

# Clarion

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## Shepherd's Concept of the Covenant

In the previous issue we published the News Release of Westminster Theological Seminary about the dismissal of Mr. Norman Shepherd, Associate Professor of Systematic Theology. Although Rev. J. Geertsema already paid some attention to this case in the Press Review of November 6, 1981, and following, we may not bypass it in our editorials. Westminster has a unique place in the Presbyterian and Reformed world, the person of Prof. Shepherd is well-known in our Canadian Reformed circles, and the relation of these churches to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church may be affected.

The unique position of Westminster Theological Seminary is due to its struggle against modernist theology and its peculiar blend of Presbyterian and Reformed ways of thinking. Westminster was born in 1929 in order to continue the true tradition of Princeton in adherence to the Presbyterian standards. Gresham Machen preserved the inheritance of Alexander, the Hodges, and B.B. Warfield. In C. Van Til, R.B. Kuypers, and N. Stonehouse there was a direct link to the continental theology, and, more specifically, the Reformed theology of The Netherlands. Men of the Christian Reformed Church in North America and those who later established the Orthodox Presbyterian Church stood shoulder to shoulder in their endeavours to dam up the flood of theological liberalism, most rampant in its subtle criticism of God's infallible Word. The founding of Westminster Seminary preceded the establishment of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. It always remained an independent institution; actions of Westminster may not be ascribed to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the other way around, although in persons of many members of the Faculty there was — and still is — a not unimportant link.

Professor Norman Shepherd is well-known in the Canadian Reformed Churches. As a member of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Inter-Church Relations of the OPC he attended some sessions of our General Synod in Orangeville, 1968, the same Synod that decided to establish the Theological College, now located in Hamilton. In November 1980 he was the first official delegate of the OPC to visit one of our synods. He was well received at the Synod of Smithville (see Acts, Art. 56 and 68), and during his stay in Hamilton he presented a lecture of our College community. His knowledge of the Dutch language — he even speaks it fluently — gives him an easy access within the circles of our immigrant churches. But more important than ethnic pride is our recognition of a fine scholar who has acquainted himself with the Reformed theology of the European continent in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and who knows the confessional tradition in which the Heidelberg Catechism has a dominant place. Professor Shepherd is a typical represen-

tative of Westminster Theological Seminary. As a student of John Murray and Cornelius Van Til he combines in his person and theological interests and concerns the Presbyterian and Reformed streams that came together in Philadelphia. The manner in which he defended the Reformed doctrine of the Word of God and rebuked the attack on the confession concerning God's eternal reprobation warmed our hearts.

Then the rumour came that Shepherd's teaching itself had been indicted as being not orthodox. It was hardly believable. There are certain instinctive reactions. We know of sinful nature and of the possibility and reality of error in each and every man, except in our highest Prophet and Teacher. "All men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself," we say in Article 7 of our Belgic Confession. Nevertheless, we also confess God's preservation and the perseverance of the saints, and, therefore, we may expect continuity and consistency in the teaching of a truly Reformed theologian. To me this is also a matter of trust and loyalty. It is not impossible that Prof. Shepherd has used wrong expressions and formulations — which Reformed theologian has never done so? — and that his exegesis of a certain passage of Scripture is debatable. Only seldom do two exegetes agree completely. But if one trusts a theologian because he has shown himself to be an obedient listener to God's revelation in Scripture and a lover of the confession of Christ's catholic church, one will always ask: What is his intention? What is his aim, even though he uses expressions that are not immediately clear and unambiguous? It is evident that Prof. Shepherd has sought to emphasize the teaching of the book of James that a faith that does not obey is a dead faith and therefore a faith that does not justify.

There are a few documents that make his position clear. In November 1978 Prof. Shepherd presented a series of Thirty-Four Theses on Justification to the Presbytery of Philadelphia of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. One may wonder whether it was wise to do so. Prof. Shepherd could have taken the position that his accusers had to bring official charges and to substantiate them. If there is a sphere of distrust, a few written lines may fuel an unjust action. Besides this series of Thirty-Four Theses, Prof. Shepherd published a twenty-two-page essay in 1979 under the title *The Grace of Justification*. Because in the latest News Release also "doctrines related to the covenant" are mentioned, it should be noted that already in 1975 he had presented a paper on "The Covenant Context for Evangelism" (published in *The New Testament Student and Theology*, Vol. 3) and that Westminster Media issued five tapes of a conference in Summer 1981, entitled *Life in Covenant with God*. I do not hesitate to recommend that interested

readers or societies order these tapes (Box 27009, Philadelphia, PA. 19118. US \$17.00).

When we glance through this material we see that *The Grace of Justification* is the most elaborate publication on the topic of justification and good works. It takes its starting point in the message of the Epistle of James and appreciates the way in which this message is integrated with the New Testament as a whole. Prof. Shepherd first looks at the consonance of the teaching of James with Paul. He then places James in the broader context of the epistle to the Hebrews, the teaching of Paul, and the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is clear that Prof. Shepherd wants to stress that living faith is faith working through love (Galatians 5:6); the faith which lays hold on Christ for justification is not alone. These statements are in line with the Presbyterian tradition. The Westminster Confession of Faith, Chap. XI, Sect. 2, declares that faith receiving and resting on Christ and his righteousness is the alone instrument of justification. But his confession goes on to say that this faith is never alone. It is ever accompanied with all other saving graces. The proof texts offered by the Westminster Assembly are James 2:17, 22, 26 and Galatians 5:6.

Francis Turretin was a leading exponent of classic Reformed orthodoxy in the latter part of the seventeenth century. In answer to the question whether faith alone justifies, he observed:

The question is not whether solitary faith, that is, faith separated from the other virtues, justifies, which we grant could not easily be the case since it is not even true and living faith; but whether it alone concurs to the act of justification, which we assert: as the eye alone sees, but not when torn out of the body. Thus the particle alone does not modify the subject but the predicate, that is, faith alone does not justify, but only faith justifies; the coexistence of love with faith in him who is justified is not denied, but its coefficient or co-operation in justification.

Turretin has always maintained a strong influence in the Presbyterian theology in America. His *Institutio* was the dominant handbook for Dogmatics in Princeton until Charles Hodge replaced it by his standard work. It is evident that Shepherd's position is in agreement with Turretin; he emphasized the coexistence of love with faith in him who is justified.

At the same time those who have been nurtured on the solid food of the Heidelberg Catechism remember Question 87: "Can they, then, not be saved who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, do not turn to God?" Answer: "By no means; for the Scripture declares that no unchaste person, idolator, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Prof. Shepherd referred to Hebrews 12:14 that speaks about the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

The latest development in the Shepherd case is the broadening or deepening of the attack on his teaching; now also "doctrines related to the covenant" are mentioned. It is possibly a logical or natural development and it makes the controversy even more important to us. Already in the Thirty-four Theses of 1978 the covenant of God came to the foreground. Let us read a few theses of Prof. Shepherd:

18. Faith, repentance, and new obedience are not the cause or ground of salvation or justification, but are, as covenantal response to the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, the way (Acts 24:14; II Peter 2:2, 21) in which the Lord of the Covenant brings

his people into the full possession of eternal life.

19. Those who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and are his disciples, who walk in the Spirit and keep covenant with God, are in a state of justification and will be justified on the day of judgment; whereas unbelieving, ungodly, unrighteous, and impenitent sinners who are covenant breakers or strangers to the covenant of grace, are under the wrath and curse of God . . . .
28. In a right use of the law, the people of God neither merit nor seek to merit anything by their obedience to God, but out of love and gratitude serve the Lord of the Covenant as sons in the household of the Father and in this way are the beneficiaries of his fatherly goodness (Mal. 3:16-18).
32. The election of God stands firm so that sinners who are united to Christ, justified and saved, can never come into condemnation; but within the sphere of covenant life, election does not cancel out the responsibility of the believer to preserve in penitent and obedient faith since only they who endure to the end will be saved (Matt. 24:13; Mark 13:13).

Apart from a single expression — is "state of justification" not too static? — I wholeheartedly agree with Prof. Shepherd's covenantal approach. Here I see him in line with Dr. Klaas Schilder, and, what means more, in line with the Form of Baptism that the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands received from the Heidelberg theologians in the Palatinate. Most of our readers know the familiar words by heart: Whereas in all covenants there are contained two parts, therefore are we by God, through Baptism, admonished of and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature and walk in a godly life.

The Reformed confessor who listens to Shepherd's tapes about *Life in Covenant with God* recognizes his Form of Baptism in the way in which the speaker describes the Covenant as a relation between God and man, a relation of union and communion, a relation comparable to that of husband and wife with mutually binding ties of love and faithfulness. The Covenant is a relation with a promise and with a demand. I was filled with gratitude and even thrilled when I heard how Prof. Shepherd makes an eloquent plea for parental Christian schools based on the doctrine of the Covenant of God with us and our children. Westminster Theological Seminary cannot fulfil its historic function without such Reformed teaching. It is needed, more than ever, in the Presbyterian sector of America, that is influenced by a broad evangelicalism of Baptist brand. The danger is that now the Reformed doctrine of the Covenant will no longer be heard. Where was covenantal teaching in the synodical churches in The Netherlands after Dr. Klaas Schilder and others had been silenced? And another danger is lurking: If a Reformed theologian is dismissed on insufficient grounds, a reaction results. When later a real necessity arises to dismiss a heretic teacher, Synods and Boards have become paralyzed. He who first uses the means of deposition or dismissal in a wrong manner, cannot come to the right use anymore later. Is this not also a lesson from the deposition of Dr. Klaas Schilder in The Netherlands? The similarities in the Shepherd case and the Schilder case are too striking to be ignored.

J. FABER

## The Belgic Confession on the Church Declared Obsolete <sup>2</sup>

In the previous Press Review the readers were informed about what the editor of *The Banner* wrote in the October 26, 1981, issue about "The Church And The Churches." Besides the great benefit of the Reformation, the rediscovery of the gospel, there was also a great disadvantage, namely, the splintering of the church.

I would like to begin my remarks by expressing my agreement to a certain extent: it is indeed regrettable that the efforts of Calvin to bring Lutherans and Calvinists together failed. The division of believers in Christ also today is reason for sadness. And it is truly a bad thing that "today nearly any 'preacher' can 'start a church,'" as the Rev. Kuyvenhoven wrote. In such cases there is no serious church consciousness at all anymore.

Trying to understand the thrust of the article, I came to the conclusion that the editor's main goal was to warn against a further splintering of (especially) the (Christian Reformed) Church, and against the formation of still another denomination. After the introduction about the advantage and disadvantage of the Reformation, the article continued to state that the "Reformers never intended the church to be divided in many groups and branches," and that it is good to listen to Calvin "in a time when there are again grumblings among us about breaking the unity." Calvin wrote that "it is extreme arrogance in us, if we presume immediately to withdraw from the community of a church where the conduct of all members is not compatible either with our judgment or even with the Christian profession."

At the end the author comes back to this point when he writes that "meanwhile . . . we must constantly pray that the unity of the church of Christ be revealed in a broken world," and that "we must insist that the

church in which we hold membership . . . behaves, in faith and practice, as the local revelation of the one holy and catholic church of Jesus Christ." In other words: do not break the unity of the church further by leaving your own denomination, but keep working in your own local church.

It is within this frame of a warning against breaking away that the author speaks about the difference in situation between the 16th and 20th centuries: then there was only one true church, the church of the Reformation, over against one false church, the church of Rome, while now the church is "divided in many groups and branches." As I understand it, it is context that we also have to read what Kuyvenhoven says about the consequences of the difference in situation: in our modern situation Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession are no longer functional. That is the situation in the Christian Reformed Church, according to the author.

From what the writer, in the context of a warning against breaking the church's unity, says about the Belgic Confession's no longer being functional in today's ecclesiastical situation, I conclude that he means to say that a breaking away now cannot be justified on the basis of these Articles of the Confession. That would be arrogance. For when a few Reformed churches, on the basis of the Belgic Confession, "declare every church except their own a 'false' church," this reasoning leads to the extreme arrogance of which Calvin speaks, "under today's historical conditions," according to Kuyvenhoven, I hope to come back to this statement later. But I would first like to answer two questions. The first one is: Is it true that Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession no longer function in the Christian Reformed Church? And the second question is: Does our Confes-

sion about the church no longer fit in our twentieth century situation? In connection with the second question we also have to deal with the question whether Kuyvenhoven's manner of speaking is correct.

Is the picture of the Christian Reformed Church as given by *The Banner's* editor correct? Is the confession about the church as we have it in Art. 27-29 B.C. no longer functional there? Is it so that the CRC (Christian Reformed Church) in general has accepted the thinking of

Most evangelical Christians in North America [who] don't believe that the true church is visible, as our Confession says . . . . Evangelicals are quick to point out that the biblical teaching about the church, for which Christ died, refers to a mystical union of God's children, an interdenominational family of all real Christians. The real church, they say, is invisible?

I do not doubt that the picture which Kuyvenhoven gives is realistic and true. I think that also in the CRC this evangelical view is accepted by almost all. It is even so that we can often read the opinion or view that the different denominations are the branches of the one church. We met this also in Kuyvenhoven's article.

Now I shall show why I do not doubt that Kuyvenhoven's picture is correct. In a number of issues of *The Outlook* (July, Aug., Sept., and Nov. 1981), the magazine of the concerned CRC members who are organized in the Reformed Fellowship, articles appeared written by the Rev. Lubbertus Oostendorp. The title of these articles is "The Doctrine of the Church." In his second article (in the August issue) we read under the heading "The True — False Distinction":

What about the old distinction between the true and the false church? Who today would dare to apply to the contemporary confusion the rule of the Belgic Confession that "these two churches are easily known and distinguished from each other." Of course, the truth of this statement must be historically justified. Nor do we have to change the basic standards of judgment. Only the application has become hopelessly complex. However, the pressure toward ecumenicity should not force us to abandon the important distinction true — false. No new discoveries have warranted our denial of our heritage in the Protestant Reformation. Nor should we hastily call a church false. But many of our brethren in other communions who are rejecting the doctrinal and moral stand of several mainline denominations are worthy of our support. The distinction true — false must still be maintained.



For me the author is not very clear. He says that the confessional distinction true — false must be maintained, but the application has become hopelessly complex. What does the Rev. Oostendorp mean when he brings in the picture “brethren in other communions.” Are those communions the mainline denominations with their wrong doctrinal and moral stand? Are these mainline denominations to be characterized as false churches? Or can one not say that because of “our brethren” who are still in such denominations? But does the fact that a denomination has believers in its midst determine that it is still a true church? Is this what the Rev. Oostendorp means when he warns that we should not hastily call a church false? I get that idea because of what he writes further. For, in what follows, his word that we must maintain the distinction true — false *practically* falls away and is said to be not useable and not workable. Actually, he writes the same as what Kuyvenhoven wrote, but using other words, and, by doing so, proves the truth of the picture which the latter gave us: in the CRC (*The Outlook* included?) the Confession about true and false is no longer functional. Rev. Oostendorp writes:

More practical however for most of us would be an emphasis on “better” or “worse.” The crisis of a church being so [!], J.G.] false that one must leave it arises only in extreme situations. The duty to seek the “better” and rebuke the “worse” is a constant challenge in every church.

Does he mean here that we have to seek the “better” things IN a church? Or must we read this as: we must seek a “better” church (as is meant later)? From what follows I have the impression that the former is the case here. The author continues:

Paul’s letters, as well as the message to the seven churches of Rev. 2 and 3, stress the importance of not being too content with the fact that we are a “true” church.

Pastor Oostendorp refers to Rev. 3:2 and 17, 18, a church that thinks it is alive or seeing, but in fact is dead or blind. In this warning against a false confidence of “we are alive,” “we are a true church,” while things so easily go wrong, we feel his pastoral concern with the church(es) he belongs to, where he sees a development in a direction he does not think is good. But then he continues:

In teaching the doctrines of ecclesiology the issue true — false is not par-

ticularly helpful. Much more helpful is the concept better — worse. Seldom does Scripture deal with the issue of a totally false church. In fact, it is rather difficult to find even defective congregations like Corinth put in that category. The New Testament however is constantly pointing out defects . . . and pressing on toward an ideal church.

In dealing with problems in the denomination or in trying to make improvements it is all too easy to be forced into a psychological or logical corner by the constant reference to true — false. Strange as it may seem, overly zealous defense of the status quo has historically hindered the very reforms which might have saved in a critical situation. Practically every church reform I have studied saw the conflict deepened into a true — false crisis. And every time the critics were forced into more radical judgments by the blindness and vehemence of the defenders. This certainly was true of the Roman Catholics and Luther and of the dealings of the Dutch Church with De Cock and Abraham Kuyper. Instead of seeking to remedy evils, the defenders stubbornly denied their existence. “We dare you to call us the false church!” became the defensive cry. And then by persecuting the prophetic spirits who dared to criticize, they proved how close they were to the description of the false church in the last sentences of Art. XXIX of the Belgic Confession (a church that persecutes Christians).

In dealing with the marks of the church using the distinction better — worse, we can try to press on to an ideal church. Then we can talk frankly about better preaching of the “whole counsel of God.”

In other words, the Roman Catholic Church in the days of Luther and Calvin, and the Dutch Reformed Church in the days of De Cock and Kuyper, were *close to* the description of the false church. But, according to Oostendorp, we can not say that they were in fact a false church. But this means that the Reformers, calling Rome a false church, and De Cock, or actually his Consistory and his congregation in Ulrum who issued and signed the “Act of Secession And Return,” were not correct when they called the Dutch Reformed Church in 1834 a false church. It can be explained psychologically that they called Rome and the Dutch Reformed Church false, but their persecutors led them into it, according to Oostendorp. Is a psychological explanation not replacing confessional, prophetic language here?

This manner of speaking is also more in line with Dr. Abraham Kuyper’s thinking. Kuyper did not

want to say that he and the others who separated from the Dutch Reformed Church in the “Doleantie,” separated from a false church. They said that they separated from a false hierarchical system governing this church. The Secession, however, plainly spoke of a separation from a false church, herewith maintaining Art. 28 and 29 of the Belgic Confession. Abraham Kuyper’s name is connected with the doctrine of the plurality of the church: the true, invisible church appears visibly in many forms (pluri-form); that is: in many different denominations, which all show an aspect of the truth.

It is good, I think, also to make another remark. The Rev. Oostendorp points to the churches in Rev. 2 and 3, in Galatia, and to the church in Corinth, where the situation was not



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“ideal” either; far from it: it was worse rather than better; and that these churches were not called false churches. That is the argument to warn us today not hastily (should we read: not at all?) to call a denomination false. Close to it, perhaps. But not really false.

In my opinion, we have to be careful with using the descriptions in the New Testament of churches where there was much lacking in conduct and doctrine in the way that Oostendorp does.

True, Rev. 2 and 3, and Paul’s epistles to the Corinthians and to the Galatians, show us pictures of congregations that are far from perfect. But we must keep in mind two things. In the first place, in these parts of the Bible Christ — or Paul, as apostle of Christ — maintains the norms for the church. And especially in Rev. 2 and 3 we have the warning of the King of the church that He will take the candlestick away from, or spew out of His mouth, such an unfaithful church, if it does not show repentance and turn back from its sin. And in the second place, we have to do with the very beginnings of the church in the New Testament. These churches were formed only a short time before the letters were written. And when a church is formed on a mission field and difficulties arise — when there are wrong doctrines or a falling back is sinful conduct — that does not mean that such a young congregation immediately is called a false church. But when the church has existed for many centuries, and then as a whole, in general, becomes apostate and hardens itself in its disobedience, and refuses to submit humbly to God’s Word, and acts in that hardening in sin as is described in Art. 29, then we must watch out that we do not refuse to speak the language of the Confession.

The use of the better — worse distinction so very easily brings along the acceptance, practically, of “better” and “worse” in the same church. This is especially dangerous when we find ourselves in a situation in which the powers of deviation have made themselves so strong that those who want to hold on to the old truth have no way anymore of keeping the church on that old track by the use of church discipline regarding both doctrine and life. Such a situation is a terrible one. But such a situation easily becomes acceptable when we use the better — worse distinction, while it is not acceptable when we abide by the confessional distinction true —

false, maintaining hereby the right use of discipline as the third mark of a true church.

In Rev. 2 and 3 Christ admonishes. He also warns that in case of a hardening in sin He will use church discipline: He will take the lampstand away; He will spew out of His mouth (Rev. 2:5, 3:16). If we point out, with reference to Rev. 2 and 3, that also in the early days there was so much wrong with churches which nevertheless were called churches of Christ, and use this, practically, to accept such a status quo which we cannot change (anymore), I do not think that we use Rev. 2 and 3 in a correct way. Abiding by the Confession with the true — false distinction and the three marks of a true church helps us more in the confusion of our days than the adapting distinction of better — worse.

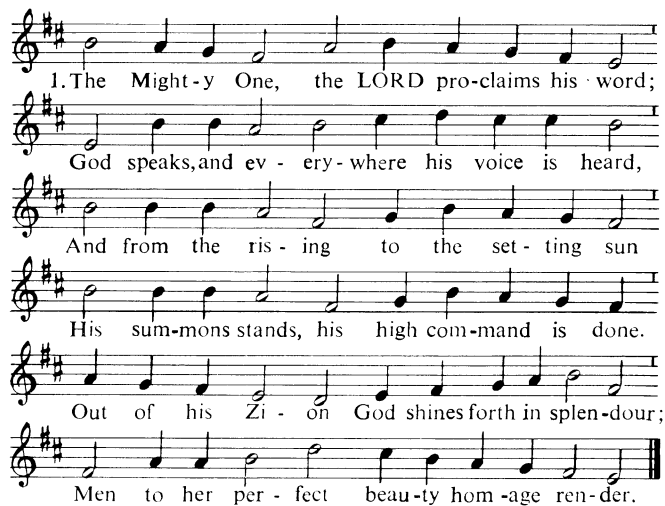
Another critical remark I would like to make is with respect to that speaking of an “ideal church.” This fits quite well with the thinking and

speaking of better and worse. But is it biblical and confessional? An ideal or perfect church we never will have here on earth. The point is: Is a church true church? And this can be determined when we maintain the norm: the marks of a true church.

But I have to come back to the main point. That was Kuyvenhoven’s picture of the CRC: in this church the Belgic Confession, speaking about the church, is no longer functional. Must the conclusion not be that this picture appears to be true? Does not *The Outlook* give proof? The Rev. Oostendorp says that the distinction true — false must be maintained. But he gives the impression that this maintaining is a maintaining on paper, but not in the practice of life, in today’s ecclesiastical situation — because we cannot work with it. We must use the distinction better — worse in daily church life. Next time I hope to continue with the other question which I formulated above.

J. GEERTSEMA

## Psalm 50



1. The Might-y One, the LORD pro-claims his word;  
God speaks, and ev-ery-where his voice is heard,  
And from the ris-ing to the set-ting sun  
His sum-mons stands, his high com-mand is done.  
Out of his Zi-on God shines forth in splen-dour;  
Men to her per-fect beau-ty hom-age ren-der.

2. Our God will not keep silent but speak out;  
Devouring fire puts all his foes to rout.  
A mighty tempest round about him swirls  
When he his summons at creation hurls.  
The heavens above, the earth below shall hear him  
When he gives judgment to the men that fear him.

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## FROM THE SCRIPTURES

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*“He will not cry or lift up His voice, and make it heard in the street; a bruised reed He will not break, and a dimly burning wick He will not quench; He will faithfully bring forth justice.” — Isaiah 42:2, 3*

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# Soft Words

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The LORD had called the prophet Isaiah to announce the coming of the Servant of the Lord, the chosen one of God who would bring justice to Israel and to all the nations. In describing the coming servant, Isaiah says that He will speak softly and tread quietly in the land. Now we know that the prophesy of the Servant is fulfilled in Jesus Christ — and His work. Yet the Lord Jesus was certainly not silent in His work. He let His voice be heard and never backed down. On more than one occasion, His voice let out a very urgent and penetrating cry, John 2:16, 7:37. Even after He was cast out of the synagogue, the Lord Jesus continued to preach and teach. Why then does Isaiah say that He would not make His voice heard in the street?

The silence of the Servant is not the silence of fear. What the prophet tells us is that the Lord Jesus spoke and worked in a unique way. His aim was not to draw attention to Himself, but to bear witness to the Father, John 5:30. Seeing Him, one had to see the Father. This principle conditioned the whole ministry of the Lord Jesus. When He performed miracles, He often commanded the recipients of His gifts not to make Him known. He told demons to keep silent, and frequently withdrew from the crowds Himself, Matt. 12:15ff. As Matthew says, these actions implied the fulfilment of Isaiah’s prophesy.

And there was good reason for this approach, not simply on the part of the Lord Jesus, but also in the light of the situation in which He was called to reveal the mercy of the Father. The Lord Jesus appeared in a time of near-total apostasy, a time when nations and peoples had long forgotten the way of the LORD and lived in darkness. And, as the prophet repeatedly states, things were not much different in Israel. The whole world was like a bruised reed and a dimly burning wick. Injustice, hatred, and idolatry were everywhere. The people of Israel had also adopted many of the customs and religious habits of their neighbours.

Consequently, the arrival of the Lord Jesus could not help being a time of confrontation and upheaval. The Lord Jesus does everything He can not to be a stumbling block for anyone. And in His person He was never a stumbling block for any hearer, because He was without sin. He spoke softly and tread quietly. He did not seek His own interests in any way. That is why all hostility against Him arose solely because

of His *message*. He was hated because of His claims and His work.

It is remarkable to notice the many ways in which the Lord Jesus lived and behaved according to Isaiah’s prophesy. He not only hid Himself, John 8:59, but also veiled His words, Luke 18:34. He consistently spoke in parables, Mark 4:34, and occasionally used hidden and obscure speech with His disciples, John 10:6; 16:25, 29. He came to *conceal* as much as He came to *reveal*. His speaking was matched by His silence, and His appearance was complemented with His withdrawal. In coming, He made haste to leave; in delaying His time, He announced His imminent departure, John 7:8, 33.

All this shows the kind of King the Lord Jesus is. He came *from above* and had no need to assert Himself. His Kingdom was not a kingdom of force and oppression. The way of obedience and submission to Him was at the same time the way of true and perfect freedom. For He did not come to bind anyone, but to set us free, John 8:31, 32. He came to revive the smoldering wick and bring life to the dying reed.

And if it was true for God’s people and the surrounding peoples then, how much more is it not true for us? “While we were yet helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly,” says Paul, Rom. 5:6. Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. He came with that glorious work of God that could and did lift us from the mire. When He first spoke, we were not able to understand. But we have been enlightened by the power of the gospel, and today may share in the fulness of His grace.

For today nothing is hidden any longer. The age of hiddenness and concealment is over. The Spirit has been poured out, and the announcement of the mystery has been made known. God has revealed everything, and sealed His promises with the Spirit who gives understanding to all who listen and believe. No longer are we restricted to parables and dark sayings. Now we may hear and understand; now we may share in the proclamation of peace.

See what a King we have, a heavenly King! He is the right King for us dimly burning wicks, the only King! For He has *absolute* power, but not an ounce of coercion and force. He takes full control, and yet sets us free. And we can only praise the LORD who has so richly provided for us!

J. DEJONG

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# school X crossing

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## THE ANNUAL HEADACHE

Recently, I received the minutes of a meeting of the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies. The main discussion seemed to have centered around a new salary schedule for the 1982-83 school year. The amount of time which is spent annually in the preparation of these schedules is to be applauded. It's often a thankless task for the committee members. Seemingly no matter what is produced, some people are dissatisfied.

Some personal misgivings about the way salary schedules are used by various school boards can be summarized as follows.

According to some teachers, they are not allowed to see the salary schedules: the facts and figures are strictly the property of the board. In some school societies, the work of the salary committee is entirely ignored. Some teachers claim that they have absolutely no input when their salaries are set. I'm not in favour of "employer-employee" negotiations at all, but I fail to see how a one-sided approach, as far as salary negotiations are concerned, can do much to build up a good board/staff relationship.

In a School Crossing column a few months ago, I noted that only a few people seemed to be planning a teaching career in our schools. This was based on a recent survey conducted by one of our teachers. The number of people preparing for a high school teaching career was even less. Some reactions were received; all came from teachers. Their comments can be best summarized in the following editorial (*Canadian Reformed Teachers Association Magazine*, Nov./Dec. 1981).

### *A Matter of Dollars and "Sense"*

The topic of teachers' salaries is one of continuing interest if not controversy in many a staff room. It is a topic much discussed behind closed doors, but seldom broached in public. It's time this topic came "out of the closet." Surreptitious discussion only engenders suspicion and distrust. Why shouldn't we be free to discuss such a vital subject openly? It's true that there are conflicting opinions among

teachers and boards on these matters. Some feel that the determination of salary and benefits is a matter between the individual teacher and the board. Others feel that staffs can have an input into the determination of a salary grid. No one would deny that the Boards have the final authority to determine salaries, benefits and conditions.

In Ontario there is a League which comes with a salary proposal to the Boards after input from, among others, the CRTA. Boards, however, are under no obligation to follow the schedule although most no doubt use it as their base. In other provinces, there is no League (as yet) and hence no common salary grid. Here it is every board (and teachers mostly) on its own, although some associate members of the League in Ontario do receive a copy of their schedule (which may not be relevant to them).

In some places salary schedules are pegged at 10% below the local public school schedule. Others have achieved full (or almost full) parity. No doubt that's only a small minority. According to information from various sources, there are some who are paid at 70% or lower compared to the local grid. In other words, invariably below what others in the same profession are getting. This is a situation that has persisted for many years. Will it continue to do so?

In a recent "School Crossing" (*Clarion*) it was noted that there seemed to be few young people planning to go into teaching in our schools. Why that is so was left up in the air. Could it be that the generally low level of compensation is *one* of the reasons?

If we wish to have our schools staffed by competent, qualified and dedicated people, it is time to recognize that in the level of compensation. Willingness to work for lower wages is not necessarily to be equated with increased dedication.

Many good reasons can be given why the situation existed (and still does) — small numbers, building costs, etc., etc. — but the time has come to recognize that teachers should not have to subsidize the cost of Reformed education by their willingness to work at 25% or less below what their counterparts are making doing the same work basically.

Progress is being made in this area, but is it fast enough and consistent enough? Teachers, too, have to be responsible over against their support-

ing committees. Nevertheless, the onus is on the societies (through their boards) to provide teachers with a salary commensurate with their training and responsibility in educating the covenant children entrusted to them.

It's a matter of dollars and "sense."

Your comments and/or reactions are invited!

\* \* \*

The reasons for the "annual headache" have not been fully explained yet, although the editorial from the CRTA magazine certainly points out one.

Some other points to consider:

(a) Certain deadlines have been established by the League of Canadian Reformed Schools in regard to the issuing and returning of signed contracts. Due to teacher shortages in some areas (I suppose), these deadlines are not always adhered to by every school board. When teachers are already approached about their intentions for the following school year during the month of December, something is drastically wrong! It is quite difficult to make an objective decision when less than half of the school year has gone by. Personally, I wish that "this whole business" could be moved up to April or May. At least then, most boards' and teachers' thoughts are directed towards the following school year.

(b) The annual ritual of signing contracts baffles me. This policy is seemingly adhered to in most schools. Unless one is involved in professional sports and signs a five-year contract worth six or seven digits, I can't see the reason for it. It seems to be quite unique to the teaching profession. The point is: Does it have to be this way? The establishment of a "permanent" contract after teaching successfully in a school for two or three years (when properly worded) seems to be one answer to the annual contract.

Your reactions to "The Annual Headache" are cordially invited. The purpose of dealing with it in School Crossing is (hopefully) to establish a dialogue which could be of mutual benefit to all our schools. So far, you've only read the views of a number of teachers. If you have a different point of view, please feel free to let me know. Your comments will reappear in some way in a future edition of School Crossing.

\* \* \*

## GUIDELINES FOR SCHOOL VISITS

Some time ago, I stated that the principal "inspects" and that the school board or education committee "visits," (that is, if everything is running smoothly in the school). Due to incoming mail on this subject, some elaboration will be necessary. It is to be recognized that the final responsibility in this respect lies with the school board. Since the task of seeing to it that the daily teaching/learning process is carried out properly, is impossible for the school board to look after, the principal is delegated with this responsibility. The principal should have "his/her finger on the pulse" at all times. In this way meaningful reports can be made on a periodic basis to the school board, and, more importantly, teachers can be helped properly in their complex tasks. Visits by members of the school board or education committee are important. They augment the work of the principal. These visits show interest and should help to build up a better relationship between the staff and the school community. However, these visits must *never* become a substitute to the administrator's work. If this should become the case, the principal should either quit or be dismissed.

I would like to pass on the partial contents of a letter which deals with this topic. The system of school visits developed in this school society is to be commended!

"At the moment we have five teachers and eight grades. At one of our Education Committee meetings, three members are appointed to visit the classrooms with their respective teachers. Together with three board members we go in pairs: one board member with one EC member. In consultation with the principal we set a date, and she informs the teachers that visitors can be expected on a certain day. We found this a good system, and in this way we prevent a sudden shock and uneasiness for the teachers (we also realize that in preparing the lessons we should take this into consideration). Beforehand we deliberate which couple goes to which classroom, and, when date and time are set, we try to have ample opportunity to prepare ourselves for the respective lessons and subjects. We check the timetable and make sure that we are ready to meet the teacher with his or her students. In most cases, seats are provided for the visitors; also textbooks and notebooks are displayed. We convince the

teacher that we are by no means inspectors or qualified teachers, but simply interested fellow members. (However, we have to do our duty as well as we can, and this is intended to help, and, if necessary, to criticize the teacher.) We stay in the first classroom till recess; we can observe the change over from the one subject to the next. The principal provided us with a questionnaire, which, in my opinion, is an excellent help both for the visit and for making the reports. After the more or less official part of the visit, we talk with the teacher concerned and tell him/her our first impressions of what we have noticed, whether they are right or wrong; at the same time he/she has the opportunity to tell the visitors about possible difficulties with students or with teaching, with textbooks, etc. In case we meet serious difficulties, we have a conversation with the principal and also discuss these things in our meeting following the visits. Reports are made by the EC members and read during the meeting. We have the custom of making three copies: one for the principal, one for the teacher concerned, and one for the EC file. The representative of the Board (one of the members of the EC) reports about this matter in their meeting, without reading them again. In short, this is the way in which we handle our school visitations."

\* \* \*

## NEWS FROM THE SCHOOLS

### 1. *Athletes in Action*

The extra-curricular sports program has gotten off to a good start this year. During the past month we attended the Christian Schools Soccer Championships and Cross Country Championships. Although the training was difficult — with our field being in the "growing stages" and the weather more often being wet than dry — the athletes performed well. At times we won, at times we lost; at times we made the "top five," and at times we jogged in with the last few. Many of the students often reflect upon these activities with joy. They have tried their best, and they have shared a team experience with fellow classmates.

(*Credo Chronicle* —  
Langley Christian High School)

2. We hope to receive the Member of Parliament for Winnipeg Bird's

Hill, Mr. Bill Blaikie, in our school tomorrow at 2 o'clock. He has been invited to tell us something about his role as MP in Ottawa and to talk a little bit about the workings of Parliament. Anyone who is able to is welcome to attend as well so that they may meet their MP. As part of their Social Studies, students in Grades 7, 8, 9 have been familiarizing themselves with the ins and outs of election campaigns. They have been learning about the various parties and their policies as well as the mechanics of voting. They have also been exposed to the recent constitutional conference. Hopefully, through these exercises, they will gain greater knowledge about and insight into their province and country and their role as future citizens.

(*Annunciator* —  
Immanuel Christian School,  
Winnipeg)

3. The Board and the teaching staff had an informal-formal meeting on Nov. 18, 1981. We discussed various areas of mutual concern. This meeting was considered beneficial enough to warrant calling such meetings on a semi-annual basis. Again, the main objective is to improve communications between these two sectors within our school. Board interaction between Board, Staff, and Society members is beneficial to everyone.

The management of the Society's business is a complex matter. The very complexity of the business makes it virtually impossible to please every individual society member in everything. This leads to some frustrating situations for the individual members from time to time. Before you do or threaten to do anything drastic, however, I would ask you to consider what you can do for the Society not what the Society can do for you. Surely there are many things you can do for the Society. The most important thing you can do costs nothing: please remember our school in your prayers.

(*Parkland Immanuel News* —  
Parkland Immanuel Christian  
School, Edmonton)

4. *From the Students:*

Our Grade 5 and 6 received a letter from the Dresden Area Central school. The Grades 5/6 from that Public School had a project about education. They would like

to know why we were going to an independent school, what the word "Reformed" means, and many more things.

We had a discussion about it in class. After that we wrote a letter with information about our school. We sent the letters from five students back. One of these letters follows below:

Dresden Area Central School,  
P.O. Box 260, Dresden, Ont.

Dear Class,

Hi, my name is Debbie. We got your letters. I read a girl's letter, her name is Marcia. It was a very nice letter. I read that you were 10, well I am 11 years old and I am in grade six. We also have split classes, five and six go in one room. As I understand your class doesn't understand what a Canadian Reformed School is. Well, it is really not different from yours, except that we have Church-History and Bible studies. And our school gets no money from the government. Now I will get to some of the questions your class asked. We don't have dancing. Your class asked if we have hotdog days, we don't, instead we have soup days. We have that every Friday of the beginning of the month. Your class might not understand but our school believes in God. We also have the New Testament and the Old Testament. The Lord sent His Son to die on the cross for our sins. In the Bible it tells us of the miracles that the Lord did to save the lives of people and other things such as healing various diseases and so on.

We start school at 9:00 in the morning and are done at 3:20 in the afternoon. I thought it was strange that you people get out at 3:38, Oh well.

My teachers name is Mr. Werkman. We don't have religion class but the whole day we think of the Lord. We don't have intermural sports. We have 14 people in our class. We have grades from grade 1-10. We don't go on bustrips, but we go on schooltrips; they are kind of like bustrips.

Well, I am going to go. Bye

Yours sincerely, Debbie DeBoer  
(School Newsletter published by the Canadian Reformed School Society — Chatham and District)

Until next time, the Lord willing!

NICK VANDOOREN

*Let's close this month with the following poem.*

*For reading; that peculiar marks on a page are so able to inform us,  
to entertain us,  
and move us to laughter and tears,  
we thank you, Father.*

*For handwriting, grammar and spelling;  
which as tools enable us to capture our thoughts  
and communicate them clearly to others,  
we thank you, Father.*

*For mathematics;  
with its dependable patterns and principles  
which reassure us that the world is not so inconstant  
as we might fear,  
we thank you, Father.*

*For science;  
which challenges us to explore our universe  
and reveals the world to be all the more wonderful  
the more we understand it,  
we thank you, Father.*

*For social studies;  
which teaches us to know ourselves  
and to know each other,  
we thank you, Father.*

*For art;  
with its absorbing, unexcelled joy  
of making,  
seeing, and appreciating the beautiful,  
we thank you, Father.*

*For music;  
with its mystical power to reach us  
and unite us  
as nothing else can,  
we thank you, Father.*

*For physical education;  
which teaches us to understand our bodies,  
and gain satisfaction inherent in strength and skill,  
we thank you, Father.*

*Father,  
for all truth,  
and for hearts and minds to know the truth,  
we thank you.*

*Elsbeth Campbell Murphy*

#### A Memo Regarding School Crossing

Now that our column "School Crossing" has been restored and is appearing regularly, it appears proper that all school matters (such as opening of schools, graduations, special events, etc.) appear under this heading.

This also means that any contribution for this column should be sent to Mr. N. Vandooren, who writes the "School Crossing."

Hence the request to all those who write reports on graduations, openings, special events, etcetera, not to send them to Winnipeg but to send them directly to Mr. Vandooren.

This not only will make it possible to place them under the proper heading and enable the editor of this column to know what it will contain, but also will prevent delays. Sending material directly to Winnipeg only causes delays, since from there it will have to be passed on to the contributor involved to receive clearance for insertion in *Clarion*.

Let us do all things the proper way.

The address is: Mr. N. Vandooren, Emmanuel Christian High School, 57 Suffolk Street W., Guelph, Ontario N1H 2J1.

Thank you all for your cooperation.

vO



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*In Memoriam*  
*the*  
**REV.**  
**H. SCHOLTEN,**  
**M. Th.**

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*On Friday January 15, 1982, the Lord took unto Himself the Rev. H. Scholten, M. Th., emeritus minister of the Canadian Reformed Church in Smithville, Ontario.*

*The Rev. Scholten was born October 31, 1913. He who loved the study of the history of God's Church was pleased with the date of his birth: Protestants will always connect October 31 with the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The young Scholten became a skilful teacher in Christian schools in the Netherlands. During the Second World War he was interned by the Germans and this experience in war time made an indelible impression upon his mind. In the same decisive manner as he had opposed National Socialism he withstood the hierarchy of the Synods of the Gereformeerde Kerken in the Netherlands during the years 1943ff. As a man of specific and singular gifts he was admitted to the ministry of Word and Sacraments after the liberation of nation and church. Ordained in 1947, he served the congregations of Nijkerk, Berkum (1950), and after his immigration to Canada the Canadian Reformed Churches of Carman, Man. (1953), Orangeville, Ont. (1957) and Smithville, Ont. (1964). He retired again on the important date of October 31 in the year 1973.*

*After he had given years of strenuous work for the upbuilding of the young immigrant church-*

*es and during his pastorate in Ontario, the Rev. Scholten took up the study of theology at John Knox College in Toronto. He not only obtained a Bachelor of Divinity degree but continued his formal theological training and received the hood of Master of Theology. After he had been appointed by Synod Orangeville 1968, the Rev. Scholten combined his skill as oldfashioned school teacher and his knowledge of the history and the polity of the Church and became an efficient lecturer in Ecclesiology. His pedagogical gifts had already become manifest in the 1964 publication of **The Heidelberg Catechism with explanatory questions and answers**, a study guide in home, school and church. We are especially grateful for all the Lord our God has permitted and enabled our brother to do in behalf of the training for the ministry during the first ten years of the existence of our Theological College.*

*Our brother Scholten knew himself to be a miserable sinner but he believed the promise of the God of the covenant, the promise of free and sovereign grace in Jesus Christ. We express our sympathy with Mrs. H. Scholten, her children and grandchildren and end with words from the Principals Statement 1979: *Sola gratia — solo Christo — soli Deo Gloria*. The labour was done by grace alone, through Christ alone, and therefore the glory be to God alone.*

*J. FABER*

# news medley

For a news medley one needs news.

That is one statement with which every one will agree. Thus I have captured your benevolence and assured myself of your agreement right away.

As the news is very meagre this time, it won't become a long medley. Hopefully, the rest of the contributors and co-editors will make up for what is lacking in this column this time.

As for the personal information: The Rev. H. Scholten is still with us, at least at the moment these lines are written. It is amazing that this is still a fact, and we ask the Lord every day that it may please Him to take our brother unto Himself. Sometimes the Lord takes His children away suddenly, and for themselves this is a blessing; sometimes, however, we learn by experience to change our petition. At first we ask that health may be restored and bonds be left intact; gradually it becomes evident that we are to change our petition and are to ask for release of the bonds and for the being loosed to be with Christ. It also makes us long the more for the day when even the last enemy shall be destroyed.

The Rev. W. Pouwelse had to take a rest for some weeks, but he has resumed his work already, be it that he did it gradually.

Sometimes people say teasingly, "You work only one day a week and then even for just a couple of hours." When it comes from brothers or sisters who know better, I just laugh along; but sometimes there seems to be more behind such a remark than only the desire to give a good-natured poke. Then there is a little pain in the heart, for who knows what is going on? In such a case a minister should never try to defend himself and to explain what all things he had to do. One can never defend oneself against distrust and backbiting anyway and should never try that either.

The fact, however, that it sometimes appears necessary for a minister to take a rest and to interrupt his work shows that oftentimes more is going on than is generally known or than the membership is generally aware of.

Our journey starts this time in Guelph. The bulletin contained a pleasant piece of information. As it is the time for budgets and financial statements to be handed out to the Congregations, there may not be many Congregations that hear that they don't have to increase their voluntary contributions. Such was the case in Guelph, however. "Although the 1982 budget will contain a substantial increase, the suggested amount per family (\$850) and singles (\$400) will remain approximately the same. The increase in membership during 1981 is the cause for this pleasant news."

Happy with this information, I nevertheless have a question. The question is not directed to the Guelph Church, only occasioned by what I quoted. It is a question concerning the size of contributions requested from families and those requested from single members. Not only in Guelph but in practically all Congregations it is customary to request of families twice the amount that is expected from single members. I wonder whether that is a correct practice.

We are to take into account that per communicant member approximately \$125.00 per year goes to causes

outside the sphere of the local Church. There are the contributions for the Mission and for the College, for the cost of the federation, for the support of needy students, for the support of needy Churches. Those are then the directly ecclesiastical contributions. Mission Aid needs another amount as a Church-related labour.

With a view to this, a couple will indeed have to contribute more than a single member. Whether, however, it is reasonable and fair to request of a single member only half of that which a couple, a family will have to contribute is a big question to me. Generally, single members can afford it far better than families; besides, it will not cost them near as much as it costs a family, for their tax savings are percentage-wise greater than those of a married couple that is in a lower tax-bracket anyway due to deductions. And as far as wages are concerned, in many instances a single person may earn as much as one who is married. "Some of our young people," someone said recently to me, "walk around with wads of bills in their wallet that are unreal." The word "unreal" certainly does not mean that the money is unreal! It may be stated with gratitude that there are many of our young people who faithfully contribute, and my question does not concern them. My question concerns the setting of percentages whereby families are expected to pay twice as much as single persons. Here I seem something out of balance.

The Toronto Church made a change regarding the number of office-bearers that enter the auditorium at the beginning of the services. Not the whole Consistory and the Deacons will walk in as a body. "As was decided earlier, not all elders will come in with the minister any longer at the beginning of the service. As per January 1982, two elders and three deacons will enter the church with the minister." Thereby it still becomes evident that the minister does not go to the pulpit as a speaker who delivers an address to a meeting but as the one who preaches the Word of God to the assembled Congregation.

Toronto is not alone in its decision. There are more Churches in the federation in which the elders and the deacons take turns. There is nothing against it as long as it becomes evident that the Congregation is together under the supervision of the Consistory.

Yes, and now we have to take a big jump: all the way to Edmonton.

From the Edmonton bulletin we learn that the contributions for the Mission will have to be increased from \$42 to \$48 per communicant member per year. Ours in Ontario North is \$45.00, and the proposed contribution in Ontario South was \$40.00. There was, however, some opposition to that in some Churches, seeing that Hamilton does not have a missionary and does not have any prospect of having one shortly either. Some Churches in Ontario South were of the opinion that a yearly contribution of \$20.00 per communicant member would be sufficient as long as there is no missionary anyway. There is already a reasonable reserve, and it was felt that the money can be used locally for better purposes than for just depositing it into a bank account.

The Church at Houston will have a Committee Administration, at least in all likelihood, for the Consistory approved in principle the appointment of such a committee.

Both in Houston and in Smithers the Consistory occupied itself with the discussion of various questions that were raised during the family visits. In Houston it was asked whether "during the worship services we could not also remain standing for the first song. Reac-

tions will be requested at the upcoming congregational meeting.”

The question itself does not have to be asked in most of our congregations, for in by far the most places it is customary to remain standing after the vatum and the benediction to sing the first song standing.

From the Smithers bulletin we quote two questions that were discussed as a result of the matters raised at family visits. In both cases the Consistory decided not to accede to the requests that were made.

There was in the first place the question “Would organ background music at the Lord’s Supper table be appropriate when the bread and wine are passed?”

As I said, the Consistory decided not to bring about any change. Thus the bread and the cup are passed around in silence. Background music would, I presume, so easily draw our thoughts away from the sacrament, specifically if the organist should play a tune. We should direct all our attention to the signs and seals of the satisfaction through the one sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ. I do not know what the Consistory’s argument was (or were) for its decision, but that would have been my reason.

The second question reads, “Could the first part of the Form for the Lord’s Supper be read the Sunday before the celebration?” Of this question, too, the Consistory was not in favour and decided against doing what was asked.

There are Congregations where it is done; and many, many years ago I did it too in the first Church which I served; it was customary there. I have, however, come to the conclusion that it is wrong to do it. I can well understand how someone comes to considering it advisable: that is caused by a wrong understanding of the self-examination. It is thought that the first part of the form fits better on the Sunday before the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, for then one can use the week following to examine oneself according to the requirements mentioned in the form. That is, as I stated, a wrong understanding of the self-examination.

What we mention in the form is in what attitude and spiritual disposition we are to *come* to the Supper. That is: knowing the three aspects of our only comfort and being aware of the uniqueness of that comfort. We are to come seeking our salvation apart from ourselves. That’s what is made clear in this first part and that’s what we are to hear when we are about to go and sit down at the table.

With these remarks I have to leave you for this time. As I don’t make up the news, only pass it on and occasionally provide it with some comments, I have nothing more to say in this column this time.

Looking forward to meeting you again in two weeks at the same place, I sign, vO

## All glory be for Thee, Most High

1. All glo - ry be to Thee, Most High.  
To Thee all ad - o - ra - tion;  
In grace and truth hast Thou drawn nigh  
To grant us Thy sal - va - tion.  
Thou show - est Thy good will to men,  
And peace shall reign on earth a - gain;  
We praise Thy Name for - ev - er.

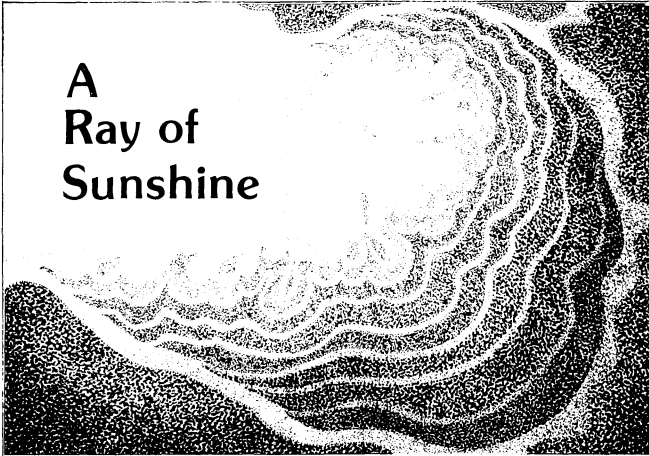
2. We praise Thee and in Thee we trust;  
We give Thee thanks forever,  
O Father, for Thy rule is just  
And wise, and changes never.  
Thy hand almighty o’er us reigns;  
Thou doest what Thy will ordains.  
’Tis well for us Thou rulest.

3. O Jesus Christ, our God and Lord,  
Son of the heav’nly Father,  
O Thou, who hast our peace restored,  
The straying sheep dost gather:  
Thou Lamb of God, to Thee on high  
Out of the depths we sinners cry:  
Have mercy on us, Jesus!

4. O Holy Spirit, precious gift,  
Thou Comforter unfailing,  
From Satan’s snares our souls uplift,  
And let Thy power, availing,  
Avert our woes and calm our dread.  
For us the Saviour’s blood was shed:  
We trust in Thee to keep us.

Hymn 62, *Book of Praise*, Hymn Section

## A Ray of Sunshine



The following is a quotation from *CHRIST AND CULTURE* by Dr. K. Schilder.

*"According to God's own commanding Word, which creates order and allots to everything its own place, it should not happen, not even for one single moment, without man as man-of-God acting therein as God's fellow-worker. 'You are labourers together with God' (I Corinthians 3:9); this is not a posthumous quietive that was proclaimed by Paul for a seceded Church somewhere in an isolated corner. No, this is a matter of leading back in an imperative way to the 'FIRST PRINCIPLES of the world.' This is not only a suitable text for a minister's inaugural sermon, but it is also the day-text for any cultural worker, for the professor as well as the street sweeper, for the kitchen-worker and for the composer of a Moonlight Sonata.*

*"Therefore the first commandment with a rich promise reads: 'Dress the garden.' No castles in the air are promised in these words; neither do they suggest a so-called 'higher reality.'"*

*"Dress the garden — here first of all the spade, a cultural instrument, and later on rubber boots, are not put into our hands, but man's created spirit has to invent them according to time and place and to design and adapt them to the dressing hand and the foot that breaks up and tramples down the soil. For the hand and the spirit, they work together: MAN has to 'dress.' Dress the garden — here no introspective moralizing sermons are delivered, but here there is a concrete work and life-commandment, a highly-spiritual and, consequently, everyday commandment."*

*K. Schilder's "Definition of Culture" — Quote page 40, CHRIST AND CULTURE.*

\* \* \* \* \*

### I'M WILLING TO SERVE

Suffer?  
Of course I'm willing to suffer for you, Lord.  
You've done so much for me.  
How could I do any less for you?  
Yes, Lord, I'm willing to suffer.

But Lord!  
I didn't mean this. Not this!  
To sit in a wheelchair the rest of my life?  
I'll do anything but this, Lord.  
But not a wheelchair!

I'll go anywhere.  
I'll go to the ends of the earth for you.  
I'll live in a heathen hut and eat fried ants.  
I'll suffer hunger, privation — anything —  
But not this!

"Child,"  
The voice was gentle, but firm.  
"This is the end of the earth for you.  
This is your place of service — this wheelchair."

"My child,  
I will transform this chair into a thing of beauty.  
It will be a springboard  
From which my Word will go out —  
If you will let me."

A thing of beauty?  
Incredulous, I dried my tears.  
All right, I'm willing, Lord, at last I'm willing.  
If this wheelchair can bring glory to you —  
Yes, Lord, I'm willing to serve.

\* \* \* \* \*

**Fenny Kuik**, Winnipeg, Manitoba likes to thank all the brothers and sisters for the beautiful cards she received for her birthday. It made her very happy.

On our Birthday Calendar we have the following birthdays for February:

#### **ALBERT DORGELOOS**

Holody Home,  
87 Silvercreek Parkway,  
Guelph, Ontario

Albert hopes to celebrate his 23rd birthday on February 12. He is looking forward to receiving and reading many cards and letters for his special day. He enjoys reading **CLARION**.

#### **CONNY VAN AMERONGEN**

Russ Road, R.R. 1,  
Grimsby, Ontario

Conny will be celebrating her 17th birthday on February 12. Conny is physically handicapped and confined to a wheelchair. She attends school and loves to read.

\* \* \* \* \*

We also have received two requests for mentioning coming birthdays for elderly people. It is a joy for them to receive words of friendship and encouragement:

#### **MR. C.W. VANDEN HAAK**

"Shalom Manor"  
122 Bartlett Road, No. 13,  
Grimsby, Ontario L3M 2N4

Brother Vanden Haak hopes to celebrate his 82nd birthday on January 31. He is a widower and lives in a Christian home for the aged. Mr. Vanden Haak has 8 children, 54 grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. He is in good health. He would really appreciate receiving best wishes for his birthday.

**MRS. L. RUITER**

Box 346,  
Carman, Manitoba R0G 0J0

Sister Ruiter will be celebrating her 64th birthday on February 10. She is a widow who is confined to a wheelchair because of rheumatism. She used to be able to create beautiful embroidered crafts, but is not able to do much anymore. She is losing the strength in her hands. In the wintertime she is confined to her home and loves to receive mail. She sent me a poem which she liked and asked me to share it with you, brothers and sisters.

\* \* \*

Shall we make these brothers and sisters happy on their special days, which they, the Lord willing, hope to celebrate?

Send your requests to:

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

**P.S.** I know there are others who are celebrating their birthdays and who would benefit from some encouraging words, but unless I am asked to put their names on our Calendar, I cannot publish them. It is up to you to send in the requests. Please do so in good time. H.R.

Dear Readers:

In many parts of Canada serious efforts are being made to establish Christian homes for the handicapped. In the West many of our brothers and sisters have profited from such homes for many years already.

From Nelena (Nena)'s parents I received an article about the expansion of Bethesda Home.

I would like to share this article with you, not in order to make propaganda for this particular home, but to focus your attention on the need for supporting such homes.

**LET EACH DONATE TOWARDS THE FUND NEEDED IN HIS/HER VICINITY.**

The following article was published in BETHESDA NEWS:

**Bethesda Expansion . . . Our Need — Your Support**

**Reaching Out To Handicapped People**

You can reach out to 12 mentally handicapped people who are looking for the opportunity to further develop their abilities.

Hank, Dini, Diana, Darlene, NENA, and Aaron have spent a great deal of time at the Bethesda Home in learning how to be less dependent upon others for help. They are now to the point where they can assume bigger responsibilities such as doing their own shopping, caring for their laundry, maintaining the yard and participating in community activities.

But we have a big concern for these 6 residents; they need to be placed in a more appropriate setting if they are to continue to grow in their abilities. The Bethesda Home cannot provide the normal style of living, such as in your home, because of the programs and concentration needed to meet the needs of the other residents.

We also have another concern. As handicapped children are born or adopted into families, they may need a place to live when they approach adult age. This is especially so when

parents feel they can no longer look after their child. The number of urgent requests for handicapped persons to be placed in the Bethesda Home continues to grow each year. So it is very important for us to find a solution before the problem becomes so large that we cannot meet the needs that must be dealt with.

It is for these reasons that Bethesda has received an overwhelming vote of confidence by its Membership to expand its services by the construction of a residential home. We have begun this expansion by the purchase of 3.22 acres of land in Sardis, B.C., for the price of \$66,500.00. This land was made available to us at 1980 prices. In order that we may meet the cost of the land and begin with the legal developments we are seeking \$75,000.00 this fall. A final \$75,000.00 will be our target for Bethesda's Annual Membership & Donation Drive which will take place in April of 1982. In addition, a proposal has been submitted to the Government of British Columbia for operational funds which will allow us to begin the new residential home by the summer of 1982.

Another very important aspect of the new home is the inclusion of a bedroom to be used only for respite care. This valuable service will allow parents, who have their handicapped child living at home, an occasional break from the everyday care needed for their child.

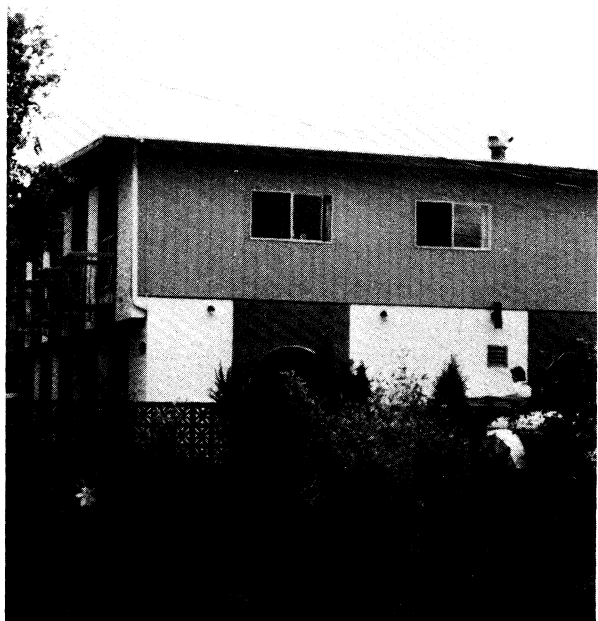
You can now help Bethesda make its outreach expansion service a realistic one by your donation to the Expansion Fund.

Bethesda is authorized by the Federal Government to issue tax-deductible receipts for all donations given to this Association.

Your donation should be marked "Expansion Fund" and can be sent to:

**BETHESDA EXPANSION**  
Box 40,  
Mt. Lehman, B.C. V0X 1V0

Thank you for REACHING OUT.



View on Bethesda Home

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# The Church at Barrhead Received Its First Minister

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The church at Barrhead, instituted January 1, 1961, and for some time the second smallest Canadian Reformed Church, received its first minister with the coming of Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar from Chilliwack, B.C. After so many years of reading sermons from a variety of ministers (some for the third or the fourth time), we may now have regular preaching by our own pastor and teacher. This is a great gift from the Lord by which the congregation of Barrhead is richly blessed.

The installation took place on Sunday, December 20, 1981, in a worship service led by Rev. S. DeBruin of Edmonton, who preached on Romans 10:14-17. In his introduction, Rev. DeBruin mentioned that the congregation prayed for a long time to receive a pastor and teacher. But God does not depend on our plans and times. Now it was God's time to give us a gift in order that we as church may grow in faith. Romans 10:14-17 tells us *that the Holy God sends messengers to His people in order to bring the glad tidings.* We must consider:

1. The need for this proclamation,
2. The instrument for this proclamation, and
3. The response to this proclamation.



Rev. and Mrs. Tiggelaar  
at  
the welcome evening.

The glad tidings is the righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ, the risen Lord. Often we seek security in things we do and not in Jesus Christ only. We need to be reminded to direct our focus on Christ and to put our hope in the Lord.

The knowledge of righteousness by faith does not suddenly come falling from the sky. It pleases God to use certain instruments to proclaim the message of salvation. Scripture speaks of the gift of pastors and teachers in order to equip the saints for building up the body of Christ.

It is not the messenger who is important; what counts is the message. It is irrelevant what good or weak points the messenger has; what is relevant is the glad tidings of the forgiveness of sins. Receiving a pastor and teacher increases our responsibility. We must be prepared to accept the full gospel, not only a message of love in Jesus Christ, but also the gospel of vengeance to those who do not listen. Ignoring him who brings the Word of the Lord is ignoring Jesus Christ who speaks through his ambassadors.

For a long time we prayed to receive a pastor; now that we have received one we must continue to pray for him. In that way he can do his work and the Lord will bless it.

After the service, Rev. DeBruin, authorized by the last Classis, conveyed congratulations from the churches within the classical resort with the hope that Rev. Tiggelaar will not only be a blessing to the church at Barrhead but to the churches within the classical region as well.

Mr. J. VanAssen spoke for the church at Neerlandia words of congratulations with the hope that the church at Barrhead, through the preaching of Rev. Tiggelaar, will be and remain a bulwark of the truth.

A congratulatory letter sent by the church at Calgary was read and also a telegram sent by Prof. VanDam and his family.

Rev. DeBruin spoke, finally, on behalf of the Immanuel church at Edmonton and as colleague of Rev. Tiggelaar.

In the afternoon service Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar delivered his inaugural sermon on Isaiah 40:9. While the people of Israel were still living in freedom, God spoke of captivity; but when they entered into exile, God spoke of comfort. In Isaiah 40 we hear the call of comfort proclaimed. Rev. Tiggelaar stated that he in his inaugural sermon and with God's help also in the future hopes to declare this message, believing that it is essential and most important for God's people and also for the world of today. We must see God and what He has done. We are called to declare God's glory. The revelation of God's glory is the foundation on which we can stand. There are many preachers who preach the importance of man in the process of salvation and put God in a secondary place. We need to see God and His word and to proclaim it to others.

The text teaches that *the church is called to proclaim the revelation of God's glory.* The church must do this by:

1. Seeing the situation in which this call comes,
2. Its activity in answering this call, and
3. Doing it with the proper contents of this call.

Israel was about to enter into exile to be disciplined for their sin and rebellion. At that time God spoke to them



about comfort, about pardoning their iniquity. Even in exile there is hope. In all situations of despair and darkness there is comfort, and God's people, the church, has the calling to herald this good tiding. Israel in exile must proclaim the deeds of their God with a strong voice. The church is the salt of the earth and has the answer to all situations from the revelation of God. She must shout it from high places to be seen and heard by all: Behold our God! With Him there is salvation through Jesus Christ. There is hope for a troubled world because God is in charge of all situations. He is at work and He will bring all exile to an end. We must go out and proclaim the message of good tiding. Not having God — we have nothing; with God — we have it all.

Two days before the installation of Rev. Tiggelaar, the congregation came together to welcome their pastor and his family with a Christmas program for all. Mr. W. Holwerda, chairman of the consistory, welcomed Rev. Tiggelaar, his family, and his parents. He mentioned the great joy of the congregation and stated the hope that Rev. Tiggelaar could stay for many years to come. Mr. T. Vandenbrink gave a brief history of the church starting with the coming of immigrants to the Barrhead area. In the many ups and downs, Christ has taken care of His church. The membership once dwindled to 39 but has risen to 97; and, for the first time, the Lord has given us our own pastor. "All glory be to God most high, to Him all adoration."

Books were presented to the



*Our choir in action under the direction of Mr. Peter Selles.*

pastor's family, one with pictures and information about all members of the congregation, one of the Golden Years of Barrhead, and one of Alberta's Celebration. In songs and poems welcome wishes were formulated by young and old, and our choir added to the success of the evening with several well-sung pieces.

Rev. Tiggelaar made known his appreciation for this evening. He hopes for a working together in harmony, with Jesus Christ born in Bethlehem, risen from the dead, and now working through the Holy Spirit who is central.

T. VANDENBRINK



*Mr. T. Vandenbrink presents one of the books to the pastor.*

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

One Dundas Street W.,  
Suite 2106, Box 2,  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z3  
Telephone: (416) 598-2520

**OPSPORING ADRESSEN:**

GRAYSHAN en GRAYSHAN-POTTER, Robert David John en Johanna Geertruida, geboren resp. 5 mei 1944 en 24 november 1948, naar Canada vertrokken in september 1981, laatstbekende adres te Putten.

HEIDEKAMP, Lambertus, geboren te Onstwedde op 2 november 1921, gehuwd met THALEN, Hillechien, geboren op 26 november 1923, naar Canada vertrokken in 1949.

HOEFSMIT, Hendrikus J., geboren te 's-Gravenhage op 12 november 1917, naar Canada vertrokken in 1955.

HUBERTS, Theodorus Petrus Jacobus, geboren te Haarlem op 27 maart 1916, naar Canada vertrokken in 1958.

SLOT, Jannes Stoffel, geboren op 21 december 1916 te Doesburg, naar Canada vertrokken in 1952, laatstbekende adres te Revela, Ontario.

TER VRUGT, Gerrit, geboren op 16 november 1948, laatstbekende adres te Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

De Consul-Generaal, voor deze:-  
(Mw.) G. SCHNITZLER

**OUR COVER**

*Barn with empty cornbins,  
across the Thames River, Chat-  
ham, Ontario. (Photo by Keith  
Sikkema.)*



*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.*

#### **AUGUSTA, MAINE (RNS)**

The teaching of the biblical story of creation in public school science classes has been ruled illegal by Maine's commissioner of education.

Scientific creationism can be discussed in public schools, but not in science classes, Mr. Raynolds said. Creationism may be appropriate "in the context of a course in the philosophy of religion, history, anthropology or other academic subjects."

School districts which decide to give equal time to creationism in science classes open themselves to legal challenge under the constitutional separation of church and state, Mr. Raynolds warned. (CN)

\* \* \*

#### **DORFWEIL, WEST GERMANY (EP)**

The outgoing leader of the European Baptism Federation Council warned his colleagues that "a paralyzing fear" of nuclear war pervades the continent, and the need for immediate disarmament must be impressed upon governments, according to a Religious News Service report.

Dr. David S. Russell, secretary of the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, said that "the future of Europe and indeed of mankind is at stake. This is something bigger than politics and ideologies. It is a matter of human survival. Disarmament on a world scale — and quickly — is a priority for both prayer and action."

The Baptist leaders from most of the countries of Europe who met here adopted a resolution saying they shared his concern. They also ex-

pressed the hope that the United States and the Soviet Union would reach accommodation on the problem of nuclear mid-range weapons in Europe in talks begun November 30. "It is our hope that these discussions by both world powers may be conducted not from a position of military strength, but rather in a spirit of understanding and with a readiness and desire for detente," they stated. (CC) (Blind leaders of the blind! vO)

\* \* \*

#### **NEWARK, N.J. (RNS)**

Episcopal bishop John S. Spong of Newark has urged Christians to join with Jews in celebrating Hanukkah as evidence of a shared search for truth.

He compared the Jewish celebration of the restoration of worship to the temple of Judah in 165 B.C. with the Christian recognition of the birth of Jesus.

The fact that both use light as a major symbol "speaks of the ancient hopes of human beings that truth will banish falsehood and that light will banish darkness," he said in a statement read at All Saints' Chapel.

"Hanukkah can be our holy day also, for in that event we celebrate the fact that the light of true worship once more shone in the darkness of human distortion," Bishop Spong said. "In the success of Judas Maccabeus in 165 B.C., our destiny as Christian was preserved just as surely as was the destiny of Judaism."

(Bishop Spong is a theological liberal who has denied such doctrines as the deity of Christ. Ed.) (CN)

\* \* \*

#### **MOSCOW (EP)**

Pravda said that political activism among Roman Catholics and Moslems could pose a challenge to socialism, and it suggested that failure to curb "religious fanaticism" was one of the reasons for the upheaval in Poland.

"The Vatican, the center of the Catholic Church and the religious stronghold of the conservative forces, has become politically more active," the Communist Party newspaper said in a long article on party ideology.

"The historical experience of the USSR and the fraternal (socialist) countries teaches that without combating habits of private ownership, nationalism, religious fanaticism,

and a philistine mentality, it is impossible to build and successfully perfect the new mode of life," it said. "It is no coincidence that the present-day political crisis in the Polish People's Republic was preceded not only by a deterioration in the economic situation, but also by a sharp worsening of the ideological climate, the spread of philistine, consumer statements, nationalist prejudices and a weakening of class vigilance." (Comm.)

\* \* \*

#### **NEW YORK (RNS)**

A nation-wide poll indicates that 76 percent of Americans believe public schools should teach both the evolutionary and creationist theories of human origin.

The poll by the Associated Press and NBC News asked 1,598 adults this question in an Oct. 25-26 national telephone survey.

"Do you think public schools should teach only the scientific theory of evolution, only the biblical theory of creation, or should schools offer both theories?"

Of those responding, 76 percent said public schools should teach both, 10 percent wanted only the biblical theory, 8 percent favoured only the evolutionary theory, and 6 percent were unsure. (CN)

\* \* \*

#### **PLOESTI, ROMANIA (EWNS)**

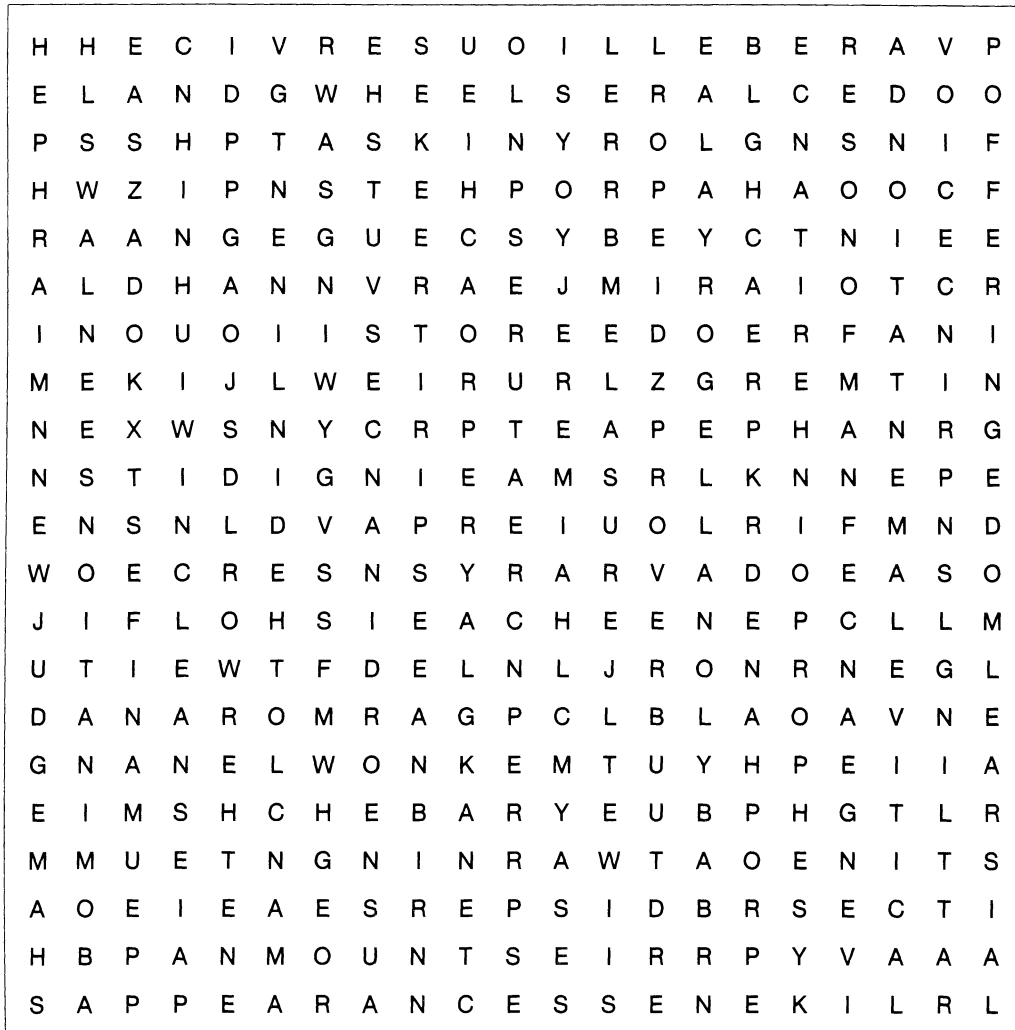
Romanian uniformed and secret police forced their way into the homes of accused Bible distributors, beating occupants and confiscating Bibles, religious literature, U.S. currency, food and western-made goods in what informed sources — including family members who witnessed the searches — are calling "Nazi-style raids" executed with brutality not seen in Romania since the end of World War II.

Silviu Cioata and Costel Georgescu are the most recent reported victims. Two uniformed and three secret police officers spent five and one-half hours combing the Cioata apartment in Ploesti, November 11, 1981. Officers confiscated Bibles, sugar and other evidence. (Twenty-seven kilograms of sugar were taken because that exceeds the legal limit now imposed with mandatory rationing.) Cioata was arrested after the search. His family has not seen him or heard from him since; they say police refuse to divulge his whereabouts. (CN)

vO

# EZEKIEL

## Word Search Puzzle



W. AIKEMA

abominations  
Aha  
allegory  
appearance  
arm  
  
Babylon  
bones  
bull  
  
Chebar  
cleanse  
cor  
creatures  
  
declare  
die  
dig  
disperse

eat  
Edom  
end  
ephah  
Ephraim  
exiles  
Ezekiel  
  
fall  
  
gate  
glory  
  
hin  
holy  
house of Israel  
  
inheritance  
Israel

Jeremiah  
Jerusalem  
Judah  
judge  
  
know  
  
lamentation  
land  
laws  
Levitical  
likeness  
live  
  
man clothed in linen  
manifest  
Mount Seir  
  
nether world  
new

offering  
one  
ordinances  
  
pit  
preach  
prince  
profaned  
prophecy  
prophet  
proverb  
  
rattling  
rebellious  
reed  
reproach  
rust  
  
sanctuary  
sea

service  
shame  
siege  
sign  
skin  
son of man  
Spirit  
  
temple  
Tyre  
  
vengeance  
vision  
voice  
  
warning  
wheels  
wings  
woe  
  
Zadok

# our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

How do you like the winter weather?  
Do you have lots of snow to play in or to go tobogganing?

I know some of you Busy Beavers ski, too.  
Isn't snow just great for winter fun?  
But how do you think birds like it?  
After a big snow they must be hungry.  
Do you have a feeder or a feeding station to help our winter birds?

Or do you bring out seeds or crumbs and scraps for them?

Isn't it fun watching them?  
Feeding birds is one of the nicest things about winter, don't you think so too?

\* \* \* \* \*

Now it's time for birthday wishes!  
February is a short month, and our birthday list is short, too.

Still, we wish all the Busy Beavers with a February birthday a very, very happy day celebrating with their family and friends. May the Lord bless and keep you also in the year ahead.

Diane Doesburg	February 1	Rosemary	
Judy Peet	2	De Gelder	February 16
Sheila Klaver	6	John-Herbert Kobes	16
Cynthia Ludwig	6	Sharon Duker	17
Greta Paize	6	Clara Barendregt	18
Sonya Van Overbeeke	6	Anita Meints	19
Alan Janssens	9	Yvonne Van Amerongen	19
Gary Sandink	11	Gerald Boes	21
Joyce Van't Land	12	Betty Aikema	22
Gaya Berends	14	Theresa De Boer	23
Martin Doekes	14	Jane Meints	24



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Susan Helder*. We are happy to have you join us. We hope you'll really enjoy being a Busy Beaver and join in all our Busy Beaver activities. How are your Dutch lessons coming along Susan? And how did your Christmas programme go?

How was your Christmas programme, *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*? I think you had a good time Christmas Day, right? Congratulations on a good report, Mary-Ann, and thanks for the nice puzzle.

Hello *Mary Vande Burgt*. It was really nice to hear from you again. I was happy to hear you are all doing well, and I see you are keeping very busy! Thanks for the pretty card, Mary. Bye for now.

I didn't know you had moved, *Sandra Onderwater*! I'm glad you like it in your new home and your new school. Thanks for writing and for the jokes and riddles. Keep up the good work!

Thanks for writing, *Gwen Van Esch*. It was nice to hear from you, even if it was for the last time. Bye for now.

Sounds to me as if you have lots of fun in school, *Tammy Linde*. And you had a fun holiday, too, right? How did your Christmas programme go, Tammy? Especially the part where all the grades sang together? Thanks for the card and the riddles?

\* \* \* \* \*

### Riddles for You

from Busy Beaver *Tammy Linde*  
and *Sandra Onderwater*

1. What word is always pronounced wrong?
2. What falls often but never gets hurt?
3. On which side does a fish have the most scales?
4. What letter can you drink?
5. What is a sailor called if he crosses the ocean twice without taking a bath?
6. What did the snail say to the turtle?

Jan: Would you know me if you hadn't seen me for a day?

Joe: Sure.

Jan: Knock, knock.

Joe: Who's there?

Jan: See? You already forgot me!

Answers:

1. Wrong! 2. rain; 3. on the outside; 4. T; 5. a drink; 6. 'l' wish I could afford a house like yours!"

\* \* \* \* \*

### QUIZ TIME

#### Word Search

If you find all these words in the puzzle you have 4 letters left.

If you put these in a certain order you get a Bible name. Can you find the name?

DO NOT circle any words that are not in the list!

kit  
sat  
house  
hose  
pet  
cut  
keep  
hi  
eat  
toe  
so  
Rick

K	I	T	J	R
E	A	T	H	I
E	H	O	O	C
P	S	O	U	K
E	A	T	S	N
T	T	O	E	O

by Busy Beaver *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg*

Answer: uqoq