

**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
Volume 29, No. 6 March 22, 1980



## ROOTS

The dignified West Hall of University College in Toronto saw an interesting gathering for a few days in February. A conference was held on the history of Dutch immigration to North America. Scholars from Leiden, Nijmegen, Holland (Michigan), Grand Rapids, Calgary, Toronto, and a few places between, were together to discuss the migration patterns of Dutch people to North America especially in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Focal points were the emigration of Dutch Calvinists to the United States in the nineteenth century and the broader emigration to Canada after the Second World War. As far as the last movement was concerned, something unforgettable happened. After a history professor of York University had given some comments about Dutch war brides, the one lady after the other arose from the audience, declared herself to be a so-called Dutch war bride and attacked the learned speaker in a captivating manner because of his generalizing remarks about some aspects of the relation between Canadian soldiers and Dutch civilians after World War Two.

The first lectures were immediately of direct interest for the lover of church history. Dr. Pieter R.D. Stokvis of the University of Leiden spoke about Dutch emigration patterns of the 1840's in European perspective. Dr. Robert P. Swierenga of Kent State University gave a statistical profile of the Dutch labour migration during the period 1835-1880. Dr. Herbert J. Brinks of Calvin College told about letters from emigrants, while Dr. C. Smits of our Reformed Pedagogic Academy of Groningen showed his detailed and engaged knowledge about "Secession, Quarrels, Emigration, and Personalities."

During this part of the conference I learned a lot about the economic and social aspects of the emigration of our seceded brothers and sisters, the people of the "Afscheiding" (1834) in The Netherlands. From my youth I had heard about the persecution of the Seceders during the reign of King William I and about their desire to find freedom of religion and freedom to educate their children according to God's Word and in agreement with the Reformed confession. A modern scholar like Dr. Swierenga takes a different approach. He gave tables about the potato production in The Netherlands 1842-1860 and you see the sudden drop in thousands of hectoliters (100 mudden), from 18,800 in 1844 to 4,450 in 1845. You realize the impact of the potato blight of 1845-1847 that brought The Netherlands to the brink of famine. Dutch working-class families subsisted on potatoes, sometimes eating three potato meals a day. The Dutch were second only to Ireland in per capita potato consumption. You see before your eyes the potato eaters of Vincent van Gogh, and you understand a little what it meant that the fungus blight struck in 1845 and wiped out three quarters of the crop. Dr. Swierenga is of the opinion that the clay regions of The Netherlands experienced the heaviest overseas migration, because the agricultural crisis of 1845-1847 hit hardest in these areas.

When a theologian hears these data, he is inclined to picture not only the economic, but also the ecclesiastical, situation. There were more congregations of the "Afscheiding" in Groningen than, e.g., in North Holland, and therefore the persecuted Seceders of Groningen outnumbered those in North Holland.

Let me give another example. Over 80 percent of all emigrant farm *labourers* in the period 1835-1880 originated in the clay soil regions, compared to only 24 percent of the farmer emigrants. In sharp contrast, 65 percent of the emigrant *farmers* tilled sandy soil, compared to only 16 percent of the farm labourers. When I read this, I thought: no wonder, the rich clay farmers in Groningen stayed within the Netherlands Reformed Church, while in Gelderland sandy soil farmers chose rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin (Hebrews 11:25). Economy is not everything. Nevertheless, it is evident that economic factors played an important role. Of the 250,000 Hollanders who emigrated prior to World War I the largest number departed during the 1880's and 1890's in the period of the great agricultural depression. Dr. Swierenga summed his essay up as follows: "In sum, developments in agriculture and delayed industrialization largely determined the character of overseas emigration in 1880." But again, a Reformed theologian is inclined to stress the ideological aspect. Over against a Neo-Marxist approach to history — as was evident in the study by Grant R. Cassidy about "Multiculturalism and Dutch Canadian Ethnicity in Metropolitan Toronto" — we lay emphasis on religion as a driving force in human life. Why did, relatively speaking, so many Dutch Calvinists emigrate to Canada after the Second World War? We know of economic facts, but we also know of the power of the cultural mandate in the book of Genesis (1:28; 2:15). We know of economic causes but also of religious motives. I think of the homesteaders in Neerlandia who helped to settle the prairies in the early part of this century, and I think of many of the 150,000 Netherlanders who arrived in Canada between 1947 and 1955 in search of a new home.

I wandered already to the second focus of the conference: the Canadian experience. Let me still return for a moment to the American counterpart. Gerald F. de Jong of the University of South Dakota, a well-known historian in the Reformed Church of America, spoke about four generations of a Dutch American community and portrayed life in north-west lowa, particularly in Orange City which was founded a little more than a century ago. James D. Bratt of the University of Pittsburg dealt with "Americanization and Self-Definition: Dutch Calvinists in the United States in the 1920's." I was again surprised how certain data are approached differently by a sociologist and a theologian. The whole development in the Christian Reformed Church in the twenties — including the doctrinal cases around "common grace" and Hoeksema — was treated as a form of Americanization that involved intense conflicts within the group.

According to Dr. Bratt, Dutch-Americans established their character for decades to come, settling upon the confessionalist-pietist definition of the Reformed tradition, of American society, and of the proper relation between the two. According to my opinion, such an approach is sociological; it over-emphasizes social aspects of doctrinal issues. The debate about the common grace theory of Abraham Kuyper raged as fiercely in The Netherlands as in the United States, and it was, therefore, not foremost a matter of acculturation. Economists should not dominate the study of church history, but neither should sociologists.

I think, this is enough to give you an impression of an interesting conference. We saw the film *It Wasn't Easy* (the Dutch immigrant experience in Canada), produced by the National Film Board of Canada, and it reminded me of the necessity to preserve history material. Let young people in our congregations — Neerlandia first — use their tape recorders; let them listen to the stories of old-timers and newcomers. Let us save these stories, and, especially, let us preserve our Reformed heritage also in our new country to the glory of the God of all the earth.

J. FABER

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## MEDITATION

*No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man Who is in heaven.*  
*John 3:13*

Reading these words of our Lord Jesus Christ leads to quite a number of questions. For the Lord Jesus speaks here to Nicodemus relatively early on in His ministry. Yet He speaks as if His work had entirely been accomplished. He stands before the cross, but speaks as if the cross, the grave, the resurrection, and the ascension are all behind Him. Why does He choose such an unusual way of speaking? And how can He say that He is in heaven when He is actually on earth, talking to Nicodemus? How was Nicodemus able to understand this?

To see why the Lord Jesus speaks this way, we must keep in mind that He had been telling His listener about heavenly things, that is, things that were coming (verse 12). The Lord Jesus has chosen this prophetic way of speaking to emphasize the certainty of His mission. As the true Prophet, the Lord Jesus can speak about His work as accomplished, because He is absolutely certain that things will happen in this way. His speaking is a speaking in anticipation, a speaking which illustrates and reveals that He knows why He came to earth, and knows why He had to be on earth.

Why is that so important for Nicodemus? Nicodemus is going to be a witness of all these events in the life of our Lord Jesus, a dynamically unified series of events that may also be looked at as one great work of salvation, one great redemptive event by which man is reconciled to God, and earth is reconciled to heaven.

Before this, the Lord intimates, heaven and earth were opposed to each other, in conflict because of sin and curse. There was a breach between God and man, and a breach between heaven and earth. Now the Lord Jesus proclaims as the true Prophet the end of that breach, and the birth of the day in which heaven takes up earth in its territorial rights again. From now on, an essential harmony between heaven and earth will prevail. Heaven and earth will henceforth proceed together to the day of glory.

How does this reconciliation take place? It happens through the work of Christ on the cross. The Lord Jesus as the true Man from heaven gives His life in order to establish harmony between God and man, heaven and earth. That is also what He says in the following verses. As Man from heaven, He did His perfect work on earth, thus establishing heavenly realities on the earth, and claiming earth for heaven's goals. "The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein," says the great ascension psalm (Psalm 24). The Son Who is in heaven has claimed the earth as His own.

One may interject that this is not really apparent in our day. Lent 1980 sees the balance of power shifting to the forces of atheistic materialism and false religion. Nations today are being quite assertive about their territorial rights, and even about territories over which have no rights. Like horses eager for battle, the beast of the bottomless pit seems to be pulling at the reins, impatient to manifest his power in the world. Where is the great King of Psalm 24?

The victorious Son is in heaven, and His work is sealed. From there He feeds and nourishes His flock, and will do so, until the last day. We may hear the world making their territorial claims, and may see large nations gobble up small ones. But no power can exalt itself against the Son of man, Who is in heaven. He will preserve us to the end, and He is coming soon, in order that we who belong to Him may inherit the earth.

J. DE JONG

### PSALM 24:7, 8

Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O ancient doors! that the King of glory may come in. Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle!

# In Sober Reason

Sometimes one writes a piece that undoubtedly will elicit some reaction. This is often the case when the subject is debatable and when the author himself first doubted whether he should keep silent or vent his opinion.

In order to introduce the situation I must confess that for the first time in my life I announced a collection within our churches of which I wondered whether or not it had a legitimate place in the worship service, and I did not dare to accompany the collection with a heartfelt prayer. Because this was an awkward situation, and it is possible that my predicament will be repeated in the near future, I submit my opinion for public consideration.

Readers of other magazines, like *The Outlook*, *The Banner*, or *Christianity Today*, and also readers of church bulletins in our midst, have probably already recognized my topic. "*Homosexual Sues Church*" is a piece that was published by more than one of our consistories, and I know of several congregations that have taken up a collection for the First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of San Francisco. This church hired an organist who was later found to be practicing homosexuality. When he saw no need to repent, he was dismissed as organist. The musician filed a suit against the church, seeking an unspecified amount for general damages and \$1000 in punitive action; he did not ask to be reinstated in his job. The congregation, backed by the denomination, has vowed to fight the case all the way to the Supreme Court, if necessary, although the legal bills are running about \$10,000 per month. In a letter asking for help the small First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of San Francisco compares itself to David tangling with an awesome Goliath. "Goliath has challenged Jehovah our God, who will not be mocked. May the Lord rise up in victory and His word triumph."

This appeal has apparently found a willing ear within our churches. Church collections are held during or after worship services, and our prayers are solicited.

That I venture to express some doubt about these church collections is not because I sympathize with the terrible way in which the gay movement tries to dominate public life in San Francisco. It should be completely clear that I am convinced that the practice of homosexuality is against the will of God, revealed in Holy Scripture. Ministers, elders, and all Christians should speak the truth in love also with respect to homosexual activities. There is certainly room for an open Christian discussion about our approach to persons with sexual disorientation, but for me it is evident from Scripture that homosexual activities belong to "all unchaste actions" of which we confess in Heidelberg Catechism, Answer 109, that God forbids them, since our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. Therefore I do not sympathize with the young man who filed a suit.

Nevertheless, I missed in the piece that was published in several of our church bulletins an important element. *Christianity Today* of September 21, 1979, reported: "The only major chink in the defense, according to some observers is that Walker was never required to become a member of the church, an oversight that technically exempted him from the disciplines of membership. Therefore, the observers say, his only relationship to the church was an employee in a job that did not require involvement in verbal ministry seemingly excluding him from the doctrinal standards of those who engage in public ministry. That point is certain to be argued long and hard."

When I read this, I thought that the people of our Reformed emigrant churches would be sober and level-headed enough, and especially Reformed enough, not to fall immediately for an emotional "evangelical" appeal to aid the now established Christian Rights Defense Fund. Should our consistories not, first of all, express their conviction that an organist never should be hired as if he were an employee? The fact that the young man in question was no member of the congregation and was not even asked to

become a member is not a slight technical oversight. Too many American congregations act as if an organist is an employee, while the Holy One of Israel, enthroned on high, dwells midst the praises of His congregation, the communion of saints (Psalm 22) and wants to be obeyed also by organists. The First Orthodox Presbyterian Church of San Francisco should have taken church membership as a serious matter, and it is precisely Canadian Reformed consistories that should remind our brothers of this fact.

I wonder whether it is wise to fight a case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, since it began with such an "oversight." If an organist is a member of the congregation, and church discipline is exercised in a Scriptural manner, no court in the U.S. will be able to overthrow the ecclesiastical discipline and its consequences for his functioning in the worship service. But if an organist is hired as an employee, the church as an employer has to abide with the law of the land, if that law is not in direct contradiction with the Word of God. There is not only a seventh commandment that forbids unchaste actions, but also an eighth commandment that regulates labour relations; and in American society Christians should speak out against absolute powers of labour unions, but at the same time they should be careful not to infringe upon the rights of labourers.

I am of the opinion that our consistories would do wise at least not to organize further church collections for the Christian Rights Defense Fund. Let us judge in sober reason, and use the offerings of the congregation wisely. Organs and moneys are instruments within the communion of saints.

J. FABER

## Psalm 22:25, 26

From Thee comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear Him. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live for ever!



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

#### WASHINGTON (AP)

A prominent Soviet defector said Russian leaders could steer their "cruel and dangerous society" to world domination unless forcefully punished for invading Afghanistan.

Arkady Shevchenko, a United Nations undersecretary general when he defected in 1978, made a rare public appearance . . . to give a House Intelligence subcommittee a chilling account of his life in his homeland and to comment on recent Soviet actions.

Unless the Soviets are punished "in specific, concrete and forceful ways for their aggression in Afghanistan, the world will find itself in not-far distant future under the dominion of Moscow," he said.

Boycotting the Olympic Games would be "a serious blow to the Kremlin," he said, since Soviet leaders hold "a long-cherished objective to have such a huge, political show in Moscow." (C.N.)

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#### FARGO, N.D. (RNS)

A federal judge has struck down North Dakota's law requiring state-funded schools to post copies of the Ten Commandments.

U.S. District Judge Paul Benson ruled that the 1927 law violates the separation of church and state guaranteed by the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution.

Judge Benson conceded that the fourth through tenth commandments "express moral precepts which for the most part reflect the mores of society and are reflected in our laws."

"Standing alone, these seven commandments could be construed as secular," he said of biblical prohibitions such as those against killing, stealing and adultery.

However, the statute requires a placard containing the Ten Commandments the Bible says God delivered to the Hebrew leader Moses — including the first three commandments relating to worshipping God.

"Those three commandments are clearly sectarian and posting them in public classrooms violates the separation of church and state," he said. (C.N.)

The learned judge must have had the Roman Catholic version of the Ten Commandments in front of him, judging by the numbering.

More and more people ignore the difference between the Church and Religion. Separation of *Church* and State does not mean that there should be a separation between *Religion* and State. However, we are going more and more into the direction of the godless state and the atheistic society.

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#### OMAHA, NEB. (RNS)

They stood in a circle at the foot of the stage, their hands joined, their arms raised overhead.

Five men and six women — all of whom looked to be in their 20's — were singing the praises of Jesus. Soon, they began "speaking in tongues." Tears rolled down their cheeks. Their faces glowed ecstatically.

"C'mon folks," said a stagehand as he passed by the circle of young people. "The show's over."

The show, according to the marquee of Omaha's Orpheum Theatre, was "Bob Dylan in Concert." But the concert by the rock superstar from Hibbing, Minnesota, was more like the Rev. Dylan's Travelling Salvation Show.

"This was no comparison to last time (Dylan's November 1978 show in Omaha)," said a bearded man who sat rather listless throughout the concert. "There was too much religion for me. But at least rock 'n roll was the core." (C.N.)

And as long as that is the core, no true conversion is possible. The very "core" of rock 'n roll is anti-Christian, as those who have truly come back from it because they learned to fear the God of the Scriptures will not tire telling us. Whether the train goes slowly or fast, it has to be on the right track first of all.

#### NEW YORK (EP)

Some 1.32 million legal abortions were performed in the U.S. in 1977 and 1.37 projected for 1978, according to the latest survey of the Alan Guttmacher Institute, a Planned Parenthood affiliate. The increase in abortions between 1977 and 1978 is 4 percent, compared with 12 percent from 1976 to 1977. About 29 percent of women who became pregnant in 1978 — three percent of all U.S. women of reproductive age — had abortions in 1978.

Available figures show that one in three abortions in 1977 were obtained by teenagers, and three in four were obtained by unmarried women. About 95 percent of abortions in 1977 were in metropolitan areas. (C.C.)

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#### WASHINGTON (RNS)

"Many thousands of Iranians" were imprisoned and tortured under the regime of Shah Mohammed Reza



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE  
Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Second class mail registration number 1025.

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

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.

1249 Plessis Road,  
Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2C 3L9  
Phone: (204) 222-5218

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

\$19.50 per year (to be paid in advance).

Foreign Countries: Seamail — \$30.00  
Airmail — \$39.00

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## INTERNATIONAL — Continued.

Pahlavi, the State Department has charged in a report (February 5) to Congress on human rights conditions around the world.

The department, which last year reported little evidence of cruel Iran, said that during more than two decades of the shah's rule "many thousands of Iranians were imprisoned for political reasons and a significant number were reportedly killed."

It added that the successor revolutionary regime of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, which is holding American hostages under "cruel and degrading" conditions, imprisoned about 15,000 Iranians for political reasons and executed about 700 Iranians after secret summary trials by revolutionary courts.

The report also made these findings: Communist regimes in Cambodia, Vietnam, and North Korea are among the most violently repressive in the world.

There are continuing strong patterns of rights violations in Morocco, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, but improvements in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The 1979 overthrows of brutal dictatorships in Uganda, the Central African Republic, and Equatorial Guinea greatly improved the situation in those African countries. (C.N.)

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## NEW YORK (NY)

February 26 . . . A new *Haggadah* to meet the needs of growing numbers of Catholics and Protestants who participate in the Passover seder, has been published jointly by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the Catholic Archdiocese of Chicago.

The 59-page book, titled "The Passover Celebration — a Haggadah for the Seder," was edited by Rabbi Leon Klenicki, co-director of ADL's Department of Interfaith Affairs, and contains an introduction by Gabe Huck, director of the Archdiocese's Liturgy Training Program.

According to Mr. Huck, Christians have been participants in Passover celebrations, not as a "restaging of the Last Supper of Jesus," but because they "acknowledge common Biblical roots with Jews" and to find "a deep and honest and strong expression of our own faith." He adds, "we come to the seder just as it is celebrated by Jews . . . We who are Christians need to be at home with it, getting to know its sounds and smells and tastes, its

gestures and dances and silences. Eventually, we will certainly find that we belong" at the Passover table.

Here, I am afraid the steps that are taken and advocated will lead to the situation of which the Epistle to the Hebrews speaks when it warns against falling back into which has been fulfilled by Christ. It is impossible to renew unto repentance those who, having lived in the light of the new covenant, fall back into the shadows, for that can be done only by denying the one satisfaction of our glorious Saviour.

They crucify the Son of God again.

"Common Biblical roots?"

Sounds good, but isn't true: Those who have rejected and are still rejecting the Lord Jesus Christ as the only and complete Saviour have severed themselves from the roots. They read "Moses" with a cover on their faces. The god they worship is not the God we believe in and honour, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Let no one deceive you: too much is at stake.

vO

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# mission news

BRAZIL

## THE SOUNDS OF SÃO JOSÉ

You can learn much about a place and its people by its sounds. Let's listen to the sounds of São José. Early in the morning, all through the day, and late into the night the cackling of hens and the crowing of roosters makes you realize that, although a town, São José is really very rural. When you walk the streets, you usually walk on sand. You hear the clopping of horses' hooves, the quacking of ducks, the squawking of turkeys, the grunting of pigs, and the barking of dogs. They are only tied with a rope or, more often, just wander around loose. All is shaded by the ever-present coconut palms. São José is rural, and yet it isn't as far as the people's enjoyment of the land is concerned.

Those coconuts belong to the owners. No one else may cut them. Nor may you grow lemon trees among them, or (in general) plant gardens or raise goats. Before the revolution of 1964 this was allowed, but now the owners again have more power to limit the activities of those who live on their land. Perhaps you could grow a few vegetables in the little plot behind your house (this plot is really your living-room), but few have the money to afford even a very simple fence of bamboo poles, let alone a proper pen to keep their chickens and pigs in their place. Without these, even with them, it's difficult to plant anything since it all gets eaten or stolen.

Nor is São José a lazy, tranquil, rural town. We live on the main road into town and the sound of the traffic sometimes makes you think you're living in a city. The main reason for all the cars and trucks and, especially, buses and motorcycles is that this is a tourist town. We have a very beautiful beach which regularly attracts people from all over the state. According to the property owners, the town council, and the governor of the state, this is a marvellous help for the town. However, the poor people tell a different story. The prices of property, in general, have become greatly inflated, so that now it is absolutely out of the question for a poor person ever to buy property. The local government spends practically all

its money on things that promote the tourist industry but which make very little real difference for the poor who live here.

On weekends (particularly Sunday) tourists overrun the town and dominate everything with their presence and noise. It is impossible for those who live in that part of the town to have a restful Sunday. The property near the beach is virtually all owned by people from Recife who usually only come from October to March and then often only on weekends. Some of the poor make a bit of extra money selling things on the beach, but, because this is mainly on Sundays, it is more of a hindrance than a help for the church. The worst part is that this tourist industry inflates all the prices. Everything sells at a higher price than everywhere else, and even through the week the storekeepers do not sell for less, since they can always sell at a better price on the weekend or to those who have a summer residence here. Tourists are always willing to pay more.

The sound of the tourists reminds you of the reason they are here, and then you hear the wind and the waves along with the motors of the fishing boats. Fishing is an important industry in São José. There are those who go

out in motor boats, those who use the *jangadas* (light rafts with sails), those who fish standing in the water. There is also the ice plant and those who sell the fish. For many it provides an adequate living, although also in this case the man who does most of the work does not get all that much money. One might expect fishing to dominate the town, but this is not the case. Many are unemployed, while many others find work in the sugar cane fields or in relation to the coconuts, the other main industries. Whatever it is, when they work it usually means hard and often long hours in the heat, the wind, or the rain. Many who come to the church activities are very sleepy, understandably. It is therefore difficult for them to learn and to contribute to a discussion.

Brazilians are noisy. When the young people go to school, it's very noisy. It not only shows the lack of discipline, which is very real, but also the fact that they like noise. On festive occasions you always hear lots of firecrackers. To celebrate Independence Day, the children march to the sound of a loud band consisting mainly of drums. They make quite an occasion out of such national holidays.

Does this mean that Brazilians are very patriotic? They are more patriotic than Canadians, but, on the other hand, this patriotism can have an interesting motivation. If the students do not participate they are suspended from class for two weeks, preferably during the time when tests are being held (of course, you cannot pass if you do not write the tests). Recently, the governor



Templo da Igreja Reformada in São José da Coroa Grande.



*The Missionaries and Mission Aid Workers (from left to right): br. and sr. J. Kuik (Mission Aid), Rev. and Mrs. R. Boersema, and Rev. and Mrs. P.K. Meijer.*

of the state was here to open a telephone office and a bank (both welcome additions to the town, by the way). Every pupil who was not there to line the streets to welcome him and did not have a good excuse received a suspension. Patriotism also has its advantages as far as the students are concerned. During the month or more of practice for the Independence Day celebrations, more than half the classes are cancelled for this purpose.

Brazilians are noisy. They like to shout, to talk, and to be surrounded by people. Everyone is always welcome in your house. Neighbours usually do not even ask to come in. They just live there. Privacy is virtually unknown. The houses are often very close, if not touching each other, and it's not unusual for ten to twenty people to be in and around a house of maybe 200 square feet. Cars, loudspeakers, fire-works — time and again you notice that no one pays any attention to sound levels.

Mention loudspeakers and you think of the Assembly of God, another aspect of life in São José. It is an active Pentecostal church which is found almost everywhere in Brazil. Speaking in tongues and prophecies are an integral part of their church life, as are a series of regulations such as no smoking, no drinking, and no sleeveless dresses or slacks for ladies. The people here speak of each church having its law. However, what we notice most about this church (there are other Pentecostal-type churches we don't notice

so much) is that they love to use their sound system as loudly as possible. Although they are quite some distance away, their noise definitely hinders our worship services.

There are other sounds expressive of the religions in São José. I already mentioned fire-crackers and fire-works. To these you can add the sound of the church bell. Perhaps you wonder, "Why link these sounds?" That is my question as well. The fact is that these are the sounds of the Roman church in Brazil. This church very much supports the so-called deep religious commitment of the people as they celebrate the feasts for the various saints and other "holy" occasions. On the day of Saint Peter, the patron saint of fishermen, which is a very important occasion here, the festivities start with a mass announced by the ringing of the bell. As soon as it is over fire-works are shot off into the air and the people let off their fire-crackers. Then the image of Peter is led around the town square under the guidance of the local priest who then leads the procession to the water where the idol is taken on to one of the boats and a parade of boats passes up and down the shore line. The holiday continues with festivities the remainder of the day which usually includes much drinking and carousing. The Roman church does not, of course, condone this aspect of the day, but does little to combat it effectively.

Although the number of those who are really committed to this church is relatively small, it is still al-

ways called upon to do the "religious part" of all the official occasions. The ceremonies for the opening of a new school year and the graduation ceremonies always involve the celebration of a mass. When the new bank building was recently opened, the padre had to say a prayer and splash "holy" water over the building.

In reality this church has lost its grip of the masses here. It tries to recover it by two means: by making the problems of the poor a priority and by showing an appreciation for the "deep religiosity" of the "religion of the people." The first tends to find expression in the "theology of liberation" with its support for a marxist analysis of history and the problems of society. The second means an encouragement of superstitious practices like those prevalent in the church of the Middle Ages and no doubt influenced here by the African roots of the people. One night the priest was leading a group of the faithful (many holding candles) on a chanting march through the back streets of the town. I do not know what the purpose of this was, but I think it was some kind of expression of the "religion of the people." Nevertheless, among many here there is very little loyalty to the Roman church. Often we meet an attitude of mockery.

There's also the sound of another religious commitment which according to the statistics could have a larger influence in the country than that of the Roman church. It is characterized most by the steady beating of drums until deep into the night and even until the day breaks. The Spiritists are making contact with departed spirits to receive answers to questions in their lives. Because there is great variety in this Spiritism it is hard to describe with accuracy. What is true for one form may not be true for another. In general, however, there are two streams. One, the Spiritualism of French and American origins. The other, the continued practice and belief of tribal heathenism from Africa, blended with the saints and other practices of Romanism. In this as well as in many of the social characteristics of this people (sexual relationships and attitudes of rich to poor and vice versa, as examples), you time and again come in contact with raw heathenism. You also realize that there is no connection between becoming more civilized or educated and the leaving behind of heathen superstitions when you note that Spiritism has gained a lot of respectability in Brazil,



being adhered to by many outstanding citizens, among which are government officials.

Of course, you understand that our record of the sounds here has to be limited. I'm not writing a tourist guide-book so I won't elaborate on the marvellous sounds of nature. Nor can I explain all the ins and outs of why the school children went on strike and marched to the mayor's house in order to get the principal of the school (who is considered by most of the students to be a poor administrator and poor teacher) re-instated. I can tell you that it was a noisy three nights and that the mayor gave in to this game. I will not go into detail either about the very limited number of records that the bars in this neighbourhood play over and over.

However, I do want to draw attention to some of the very quiet sounds. First there is the misery of unemployment and poverty which most bear without too much noise. Then there are malnutrition and illness, which creep up with so little sound but with such terrible force. Sickness and death are common here. It is not as dramatic as the plight of the boat people or the Cambodians, but it touches millions and millions and continues year after year, seemingly without relief. The help offered by Mission Aid is only a drop in the bucket compared to how many more need help. Another striking non-sound is that of the ants, the intestinal worms and bacteria, and the termites.

All are examples of the silent army carrying out the curse of God.

Nevertheless, there is also the sound of victory. There is the sound of hymns, a recording of chimes played over the sound system of the Igreja Reformada. There are the joyful singing of praise to the Almighty and the clear preaching of the Word of God, albeit in stumbling Portuguese. The Biblical faith, the Reformed faith, is being heard and believed in São José da Coroa Grande. There are believers among the Pentecostals and the Baptists, and we thank the Lord for that. We also thank Him that the full gospel is being proclaimed in the Igreja Reformada and that through this ministry the Lord is setting free those who were enslaved in darkness. Two Sundays ago we again witnessed the public confession of their faith by a couple, parents of five children. Amaro Barros Lins and his wife, Angelita, gladly spoke about their commitment to the Almighty. The next Sunday we celebrated the Lord's Supper with twenty-five people. The membership of the "congregation" here now stands at forty-one of which nineteen are communicant members. When we consider that about twice that many come to the activities of the church, we give thanks that the Lord is graciously allowing the sound of the Igreja Reformada to be not just a passing sound. To Him is our praise!

R. BOERSEMA

## MISSION NEWS(2)

### SIN AND GRACE

Let us not start with sin. Sin is not the conqueror, but Christ with His grace. Therefore we start with grace.

Is grace visible in every-day life? Yes, it is. Grace is visible, for example, in a list of activities in the congregation of São José da Coroa Grande. Why not start with such a list?

Sunday morning: 8:30

Sunday School  
10:00

Catechism class for young people.

Sunday evening: 19:00

Worship service

Monday evening: 19:00

Catechism class for adults.

Wednesday evening: 19:00

Bible Study

Friday evening: 19:00

Women's Society (every fortnight)

Saturday morning: 8:30

Youth Club (10-15 yrs; every fortnight)  
10:00

Girls' Choir

Saturday evening: 19:00

Young People's Society

Do we see God's grace in these activities? Yes, we do. Each activity, every meeting is an instrument, should be an instrument, to bring the Word of grace which heals sinful life.

Great is the missionary's responsibility in this respect. Not his words, but only the Word is grace. His voice should be subject to The Voice. Great is your responsibility, brothers and sisters in Canada, in supporting the sending church by daily prayer. I do not talk about money for New Westminster, although it is true: he who prays, pays. Praying for mission is paying for mission.

### ADDITIONAL DATA

With regard to the list, I have to add that Rev. Boersema and I conduct Sunday School and worship service in turn. Br. and sr. Kuik give assistance at Sunday School.

The catechism group for adults is Rev. Boersema's responsibility, the group of young people is mine. Rev. Boersema is doing the Bible study. The chairwoman of the Women's Society is sr. Kuik, also known as dona Ardis. Dona Lucille and dona Alida give assistance. The same applies for the Girls' Choir.

I am responsible for Youth Club and Young People's Society, but I share this responsibility with br. Kuik in preparing and conducting. If one of us is absent Rev. Boersema is present.



Rev. and Mrs. P.K. Meijer chatting with br. J. Kuik in front of their home in Maragogi.

Since br. Kuik still knows more Portuguese words than we do, his help is very much appreciated.

It is a great blessing that we, as three families, may cooperate in good Christian understanding: grace in a sinful world.

#### ESSENTIAL DATA

Since the hearts of Brazilians are inclined to all kinds of sins, just as much as ours are, the preaching and teaching during all the meetings is that we are lost in ourselves, that we have to believe in Christ as the Saviour, and that we have to show gratitude to God for our salvation. This is the simple Biblical and Reformed doctrine of the Heidelberg Catechism. There is no special Gospel for the mission field.

On the other hand — and this is essential too — the Gospel has to be brought to a nation with its specific characteristics. The preaching and teaching address themselves to Brazilians, not to Canadians.

My impression is that a Brazilian takes it easy. He seems to be superficial. This means, we have to emphasize the Biblical doctrine that we deserve nothing but eternal punishment, that sins are really serious in God's eyes.

Since the Roman Catholic doctrine of grace (the sacraments infuse God's grace into man's life) predominated, we have to emphasize that we have to *believe* in Christ as the only Saviour.

Since Brazilians are emotional, we have to emphasize that we should live out of the Scriptures, and not out of experiences. Grace is more than feeling (of grace).

I touched only on some essentials with regard to the preaching of Sin and Grace in this country. Much more, of course, can be said about this subject.

#### SOME EVENTS IN CHURCH LIFE

Neither the Boersema family, nor we, received any word about our visa applications. This meant for us that we could stay. In our case, the Department in charge in Brasilia promised to send a telex to our lawyer, but they did not. The lawyer will phone again to Brasilia, but she said to me that if we do not re-

ceive word by the 15th of December we will have to wait at least one more month because of the vacation season.

Well, this was a non-event, because nothing happened. Nevertheless, it was important for church life, because the work of God's grace could be continued.

And it did continue. On the 4th of November our brother, Amaro Barros Lins, and his wife, Angelita, made profession of faith. Their youngest son, Salomão received the sign and seal of God's gracious covenant. Four other children, Fatima, Flávio, Fábio, and Fernando were already baptized. A great event in church life: the first complete family in the congregation of São José!

Grace and sin are visible. Grace: a whole family became church member. Sin: it is the first family in all those years. Sin destroyed family and matrimonial life. May the LORD of all grace guide this family. And may it please Him that our brothers and sisters who still go to church *without* their husband, their wife, their children or parents one day may go *with* them.

#### SOME EVENTS IN MARAGOGI

Did you ever see a turtle? We did, a big one, its weight 50 kg, and its length 1 metre. Does Maragogi have a zoo? No, but behind us lives a family of fishermen and they caught the turtle. They never eat meat, always fish, the mother said to my wife.

Do these people know of sin and grace? The work in Maragogi has not started yet due to the uncertainty surrounding the visas. We pray that this situation may change.

In the meantime, we brought our first visit to a family in Maragogi at the beginning of October. We went for a visit to a young woman, Christina, whom we took along to and from São José several times, sometimes with her husband. She is a granddaughter of dona Alcina, a church member (the mother of br. Amaro Barros Lins). One of Christina's brothers, Eronildo, comes to church very regularly. She herself also came to church when she was young. We paid a visit to her house, close to ours, because she had a baby. Well, this is our first (still superficial) contact in Maragogi.

It is true that we have to seek contacts, but in this seeking the Lord is directing our ways. HE gives opportunities to lay contacts. Once, at the beginning of November, a girl came to our house (she had met my wife before in the Post Office) to ask for help with

translation work from Portuguese into English. It happened to be that when she came the Boersema family just left. They had to leave, so the girl received second-rate help as far as knowledge of English is concerned. We found out that she first had gone to the priest, but he was not at home. Therefore she came to our place. I think she thought we were Americans. Anyway, she stayed with us for an hour, teaching me Portuguese after my endeavour to translate Portuguese into English.

#### MORE EVENTS

We could not use our refrigerator for some weeks. We had no water from the tap for some weeks. Worse than these events was the car accident on the 16th of November. I don't like to go into details, but, since I know that I am not guilty, it is not necessary to hide the fact that we hit a man who suddenly, in the darkness, crossed the highway near the entrance to São José. At first, his condition did not seem very serious, but the next day the man, known to be a drunkard, died in a hospital in Recife. We paid the funeral, since it is customary to do so here, and all the more because the victim was a poor man. The contacts with his relatives were not so pleasant. Money, that was what they wanted.

I don't think the police consider me guilty, but, of course, an official report had to be made for the judge in Barreiros. We are not sure yet whether this case will have any effect on the visa application. We pray that this accident will not hinder our mission work.

Sin and grace — after the accident two words with even more significance for us. Who is guiltless? He and she who believe in the God of all grace. May His mission in a sinful world be our aim in life, also in 1980.

We wish you the LORD's blessing in a new year.

P.K. and A.J. Meijer  
Maragogi, December 1979.

#### A WOMAN'S EYE ON MARAGOGI

From a warm and sunny Brazil (it is now summertime) I would like to tell you a little more about life here, not any longer from São José but sitting at the table in Maragogi (18 km south of São José). As you know we have been living here since the middle of August.

We are thankful to the LORD that we can still be here. Until now we haven't heard anything about our re-

#### OUR COVER

Winter Scenery. (Photo courtesy  
Manitoba Government Travel.)

application for visas. We hope and pray that our heavenly Father will lead everything in such a way that we can stay here, but if HE decides in a different way then we will go along the path which He will show, trusting that our Father knows what is right for His Church and for us. ". . . he who believes in Him will not be put to shame" (Romans 9:33b).

We read in *Church News* that "our" Rev. C. Van Dam and his wife held open house to give an opportunity to the congregation to admire the new manse. We would like to propose this, too, because we, too, live in a "new" house. You are not bound to a certain day or hour — always welcome. So, if you happen to be in the neighbourhood . . . . We even have a guest room.

We had our first guest last weekend. The teacher we had in Recife wrote us that she planned to be here from Friday to Monday. Fortunately a certain Kuik family, living some 18 km away, has more furniture than we have. With their help we could fix up the guest room.

We had nice days with our ex-teacher, despite the fact that our first reaction was, "Oh! Now we have to talk Portuguese for a whole weekend!" It exceeded our expectations and the (Dutch) saying: "The mens lijdt 't meest door het lijden dat hij vreest en dat nooit op komt dagen" (man suffers most from what he fears to suffer but which never becomes reality) proved true again. By the way, it was good training to have had to talk so much Portuguese.

Due to the fact that I have no maid here, I do not talk much Portuguese. If you have a Brazilian maid, then you have to. When we have more certainty about our stay here, we will look around for someone, be it only for a few mornings a week. When we had just settled in, a girl came to apply as maid, but because my husband wasn't at home at that time, I asked her to come back on a certain day. She never came back, however . . .

We live in a house suited to our situation, but it does demand quite a bit of work, particularly due to the fact that there is no ceiling. When you look up you look directly at the clay tiles on the roof. That's no problem in itself, not at all, for the house is cooler than other ones, but a consequence is that dust and dirt from above is always laying on the concrete floor and everywhere else as well. So, the house is never really clean [isn't that really Dutch? PKM].

The ever-present wind (the sea is about 100 meters away) really promotes this dirt.

Every day I'm washing clothes (without a machine). Every day I fill buckets with water to have water on hand. It happens quite often that there is no water in the bathroom and the washing place. In the kitchen we usually have water, although it hardly ever has much pressure. Sometimes we have no water at all for hours and hours. Fortunately, there is a big cistern in a corner of the bathroom, which we now always have filled with water.

It is too bad that you couldn't have had a look before and after the house was made liveable. You would have been taken aback by the difference. It isn't a new house, but it certainly looks like it now. Despite the fact that only the most essential things were done, and as cheaply as possible, the house underwent a metamorphosis. All the walls were whitewashed (which didn't take in some spots). Everywhere in the house is electricity; the new blue wires contrast merrily with the white walls. In the kitchen we have a stove, a refrigerator, and a stainless steel sink. We chose this sink because we can take it out if we move to another house. The bathroom underwent the biggest renovation: we got a real shower, with nice curtains around it; the toilet got a flushing apparatus. By the way, the bathroom is not *in* the house, but in the room behind the last room of the house, without direct access to the house.

The house is narrow, four meters wide, but the depth is big enough to make up for it. From the front to the back of the garage (each part is built on to the other in a variety of ways) is 35 m! It is quite an experience to live in a real Brazilian house. It is in a long row of houses in a narrow street. We live here with pleasure. You will understand how we should feel at home in a street with the name **HOLANDA**. We could tell much more about the house, but that would take too long. We may live here one year, as far as the owner is concerned.

We are glad that br. Kuik was willing to do so much to make the house liveable — something it wasn't before. Lots of work has been done. Jacob Kuik, too, spent many an hour here.

It is quite an experience to live in this part of Brazil. Almost everything is totally different from (in our case) The Netherlands. For example: you can see pigs on the beach, carrion vultures,

dogs, cats, pigs, chickens (also little ones), sheep, and goats, all these animals we see in the "street" behind our garage (the "street" is not paved); here you can do the woman next door a favour by giving her the head and the feet which were with the chicken you bought and which you don't like so much . . . . There is also a dance hall right across the street from our house where they sometimes have a ball till 3:30 a.m. with the usual blaring music. Then also: in November we go to the beach. While it is getting colder in Canada, here it is getting warmer.

Some weeks ago, on a Sunday afternoon, a band passed by in our street. The music sounded nice. When we looked we saw quite a crowd following it. It appeared that a number of people of the *Assembléia de Deus* (one of the Pentecostal churches) would be baptized in the sea. Their church is in our street.

It is not only so that many things are different to *us*, but *we* are different, too, to the people, especially my husband. In The Netherlands his height was not that exceptional. It was not a topic for conversation, but here . . . people nudge each other to have a look at him. Even the man at the Post Office asked him how tall he was. You can make little boys believe that he is 5 m high. We have to get accustomed to this kind of attention. (Rev. Van Spronsen already mentioned it at the farewell meeting last year.)

A short time ago we had a meeting of the Women's Society in our house on a Friday afternoon instead of a regular meeting on Friday night. We had a nice afternoon. You can imagine that such an afternoon is something for these sisters who never go out. Everyone was nicely dressed. It was the first time that one of the members conducted the meeting. She herself had chosen a part of the Bible, and she explained it to us. Every start is difficult — so it was in this case. It is good, nevertheless, that the members know that they should not be dependent on us. It will take time to lead them to complete independence. Don't forget that only one of the sisters can read in public. Illiteracy makes the work more difficult.

This story became quite long, but you don't mind, I hope. We wish all of you the indispensable blessing of the LORD, everyone in his own situation. It is in Christ that we are bound together.

A.J. Meijer  
Maragogi, November 1979.

# news medley

## 50th Wedding Anniversary

First of all we have to pay attention to two fiftieth Wedding Anniversaries. Perhaps there are more of them, but I am not aware of more. Once in a while I browse through old volumes of *Clarion*, and especially when people ask me to bind them I see the same faces and scenes over and over again. Then I am oftentimes wondering how many of those couples who celebrated their fortieth or forty-fifth Wedding Anniversary have still been left together by the Lord now that we are five years later. Of some I know that their bond has been dissolved by our Father; others may still be together and enjoy the blessings bestowed upon them.

Of those who have been kept together by God's mercy and grace we mention in the first place brother and sister P.H. Wildeboer. Formerly they lived in Orangeville — for almost all the years they have been in Canada — and now they are living in Guelph. I have known them for many, many years, for when I was in Oud Loosdrecht I oftentimes conducted a service in Soest, and that's where the Wildeboer family lived. That is well over thirty years ago. I also remember having written to brother Wildeboer once (when he was already in Canada) about a family that was desirous to emigrate to Canada; he was the address to contact, for he did much for the upbuilding of the Church in Orangeville and always tried to attract people to that place and its surroundings. On behalf of our readers I extend our heartfelt congratulations on this occasion and express the wish that the Lord may continue to give you health and strength and the opportunity to continue taking an active part in the things going on in the Church of Christ.

The second couple we are to congratulate are brother and sister H. Jansen of Surrey, B.C. When they were married for forty-five years, I told a few things about them and openly acknowledged my debt to brother Jansen for the basic knowledge of the printing business which he imparted to me in Schiedam. We are happy with them that the Lord grants them the privilege of celebrating their fiftieth Wedding Anniversary on March 26th. The health of both has not been all that good the last couple of years, and they no longer can do what they would love to do, but they are still together and may enjoy the proximity of their children and grandchildren besides benefiting from the communion of saints. Them, too, we wish the blessing of the Lord our God upon their further pathway. May they, as is the case now, rejoice always in His goodness and grace. Brother Jansen is, as far as I know, still serving as book-keeper of the Maranatha Church in Surrey.

We continue with that Church. In the *Church News* we hear the following warning: "The information was passed along that gasoline is being stolen from cars parked in the Church parking lot." I pass this on, but not with the intention of showing how bad the people in Surrey are. My intention with passing it on is to make members of other Congregations aware of the hazards even of parking lots. A lock on the gas tank may prevent much frustration and save you from early breakdowns for lack of gas in the tank.



*Mr. and Mrs. H. Jansen of Surrey, B.C.*

As for the rest of the Churches in the Valley, Abbotsford is actually the only one about which we are to tell something. That "something" is about their organ. Apparently there have been some delays in the building of their organ. We read, "The chairman informed the meeting that Mr. D. Zwart, in spite of the delay in the organ construction, still might be able to assist us and to play for us at the dedication of the organ." Gratifying.

On our way to Ontario we have a stopover in Carman, Man. Much of the activities in that Church are centered around the erection of a new place of worship. Descriptions and reports of meetings occupy an important place in the bulletin of that Church. Let us listen in for a moment.

A brother reported on a meeting with the building committee. He himself is the convenor of the grounds committee. Dividing the work and involving more people is always desirable. Carman appears to have mastered that art to some extent.

Both committees looked into the possibility of moving the present church building south (staying on the same property, mind you). This was not deemed advisable, reckoning with the little parking area (and sometimes mud) left during construction time, besides the lack of washrooms.

Out of three other possibilities we all favour the use of our own facilities, in this case the gym of the Dufferin Christian School. (Did you know about that, members of the school board?) be it that some work will have to be done on acoustics and ventilation. In the meantime the present building will be advertised in the local newspaper.

I recall the day when the present building — the one now put up for sale — was purchased and viewed by members of the 1958 Synod. It was transported to Carman and has since been modified and altered more than once. Perhaps it will yield an amount which is close to what was paid for it. Who knows!

Yes, and that concludes our visit to Carman. We move on to Ontario.

Closest to (my) home is the Church at Guelph. There is, of course, also the Church at Fergus, but nothing is to be mentioned about the latter. Thus we proceed to Guelph.

For a considerable time already the Consistory at Guelph has been approached by members who would wish to see weekday services re-instated. The Consistory has decided not to have any services on weekdays except, of course, the 25th of December, as we have agreed upon in our Church Order. Its decision not to have any other weekday services was based by the Consistory on Article 67 of our Church Order. The matter was discussed at a Congregational meeting, and the Consistory discussed the point again, but decided not to change its stand. The "Church at Guelph will not observe *days*, but the *acts and deeds of the Lord*."

It requires courage to make such a decision and to stick to it, but personally I agree with the Consistory's decision. There is a tendency in the world around us to increase special days and special occasions. Time and again I get circular letters promoting "Bible Sunday" or "Family Week" or whatever other fancy or not-fancy name may be invented. Pretty soon there won't be any "regular" or "plain" Sundays or weekends left. They all have been taken up by special days.

I am well aware of it that there is a general aversion against those things among our people, and that is a good thing. As soon as people try to be more pious than the Lord wants them to be, things go wrong. We are to do faithfully what the Lord wishes us to do; as for the rest: the plainer and more regular our life is the better. That applies to our personal life, it also applies to the life as a Church. It is, I hope, a well-known fact that in the days of the Doleantie of 1886 the Church at Voorthuizen, under the leadership of Dr. Willem van den Bergh, abolished the service on the so-called "Good Friday" and that it upheld that decision for many, many years and decades even.

I think that we would follow the correct course if we abolished all "special" days and come together faithfully on the Day of the Lord alone.

Mind you, whenever the Congregation is together, I preach with joy, for it is always a joy to preach the Word of God and to present the riches which we have received from our covenant God in Christ our Lord. Scripture is an inexhaustible well from which we may draw. That point is not the issue. The point is the special days as such. I think that it is a step back that our Netherlands sister Churches included the so-called "Good Friday" in their list. I certainly will preach with joy about the bitter sufferings of our gracious Saviour if the Consistory decides that there shall be a service on that day; but I refuse to make it mandatory by inserting it in our Church Order so that each and every Church *has* to do it.

Although I would favour abolition of all the special days as such, I would really miss the service on New Year's Day. As much I "hate" a service on New Year's Eve so much I

"love" the New Year's Day's service. But if it has to go, let it go; I won't shed one tear about it.

Anyway, we have to continue.

There was also a suggestion to abolish all collections for special purposes and to let everything go via the treasurer of the Church. (We are still speaking about Guelph, remember?) It would mean some more bookkeeping for bookkeeper and treasurer, but the members would be able to deduct everything they contribute from their taxable income and thus save on their taxes, something which would enable them to give more. The Consistory does wish to consider that point seriously.

There would be nothing against things in that manner. It may, however, not help at all in quite a few instances in the midst of the Churches. Are there not many among us who are well above the 20% they are allowed to deduct? Are there not many who, when they add the voluntary contributions to the Church and their membership/tuition fee for the school(s) come far higher than the maximum 20% deductible? For those who do not reach that level it would indeed be to their advantage if all contributions within the the kingdom of God were registered via the treasurer of the Church.

On May 1st of this year it will be twenty-five years ago that the Church was instituted in Burlington. "It has been decided to celebrate this occasion on Friday, May 2nd, in the Wellington Square United Church building. Not only will the members of the two Burlingtons be invited but also those who have moved to other congregations during the 25 years."

I mention that so that all who at one time or another belonged to Burlington can make cheap reservations on plain or train to attend this happy occasion.

We mentioned about Smithville that the matter of collections was to be discussed at a Congregational Meeting. It was done, and this is the result: "The consistory concludes that a good majority of the congregation would deplore the removal of the Church collections, and therefore decided to maintain the collections."

We conclude our journey in Watford this time. A report of a school society meeting contains this item: "At the meeting it was brought forward that some property might become available within the next two weeks . . . . The Board will make further investigation into this situation."

A few weeks ago we had a congregational meeting here in Fergus, and there some criticism was voiced about the fact that our bulletin sometimes contains items which concern the school more than the Church. Such items, it was said, belong in a school bulletin.

It is up to each Church what to decide about that. In the first place I think that there is nothing against having a notice about certain activities within the school community published in the Church bulletin. The Church bulletin is a paper which is issued for the benefit of the Congregation and I see no reason why a notice from a Young Men's Society should be considered acceptable whereas a notice from the School Society should find a place in another paper.

In the second place, I do see a point in that criticism. I also receive bulletins in which quite regularly reports are published, press releases of meetings of school society boards. In those instances I would indeed raise some objections. The Church bulletin is not for regular schoolboard publications, I think. Our school(s) here in

Fergus and Guelph issue a Newsletter every other week, and every month we have the *Link*, a sort of monthly school magazine. Whatever publications and reports are to be made known to the membership can be found in those means of communication. I would not deem it proper to use the bulletin (and the money) of the Church to save the school expenses. However closely both are connected, we can proceed safely only when we keep their financial and other matters separate. If school boards wish to publish

press releases of their meetings, they should use a school publication for that, I would propound.

As you see: there was not much news, and then I have a chance to make some remarks about points I have noticed or consider worthwhile to be raised. You have something to think about for the next two weeks. Hope to see you after that.

vO

## Letters-to-the-Editor

*More than once we have received a letter-to-the-editor regarding smoking. Sometimes those letters were more than just letters: they were complete articles. We are not unwilling to publish some articles on this topic, but for that we need more than the incidental remarks and sometimes emotional utterances which are found in many letters on the subject.*

*In this issue we publish two letters on smoking. Our readers are requested to bear in mind that we do not do so to promote an exchange of thoughts in this column. Perhaps, when the reactions to the request in brother Hordyk's letter are in, we can pay some more attention to this topic, although this should not be construed as a promise.*

vO

\* \* \*

Dear Mr. Editor,

It sort of shocked me recently to discover the opposing views in our Canadian Reformed community with respect to the use of cigarettes.

I gave up my two-pack-a-day habit over 20 years ago (and my wife never smoked), mainly because the press had just started to reveal a link between cancer and the cigarette. I could also see a big problem down the road for my children, and would as a non-smoker have a lot more weight on a decision not to allow them to smoke.

Over the years I have seen a shift in attitude toward smoking, in particular at our own meetings, where rules are made not to bother our non-smoking brother or sister with second-hand smoke. We have indeed come a long way.

It may be of interest to know that the City of New York passed a law 70 years ago, forbidding women to smoke. Human Rights, of course, could not make it stick too long, but there may have been a good motive (like motherhood) for the City Fathers to make that decision.

About two years ago, Toronto passed an anti-smoking by-law for all public areas where smokers and non-smokers gather. There is a Federal regulation warning every user of the danger of inhaling cigarette smoke right on the package. And yet we seem to shrug our shoulders when we are reminded by outsiders that cigarette smoking is not conducive to a Christian life style. I have heard it called "sectarian" by our people. We should not even discuss it; there are other things too, like excessive drinking, and then you open up a whole can of worms . . . .

I would like to have the readers' views on the matter of smoking. Don't come with arguments like: We have an obligation towards the tobacco farmer, or the tobacco industry supports a lot of sports or charity. But give me your support for smoking and/or for not smoking. On solid grounds. Depending upon the reactions I receive, I intend to put all this material together in a sort of a brochure for publication, initially in our own circles. I will not disclose identity of any submission. Let me also know how you cope with the problem in your family life. Let me assure you that I will give all those who co-operate with a submission priority in making a copy of the total report available.

Arie J. Hordyk  
3386 Regal Road,  
Burlington, Ontario L7N 1L8

\* \* \*

### THERE IS AN EVIL UNDER THE SUN

There has been a time — especially when the older ones among us were still living in the old country — that smoking of tobacco was considered a very normal thing. No meeting was deemed to be complete when, after opening by prayer and Scripture reading, no cigars, pipes, and cig-

arettes were lighted, and soon the meeting place was filled with nicotine aroma. Since that time we have become aware of the health dangers for smokers and for those who have to breathe the with-smoke-polluted air, as well.

I can very well see that, once somebody has started smoking, it is difficult to quit. There are people who have stopped smoking overnight. I know a minister in the Canadian Reformed Churches who in former days was a chainsmoker. On a certain day he stopped with it and since has not touched the thing anymore. He shook it off completely! I can honestly say that I admire him for that! But I also know people, brothers as well as sisters, who are telling me that they know how bad it is, but simply cannot shake the habit. They are hooked! We must have pity with these people, but also must say, "That is a sinful situation." Further on I will say more about this.

The Lord is giving us the fresh air, that we may have life by breathing it. All of us have in this respect equal rights. And now it is a horrible thing that a smoker not only endangers his own health but by polluting the air endangers the health of his fellow men as well.

For this reason I firmly believe that a person who wants to smoke in a closed place — a store, office, waiting room or in a meeting — first of all has to ask, "Is there anybody who objects that I light a cigar or cigarette?" And if there is only one person who says, "Yes, I object!" then he is not allowed to smoke then and there, for the simple reason that he or she may not deprive others of their right to breathe air which is not polluted by tobacco smoke! He can smoke outside, if he so wishes, in his own car or in his own house, but not in the house of someone else, without obtaining permission from everybody present.



In practically every magazine we can read reports in which we are warned against smoking, and as a result not only many doctors, but also many others, have quit the habit. Statistics have shown that the lifespan of a heavy cigarette smoker is an average of 15% shorter than that of a nonsmoker, and that a smoker is twice as likely as a non-smoker to die before the age of 65. The death rate from lung cancer — the most conspicuous index of smoking damage — tripled between 1950 and 1975, and much more can be said or written about the terrible results of cigarette smoking. And this brings me to another aspect of the case.

In I Corinthians 6:19 the Apostle Paul writes, "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." And here comes the serious question to all smokers, "Do you believe that you glorify the Lord in your body by defiling it with your tobacco smoking?" The Heidelberg Catechism teaches us in Lord's Day 50, as a part of the requirements of the sixth commandment: "moreover that I harm not myself nor wilfully expose myself to any danger."

It is beyond any doubt, after what has been reported as quoted above — which reports can be and have been substantiated by many more — that tobacco smoking is very harmful to health, and consequently to the life of every smoker.

I realize that in the past many were ignorant of these dangers. But at present ignorance can no longer be advanced as a defence. Therefore every Christian, who thus far has been a smoker, should do his utmost to break with this habit.

I regret that among our ministers there are several who are heavy smokers. I can hardly imagine that these brothers fruitfully can preach a sermon, based on the Lord's Day 50. Everyone who will hear him preach will say, "Physician, heal yourself!" And this counts as well for elders and deacons, who have to be examples for the flock which is entrusted into their care.

It is my sincere wish that all our brothers and sisters, who are in the habit of smoking will ask themselves earnestly, "Is what I am doing to the glory of our Lord?"

JOHN DE HAAS

## Christian Farmers Seek Meeting with Henderson

MILTON: January 17, 1980.

The Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario is seeking a meeting with the Honourable Lorne Henderson, Minister of Agriculture and Food.

The CFFO Provincial Board has adopted a major statement of its concerns about agriculture in Ontario.

The statement argues that every scrap of food land in Ontario must be kept available for food production. The CFFO is willing to give up the so-called "right" to a retirement lot.

"We do not need a special status that is different from other citizens," argues the statement. "All severances should be made on the basis of good planning; not on the basis of who or what kind of resident owns the property."

The statement also points out that preserving food land is not enough. It argues that agriculture needs "planning *for*" just as other parts of our communities.

The Federation wants appointments to Commissions, Boards, or Tribunals to be based on recommendations from general farm organizations.

The CFFO wants the Minister to protect the market shares of pullet growers.

CFFO Chicken producers want something done about 20% of chicken processing being controlled by one firm.

"Some of our members" said Elbert van Donkersgoed, Executive Director of the Federation, "are concerned that the Chicken Board will not be able to plan production when so much of the market is controlled by one firm."

The new dairy quota exchange is of concern to the Federation. The Federation's Dairy Committee believes that the exchange system will bring all buyers into one forum and therefore put upward price pressure on quota. The Federation will be meeting with the Ontario Milk Marketing Board to discuss their concerns. They are asking for a commitment from the OMMB that the exchange will be stopped if the value remains too high.

The Federation is asking the Minister for effective alternatives in many areas to give the family farm a stronger role in agriculture in the 1980's.

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### Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

1 Dundas Street W.,  
Suite 2106, Box nr. 2  
Toronto, Ontario M5C 1C3  
Phone: 364-5443

#### OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

VAN AMEROM, L.A. geboren 7-9-1945, laatstbekende adres te Woodstock, Ontario.

VAN DIJK, Cornelis, geboren te Amsterdam op 7-3-1914, naar Canada vertrokken in 1954.

VAN EIJNDTHOVEN, Alphons, laatstbekende adres te Trenton, Ontario.

HERCKENRATH, T. laatstbekende adres te London, Ontario.

KOELJE-BRINKERS, Anne, geboren te Scheveningen op 1-5-1921, laatstbekende adres te Bowmanville, Ontario.

MARE, Frederik Antonius, geboren 6-3-1954 te Haarlem, naar Canada vertrokken in 1978.

NORDER, Geert, geboren te Hoogezand op 27-10-1914, naar Canada vertrokken in 1953.

POSTMA, Andreas Mattias, geboren te Den Haag op 26-2-1940, laatstbekende adres te Toronto, Ontario.

PORTER-DE JONG, Maria, geboren te Aalsmeer op 2-5-1945, laatstbekende adres te Stouffville, Ontario.

SCHNEIDER, John Henry, geboren te Teeswater op 21-4-1915, laatstbekende adres te Putte.

SMIT, Dirk Jacobus, geboren op 13-7-1924, naar Canada vertrokken in 1953.

WENKENBACH, Johannes Helenus, geboren te Den Haag op 13-12-1914.

DE WIT, Willem Jacobus, geboren op 17-9-1948, naar Canada vertrokken in oktober 1979.

De Consul-Generaal, voor deze:  
MEVR. G. SCHNITZLER

# Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund (C.R.W.R.F.)

During the months of January and February you received an insert in your local Church bulletins. These articles were two letters which the C.R.W.R.F. received in response to the aid that was given by the organization. For those who missed these letters, we will include them again in this article.

It has been a while since we first mentioned the need for aid to Zaire (referring to the letter from Miss Jane Raffloer), and therefore we shall tell you again what has happened during the past year in this regard.

Towards the end of 1978, the C.R.W.R.F. became aware of the great need in Zaire. Through the C.M.A. (The Christian and Missionary Alliance) we heard that Miss Jane Raffloer worked as a missionary in this area. A letter was sent asking Miss Raffloer how great the need in Zaire was and where in Zaire she was situated.

Within a short time we received a reply to our letter. Here follow some of her remarks.

Since being a missionary in 1966, I do not remember Zaire being in a more drastic situation.

What foods are available are out of reach to most people. Money has no value.

There has been no rain since November 1977.

Zaire has now more refugees than any other country because of surrounding wars.

Crops are almost non-existent because of the lack of rain. Rivers continue to dry up, causing much disease.

Miss Raffloer stressed that there was a need for funds to give food relief and funds for equipment for digging wells.

From reading these remarks one will realize that the need in Zaire was very great, and that any help would be greatly appreciated.

After having received this information, it was decided to give financial support to the work in Zaire. The amount of \$3000.00 (\$3550.50 Canadian) was sent to the C.M.A. which placed the money in the Zaire Mission Relief account.

All this happened over the past year (1979), and in October we re-

ceived a letter from Miss Raffloer, which you could have read in your local bulletin. Here it is again.

\* \* \*

"Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$3550.50 for the hungry. I deeply appreciate your heartfelt interest, concern, and prayers for the Zairian people.

We had hoped that by this fall we would be seeing many signs of improvements since the drought of 1977 so drastically affected our area. Unfortunately, this is not the case.

A recent visit from U.S. Agricultural Department specialists informed us of their findings. This area is worse off today than it was a year ago. And, it may take one to two more years to overcome the effects of the drought.

Due to spasmodic rains, too early rains not allowing fields to be burned, the diseased ground has hindered crop production. Most crops continue to produce 19-14% only. Yes, sadly we are still in a critical situation due to the drought. Malnutrition continues to be on the rampage. On a daily average right here in Boma, ten to fourteen children die daily from lack of food.

The U.S. government is assisting some with wheat, soya oil, and milk powder. However, there are many areas not touched by this assistance and specific areas we would like to help if we had the possibility.

Thus, your gracious gift will be used to combat the hunger and malnutrition in our area of Bas-Zaire. Thank you for caring and sharing.

Above all continue to pray for the regularization of seasons and a good rainfall this year due to start in two weeks. Pray for the Zairian people still suffering from the effects of the drought. Many relief efforts cause many to have tender hearts toward Him.

Gratefully in Him,  
Jane Raffloer

\* \* \*

The need in Zaire is still very great. If at all possible the C.R.W.R.F. would like to help them again this year. At this time it is not possible be-

cause our funds are very low. But we hope that through your support by prayers and donations it will become a reality.

If you would like to help in this particular area, you may send your donation to us, with the words "Zaire Relief" written on the back of your cheque. Our address is:

C.R.W.R.F.  
Box 793,  
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y7

\* \* \*

The other letter that the C.R.W.R.F. received was written by one of the nurses of the Busan Gospel Hospital in Korea. Here is the letter again in condensed form.

\* \* \*

I am going to tell you about our work from June to the end of August. During these months 668 people visited our clinic and we visited 606 houses. At our clinic, Mrs. Park and Miss Lee visit from door to door every day, by turns, to prevent infections, diseases, and teach about inoculations. Our medical services to the people are free, and we preach the gospel to those who visit our clinic. But our ultimate purpose is preaching the gospel, and the medical treatment is a means of reaching the people.

During the last few months, ten people became interested in the Gospel. Four people accepted the Word of God.

During the month of August, we couldn't do much work because of the summer holidays. In the hot weather it was very hard to visit from door to door and work at the clinic. Now we have nice, cool weather. Mrs. Park is working very hard in preaching the Gospel and treating the sick people.

Many thanks to C.R.W.R.F. for helping us. I hope you will help us at all times through your prayers.

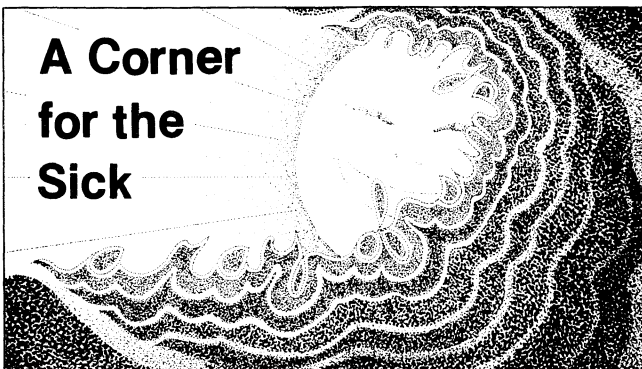
**P.S.** Mrs. Park is the same person as Mrs. Shim from previous letters. Mrs. Park is the Western style, while Mrs. Shim is the Korean style. (We keep our family name even if we get married.)

\* \* \*

The health clinic in Korea is one of the projects which the C.R.W.R.F. supports. In the near future, we hope to give you more information concerning the work of the C.R.W.R.F. Watch for these articles in your local Church bulletins and future *Clarions*.

(Mrs.) YOLANDA DEBOERSAP  
C.R.W.R.F.

## A Corner for the Sick



Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established.

Proverbs 19:21

*How often do we not experience that our plans turn out quite differently from what we had planned? This may be the case with just small matters, which do not really interfere too much with our daily existence, but it is different when it concerns our future.*

*The wise words of Proverbs 19:21, are a reminder for us, "that it is the purpose of the Lord that will be established."*

*When we make our plans for the future, we will have to remember that without the Lord's blessing, our plans will not prosper. Even the king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He will.*

*This is comforting for us to know, but it also gives us a warning, not rebelliously to go our own way. We are as clay in God's hands, and He will mold this clay so that it becomes an instrument in His hands, whenever He thinks it necessary.*

*Paul had to learn to ask, "What shall I do, Lord?" We can read about this in Acts, chapters 9, 16, and 22. Paul's future changed dramatically from being a persecutor to being persecuted. This was NOT what he had planned! The Lord's purpose WAS established when Paul willingly surrendered to God's will.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*We will start with some thank you notes!*

*Albert Dorgeloos appreciated all the birthday cards he received. He had a very good birthday. Thank you brothers and sisters!*

*Hank Orsel sent a note expressing his thanks for the many cards he received for his birthday. He wrote that he sent everyone a card back. That was a nice way of showing your appreciation, Hank! Thanks!*

\*\*\*\*\*

*The Lord willing, we will have three birthdays to remember for the month of April. Please mark them on your calendars!*

### DEREK KOK

377 Dominion Street,  
Strathroy, Ontario

*Derek will be celebrating his 10th birthday on April 2nd. Derek suffered from meningitis as a baby, and as a result of that has brain damage.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### MARINUS FOEKENS

Norfold 1 South,  
Southwestern Regional Centre,  
Cedar Springs, Ontario

*Marinus lives in a home for mentally-handicapped people. He enjoys getting cards for his birthday. He loves babies, animals, and colourful cards. His birthday is on April 19th, he will be 28 years old then.*

\*\*\*\*\*

### ARLENE DE WIT

Barnston Island,  
Surrey, B.C. V3T 4N2

*Arlene will celebrate her 19th birthday on April 23rd. She lives at home and attends a special school daily. She has eyesight in one eye only, and her speech is also limited. She loves to receive mail!*

\*\*\*\*\*

*Shall we make it a happy day again for our "Birthday Children," brothers and sisters?*

*I have received many comments and thank you notes. The cards and letters you are sending are very much welcomed and appreciated. I especially would like to mention our senior brothers and sisters who so faithfully respond to our requests. Thank you, everyone!*

\*\*\*\*\*

*I have received a thank you note which I will pass on to the readers of CLARION via our Corner.*

*Thank you!*

*During and after the eight-week stay in the hospital, I received many good wishes for the recovery of my health. They did not only come from brothers and sisters of the Hamilton congregation for which I could thank in the Bulletin of the Hamilton Church, but also from many other congregations. Too many to thank personally. I assure all who wrote to me, that your words did a lot of good to me and that I appreciated them very much.*

*The LORD answered prayers and an operation could be postponed. Strenuous and faithful exercises may be the way for further strengthening."*

*Rev. W. Loopstra*

Send your requests to:

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

# Word Search — Puzzle No. 63

## PROVERBS

T	N	A	G	O	R	R	A	H	S	E	S	I	P	S	E	D	R	O	D	I	G	J	S
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Abaddon	directs	good	king	persuades	scoffer	
abomination	discipline	greedy	lamp	pit	Sheol	
admonition	discord	guards	learning	poverty	sluggard	
arrogant	discretion		leech	prolongs	snares	uprightness
attentive	drunkard	harm	life	prosperity	Solomon	
		hates	lips	prudent	son	vigilance
balance	ear	haughty	listen	pure	sparing	
bind	eyes	hears	lying	pursuits	strength	ways
bribes	falsehood	hope			strife	wicked
	fear	humility	mocks	regard	stronghold	wisdom
curse	folly		mouth	reproof	surety	wise
	foolish	incline	nought	reward		worthless
David		insight		riches	teaching	
delight	gain	instruction	partiality	rod	tongue	
despises	glad		paths	right	treasure	
destruction	glutton	just		ruin	trust	
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W.DIEK

# our little magazine

Hi Busy Beavers!

How did you enjoy your March break?  
 Did you have a good time?  
 What did you do?  
 Did you go away to visit a cousin or a friend?  
 Maybe you went somewhere with your family!  
**AND YOU FINISHED YOUR ENTRIES FOR OUR CONTESTS, RIGHT?**  
 That's great!  
 I'm looking forward to getting lots of mail from you!

\* \* \* \* \*

Time goes fast. It's time for birthday wishes!

We all join in wishing the Busy Beavers who celebrate an April birthday a very, very happy day. We hope you'll all have a really good time together with your friends and family. May the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead.

Audrey Van Veldhuizen	April 1	Carolyn Stieva Richard Slaa	April 12 14
Karen Wieggers	1	Annette Bosscher	17
Rose Barendregt	2	Emma Bosma	22
Peter Van Assen	2	Annette Haan	22
Kenneth Wendt	3	Betty Bouwers	24
Denise Dijkstra	4	Carl Dorgeloos	25
Evelyn Hamoen	5	Adrian Hamoen	25
Yvonne Selles	5	Karen Stam	25
Meta Bosscher	6	Henrietta Vink	26
Marion Overbeek	6	Christine Vis	28
Tanya Jansen	8	Ria Hofsink	29
Gerald Van Woudenberg	9	Ralph Van Eerden	29
Anthony Tenhage	10		

The birthday wishes are also for you Busy Beaver *Carolyn Kok*. But we don't know what day to list you under!



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Bernard Breukelman*. We are happy to have you join us. We hope you'll really like being a Busy Beaver and joining in all our activities. Do you help with the pigs every day, Bernard? That will keep you busy!

And welcome to you, too, *Wayne Breukelman*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already sharing your riddles with us. Could you skate very far on the river behind your house, Wayne? Or was there too much snow on the ice?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Margo Hofsink*. I hope you'll really enjoy being a Busy Beaver. I see you and your sister had lots of fun in the snow. Are you sorry it's gone now, Margo? Will you write and tell me how you did on your Indian test? Bye for now.

Hello, *Irene De Jong*. Thank you for your nice chatty letter. I can see you're used to writing letters! I'm glad you're

feeling better, Irene. Have you entered our Contests? I hope you will!

Thanks for your letter and your quiz, and not to forget, your contribution to our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT, *Edith Hofsink*! I think baby James must have enjoyed your company, Edith. How is your music coming along? Congratulations on your good project. Bye for now.

Sounds to me as if you had a very nice Christmas concert, *David Nienhuis*. I just wish I could have heard you! I see you're also interested in stamp collecting. We'll see if some of the other Busy Beavers are, too. I know some have told me about it before.

*Busy Beavers*, if any of you are interested in stamp collecting and stamp clubs Busy Beaver David Nienhuis would like you to write him at this address:

*David Nienhuis*  
 36 Hopewell Crescent,  
 Hamilton, Ontario L8T 1P4

## QUIZ TIME

This time Busy Beaver *Diane Smith* has a go-together poem and quiz for us. I think you'll like them.

### Moses

The daughter of Pharaoh came to bathe  
 Down to the Nile River with her maids.  
 And all of a sudden she saw a basket  
 And in it there was a wee boy called Moses.

### Wrong Order

1. Moses fleeing Egypt
2. The ten plagues
3. Moses at the well
4. Moses' birth
5. The burning bush
6. Moses as prince
7. Aaron meets him
8. God speaks to Moses
9. Moses kills an Egyptian
10. Moses' trip to Egypt

### Right Order

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(Answers next time.)

And Busy Beaver, *Corinne Terpstra* has one more puzzle for you!

Code

W - 1	L - 6
I - 10	B - 2
Y - 15	E - 8
H - 5	K - 14
A - 3	C - 4
S - 7	R - 11
D - 9	O - 17
P - 12	F - 19
T - 13	

1 5 3 13 9 13 15

7 12 8 6 6 8 9

2 3 4 14 1 3 11 9 7 10 7 :

6 10 11 12 3 6 17 17 19 15 13 9 ?

3 12 11 10 6 19 17 17 6

9 13 15 !