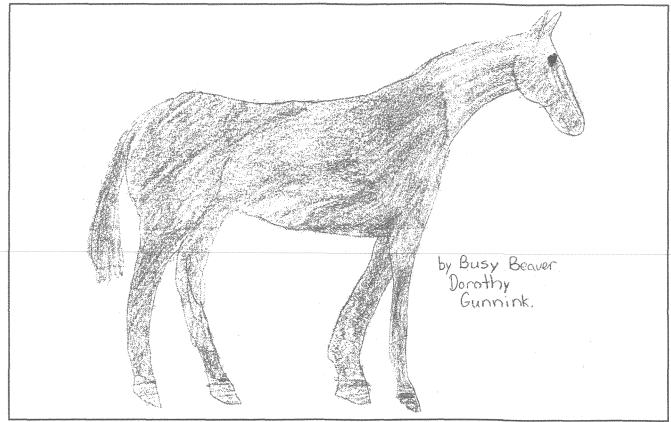
Quiz Time!

ANIMAL WORD SEARCH

By Busy Beaver Tracy Breukelman

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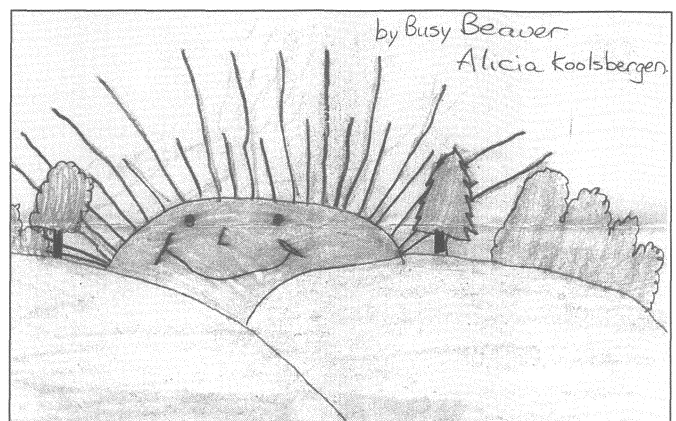


By Busy Beaver *Dorothy Gunnink*

JESUS TAUGHT THE DISCIPLES

Jesus spent much time teaching His disciples so that they could take over when he left the earth. Answer these questions about what Jesus taught the disciples.

1. What was the only thing Jesus told his disciples to take on missions trips? Mark 6:8.
2. What were the disciples to do if they were not welcome in a place? Mark 6:11.
3. What were the disciples to do on their mission? Luke 9:2.
4. What do we call the prayer Jesus taught his disciples? Matthew 6:9-13.
5. How did Jesus tell his disciples to treat others? Matthew 7:12.
6. To what two things did Jesus compare the disciples? Matthew 5:13-16.
7. To what did Jesus compare his relationship with his disciples? John 15:5.
8. What did Jesus use to teach his disciples humility? Matthew 18:1-2.
9. What did Jesus say he was leaving with the disciples? John 14:27.
10. What did Jesus tell his disciples to use as a remembrance of his body? Luke 22:19.
11. What did Jesus tell the disciples to do if they loved him? John 14:15.



By Busy Beaver *Alicia Koolsbergen*

PICTURE CODE

by Busy Beaver *Candace Schuurman*

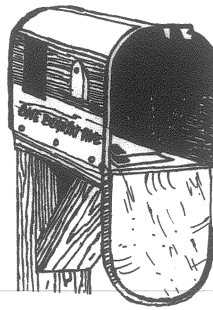
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FROM THE MAILBOX

Hi, *Michelle Linde!* It was good to hear from you again. Are you all settled into your new house? Is it much different from your old one? Where did you go camping with your aunt and uncle? How is Grade Three going? Hope to hear from you soon. Bye, Michelle.

Hello, *Alicia Koolsbergen.* Thank you for the beautiful, bright pictures you drew and sent me. I hope to get a letter from you again some time! Bye.


Hi, *Dorothy Gunnink.* How are you settling in your new place? Do you like it in Winnipeg? Thanks for the horse picture. Bye.

Hello, *Alicia Janssens.* Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club. I hope you enjoy doing the puzzles and other activities. When is your birthday? Your brother and sister may join, but I'd like to hear from them! Bye, Alicia!

That's all for this time, Busy Beavers!

Answer to Picture Code:

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

Love to you all from
 Aunt Betty 

We thank the Lord for granting us another one of his covenant children, a healthy son, whom we have named

CALEB LANE

Born September 22nd, 1994

A brother for *Benjamin*

Rudy & Cindy
 Vanderbrugghen
 (nee Vandersluis)

RR 1

4020 Spring Creek Road
 Vineland, ON L0R 2C0

Every good endowment and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of Lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

James 1:17

With thankfulness to the Father of lights, Who is the giver of every good and perfect gift, we announce with joy the birth of our first child

EDWIN WALTER

Born on August 16, 1994

Reverend Kenneth and
 Brenda Kok

118 Hilltop Road
 Norristown, PA 19401

~ Psalm 144:12 ~

Stieva (nee Bouwman)
 – Bryan and Catherine thank the Lord for enriching our marriage with the birth of our third child, a daughter.

ELEANOR TRUDY

was born on September 28, 1994.

A sister for *Madeline Grace* and
Zachary Eric.

3rd Grandchild for
 Eric and Grace Stieva

19th Grandchild for
 Jake and Trudy Bouwman
 275 Big Creek Road
 Caledonia, ON N3W 2G9

With thankfulness to the Lord, who has blessed us with a third child, we joyfully announce the birth of

LORI ANNE

Little sister for *Bruce* and *Dianna*

Andrew & Betty Ann
 Leyenhorst
 (nee van der Meulen)

September 28, 1994

45135 Balmoral Avenue
 Sardis, BC V2R 3G8

With great thankfulness to the Lord for His many blessings, we joyfully announce the birth of our son

RYAN ADRIAN

Born September 24, 1994

A brother for *Madelyn*

Rick and Michelle Nordeman
 (nee Oostdyk)

2050 Upper Middle Road
 Unit 61, Burlington, ON L7P 3R9

With thankfulness to the LORD who brought us together we

JUDITH POPPE

and

DEREK DEWITT

joyfully announce our
 engagement.

September 1, 1994

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Make me to know Thy ways, O LORD; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day long. Psalm 25:4,5

After a period of illness, but at His appointed time, the Lord took unto Himself, my beloved wife, our dear mother and grandmother

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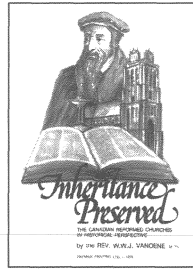
For Enquiries, please contact

D. Veltkamp, chairman
12 Wilhelmina Ave.
Launceston, Tas. 7250
Australia
ph +61 03 341380

Applications to be lodged with

Mr. J. Everts, secretary
Free Reformed School Association (Tas.) Inc.
14 George Street
Perth, Tas. 7300
Australia

Applications close 15 December 1994



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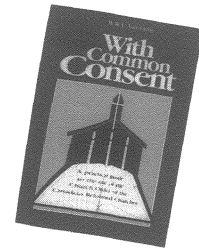
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Further information may be obtained from the

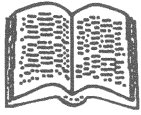
Chairman of the Board,
Mr. J. Mulder
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Applications should be directed to:

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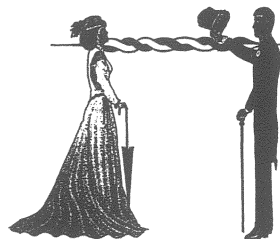
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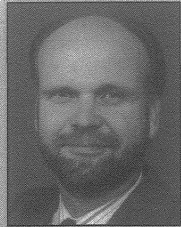
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