

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Vol. 31 No. 19

September 24, 1982



From Pre-Position to Pro-Position

Address given by Rev. D. VanderBoom, chairman of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, at the Thirteenth Anniversary Meeting and the Tenth Convocation, in the Wellington United Church, Burlington, Ontario, September 10, 1982.

The words used in the title of this address sound and look identical and at a certain time they were. In the course of time their meaning began to differentiate. A Pre-position, according to Webster, is a relation word that connects a noun or pronoun to another part of the sentence, as e.g. to a verb (he went to the store) or to an adjective (old in years). The word Pro-position can have several meanings, e.g. a proposal or expression in which the predicate affirms or denies something about the subject. The combination of the two, "from preposition to proposition," describes the purpose of this speech: that is to discuss an expression with a preposition which leads to a statement to be argued and upheld.

The question may be asked: How can you draw a conclusion or defend a statement on the basis of a preposition? To answer that question I would like to refer to some grammatical rules. Some scholars maintain that "prepositions govern nouns." This is not entirely correct. They do not govern, they define nouns. A.T. Robertson, in his *Grammar of the New Testament* (pp. 554, 590) writes: "The prepositions come in to help out the meaning of the case in a certain context. The case indicates the meaning of the preposition; it is not the preposition which gives meaning to the case."

With this rule in mind we turn to the prepositions themselves, and we shall restrict ourselves to an important one: the preposition IN. It is used 2698 times in the New Testament. Two examples may suffice to show how this preposition can be translated in different ways. We find, for instance, the expression "in the marketplace" which is translated as "at the market." "In the throne" is usually translated as "on the throne." The word "in" states that the location is within a certain locale.

We also find the instrumental use. Luke 22:49 reads: "Shall we strike him IN the sword?" which is translated as "with" the sword. "In" does not mean "with" as such; the idea comes from the context.

There is one certain type of locution in the New Testament, especially in the letters of the apostle Paul, in which the use of the preposition "in" has led to interesting discussions. Therewith we come to the heart of our topic. The well-known phrase "IN CHRIST" has given occasion for all sorts of controversies. It appears 164 times in Paul's letters as "In Christ"; "In Christ Jesus"; "in the Lord"; or "in Him."

For more than seventy years scholars have occupied themselves in an attempt to give a clear definition of this term. It can be understood that these studies involved many related matters, as I hope to show presently. The discussion started in earnest when Adolph Deissmann published a book entitled *Die Neutestamentliche Formel "In Christo Jesu"* (The New Testament Formula "in Christ Jesus"). During the following decades a series of books and articles have been written on the subject.

Is an exegetical exploration of the use of this term so important, we may ask? Apparently it is. E. Andrews in his book *The heart of Christianity* writes: "So central to Paul's thought is the concept of being-in-Christ that an inquiry ought properly to begin at this point." H.

Ridderbos states in his study on Paul (p. 34) that "the centre of Paul's religion is not primarily the union with Christ, but God's acts in Christ."

Whereas the Reformation theology found the main entrance to Paul's writings in the "righteousness by faith," there has been a considerable change of approach since the publication of Deissmann's book. The process of "individual experience" of the benefits of Christ's redemption and the "Existential effects" thereof received more and more emphasis. To a certain extent this has been caused by the studies on the term "in Christ." The influence of these writings, with their definite approach to the matter, has even been noticeable in the publications during the discussions on the term "sanctified in Christ" in the years 1936-1944. The decisions of Synods of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands were, to say the least, coloured by a religious subjectivism.

Deissmann, in his aforementioned book, writes: "This mystical 'in' has, through the Pauline 'in Christ,' become the great watchword of Christian mysticism." He adhered to the local interpretation and stated that "the formula characterizes the relation of the Christian to the living Christ; it is the expression of the most intimate communion with Christ, which is called Christ-intimacy." As far as I have been able to verify, he never mentions what that intimacy is based on or how it is accomplished. This approach did not remain unchallenged. It was even called "a resurgence of antique gnosticism which has haunted the interpretation of the term 'in Christ' for a long time." It has also been labelled "an unstable, exaggerated interpretation." There were also moves in another direction when it was said that there is a variety of uses with differences in shades of meaning, while the translation IN must be maintained and should not be replaced by "through" or "with" for which Paul uses other prepositions.

The conclusion which a French theologian, M. Bouttier, arrives at deserves our attention. In his book *"En Christ"* (In Christ) he writes (p. 6): "The expression 'in Christ' evokes the act of God by which . . . we are included in the body of Christ through His Holy Spirit to participate in His life and all that is His" (my translation). It is regrettable that Bouttier did not retrace this line to where it ought to start, namely, God's righteousness as revealed to man in the gospel.

The conclusion that there is a variety of shades of meaning as to the interpretation of "in" is borne out by the occurrences in Paul's letters, and this would suggest that a classification is possible. The interesting question is: How should we go about this?

It can be accomplished in different ways, depending on certain premises evidenced in Deissmann's treatment. He speaks of an "immediate" union with Christ and takes his starting point from that premise. He builds his exegesis of the several occurrences on a mystical interpretation of the term, resulting in a climate of religious subjectivism.

This matter has come to the fore in many current

publications in which religious feelings seem to be the basis for ethics and morals. A clear description of this religious subjectivism was given by J. Kamphuis in *De Reformatie* (Vol. 57, No. 10, p. 145). He defines this subjectivism as: "Any religious conviction which does not ascribe a central place to the Word of God and His covenant, but, on the contrary, awards a central place to man and his religious feelings and moods" (my translation).

In all the classifications given since the days of Deissmann, a one-sidedness presents itself gradually modifying the revelation of God's deeds in Christ to an account of the reborn soul: Christ-intimacy! The decisions of Synods of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (before 1944) were not free from this influence. The pronouncements on "presumptive regeneration" make it clear that the right to and the validity of baptism is to be defined from what *has been realized* in the children or is presumed to have been realized in them. From that resulted the distinction between "internal" and "external" holiness. The discussion on the use of the term "sanctified in Christ" was bound to reach a deadlock in the dilemma "either - or."

From the examples given — I had to limit myself to a few — it appears that a purely local use of the preposition does not do justice to the context of many occurrences, and in some cases this local interpretation has caused the elimination of certain passages because they did not fit into the scheme. Even Reformed theologians have resorted to translating the preposition "in" by others, for instance, "through" and "by." H. Venema argued in an article in *Opbouw* (Vol. 11, Nos. 24, 25) that in I John 5:11, "God has granted us eternal life and this life is in Christ His Son," John is speaking about "the Activity of the personal, historic Christ." However, John does not write here about eternal life "through" Christ (which we find indeed in other places in Scripture), but about eternal life IN Christ. This expression must therefore be differently defined.

Although Bouttier is not completely clear in his conclusions, he is, I am convinced, on the right track. He writes (p. 95): "'In Christ' recapitulates step by step the plan of God; in every phrase it indicates the origine, the way and the realization of the divine work." Taking this as a starting point, we can categorize the three different shades of meaning which are very closely and inseparably connected. The one is impossible without the other two.

In a first series of occurrences we learn about "God's acts in Christ." God is the subject of the verb, e.g. "He is the source of our life in Christ Jesus" (I Cor. 1:30), or "God, who in Christ leads us in triumph" (II Cor. 2:14). Then Paul writes in I Cor. 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation," he adds in verse 18: "all this is from God." The being led in triumph is not based on a union with Christ, not on a being-under-the-influence of Christ, but on God's plan of salvation revealed in His Son.

One more example is Gal. 3:26, "You are all sons of God through faith in Jesus Christ." The RSV translates: In Christ you are all sons of God. Deissmann puts the emphasis on the communion with Christ which makes men sons of God. Although both translations are possible, it is remarkable that Paul points to the covenant in verse 29 when he adds: "If you are Christ's [and I would add: through faith] you are the seed of Abraham, heirs according to the gospel." Here is a direct reference to the position of man in the covenant which God established with Abraham.

The letter to the Ephesians is even clearer on this point. "God has blessed us in Christ" (Eph. 1:3). "Even as He chose us in Him" (1:4). "He bestowed His grace upon us in the Beloved" (1:6), and "according to His purpose which He set forth in Christ, as a plan for the fulness of time" (1:9, 10). This sequence of statements speaks, in the first place, about the purpose and plan of God in Christ, and, next, about bestowing gifts upon man. From almost every letter of Paul examples can be drawn to show that "in Christ" is used in a comprehensive sense and that "the case or the context indicates the meaning of the preposition." The act of God in Christ is always set forth prior to a bestowing of gifts. It is not done by virtue of a mystical union with Christ, but through faith in God's covenant Word.

This observation leads us to another group of occurrences in which we discern how the benefits of salvation, the rewards of Christ's redemptive work, are present in Him. In Gal. 3:14 Paul refers again to the covenant when he writes: ". . . that the blessings of Abraham might come upon the gentiles." These blessings are realized in Christ's work of fulfilling God's purpose and the promises of the covenant. In turn, these promises are granted to us and we may participate in them. How they are given and how man can and must participate in these blessings is explained later in this letter. Rom. 6:23 teaches that "the free gift of God is life eternal in Christ Jesus." This life is not enjoyed, nor can it be, if and when it is not there — objectively — as a present reality. This reality exists already before union with Christ comes to mind.

It would take too much time to mention all the occurrences of the phrase "in Christ" speaking about the treasures of the Kingdom and the promises of the covenant as they are "available" in Christ.

We now turn to an extensive number of places where the phrase "in Christ" is used in connection with man. There is a very clear pattern in Paul's use of the preposition, especially in relation with verbs: What is man to do "in Christ" and what does it mean "to be in Christ"? These expressions, indeed, point to a close relationship. The cardinal question remains whether this is a mystical union, an existential experience, or something else. I have argued already that a merely local interpretation does not do justice to these expressions. There is no possibility for *direct, immediate* contact with Christ, neither from His side nor from ours, without a revealed means of contact.

Attention must therefore be paid to the words: "To be in Christ," as we read in II Cor. 5:17: "If anyone is in Christ he is a new creation." Is this a "religious experience," a "being under the influence or in the sphere of Christ"? Deissmann stated: "God takes the initiative at the mystic initiation and continues it. Baptism does not bring about this communion, but seals it." There is no indication how this communion is brought about. Deissmann solved this problem by identifying Christ and the Holy Spirit. Greijdenus, in his commentaries, also speaks about "fellowship with Christ" in connection with this phrase, but he does it in such a way that the forensic or juridical meaning comes first. Scripture, he writes, speaks of fellowship which is worked and maintained by the Holy Spirit *in the way of faith*. The term "to be in Christ" indicates the effect of acknowledging Christ in faith and thereby becoming partaker of His realized benefits. Man who hears the Word of the covenant is faced with the question, *not* whether he is elected or reborn, but whether he receives the Mediator of the cove-

nant with the promises fulfilled in Him. God, who has realized His purpose in Christ, calls unto faith and in that way realizes His decree.

The words "sanctified in Christ" are once again in dispute. H.C. Hoeksema recently reacted to an article written by J. Overduin, in which the words "conditional promises" are used. Hoeksema argues that "external holiness" is not real. In the first question to the parents in the Form of Baptism — "Do you confess that . . . our children are sanctified in Christ" — a "real holiness" is meant. Hoeksema maintains that there is no condition of faith. The conclusion is that only elected children are sanctified in Christ. Once again the "real" and the "unreal" holiness continue to confuse the issue and the influence of the mystical interpretation of the term "in Christ" persists.

In Rom. 5 and I Cor. 15 Paul makes a comparison between "in Christ" and "in Adam." This could be explained in the sense that all men were "in the loins of Adam, but then the comparison does not make sense. A mystical interpretation is alien to the context. Being in the sphere or under the influence of Adam is only partly true. There is more to it. The expression "man has sinned in Adam" indicates the position of all mankind because of Adam's sin. All people, whether they know it or not, whether they want to believe it or not, deserve eternal death. Christ was sent into the world to restore our relationship with God by changing that position of condemnation, by right for us. We were dead in Adam, we are alive in Christ. That indicates a position-in-rights, judicially speaking. Being in Christ, being righteous and holy in Him, is not an inward experience; neither is it external righteousness or holiness. It is real, realized righteousness and holiness as it is obtained by Christ.

In the expression "sanctified in Christ" in the Form of Baptism the words "children" and "sanctified" have for a long time received undue emphasis. This has led to "presupposed regeneration of the child," on the one hand, and "presupposed non-regeneration," on the other hand. The full emphasis, however, should be on "in Christ." It is a position; it is a status-in-rights in the cove-

nant of grace; it is a historic and dynamic reality in God's continuing plan of salvation, revealed in Christ as set down in the covenant Word. That is what is called the "indicative" of the gospel. God so loved the world that He sent His Son. But, directly connected with this gospel is the call to faith and repentance and to cleaving to the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That is the "imperative" of the Word of the covenant. He who is sanctified, according to the promises fulfilled in Christ, must become manifest as being sanctified. The fellowship-in-rights becomes a fellowship-of-life by faith.

The preposition "in" in the expression "in Christ" leads to the following propositions:

- The word "in" in this phrase should not be translated by "through" or "with"; it does not refer directly to the redemptive work of Christ.
- The term "in Christ" as found in the letters of Paul is used in a comprehensive sense with a clear pattern. Summarizing this pattern we see:
 1. The plan and purpose of God which He realized by sending His Son into the world.
 2. The benefits of grace; i.e. righteousness, holiness and eternal life which have been realized in Christ as Mediator of the covenant.
 3. The union-in-rights of those with whom the Lord established His covenant: the believers and their seed. This union-in-rights can be acknowledged or rejected.
 4. The rejection of this union-in-rights means that the wrath of God remains on such unbelievers.
 5. The acceptance of this fellowship-in-rights, by believing the promises and heeding the call of the gospel as worked by the Holy Spirit, leads to fellowship-of-life: the participation of Christ and all His benefits.

I believe that when this line is followed in our considerations much confusion will disappear and the word "mystical union" will be replaced by "covenant union." That would be the strongest gain in our argument against "religious subjectivism" and would give to the Word of God and His covenant the central place.

D. VANDERBOOM

Theological College

PRINCIPAL'S STATEMENT 1982

*Thirteenth Anniversary Meeting
Tenth Convocation
Friday, September 10, 1982*

1. COLLEGE EVENING

The academic year 1981 - 1982 had a festive beginning. At our twelfth anniversary meeting and ninth convocation on Friday, September 4, 1981, the Rev. C. Van Dam, M.Th., was installed as Professor of Old Testament. His inaugural address was entitled, "The Genesis Flood Account."

2. FACULTY AND STUDENTS

Mr. A. Van Delden, B.A., enrolled as freshman, together with Mr. G.

Wieske, who was the first student from Australia and the last student to be admitted as a mature student on the basis of an entrance examination in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Ancient Philosophy. Our total number of students rose to eleven. Besides the freshmen course we offered the course of the junior year.

During the first semester the professor of Dogmatology lectured as Visiting Professor at Westminster Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, U.S.A. The excellent cooperation of his colleagues made it possible to exchange courses of the second and first semesters. The result was a busy academic year but a grati-

fying one: our students did not lack their proper theological education and our institute could be of some significance to at least ten times as many students as we ourselves have.

This good cooperation was evident again in the second semester when, at the end of April, Prof. C. Van Dam left for a one-half year stay in The Netherlands to prepare his doctoral thesis in Kampen.

Two special lectures were held during this academic year. Mr. W. Van der Kamp spoke on *De labore solis* and Prof. Dr. J.W. Wevers of the Institute for Near Eastern Studies at the University of Toronto dealt with Septuagint scholarship.

The Rev. G. Van Dooren, M.Th., reached the obligatory retirement age, but we are thankful that he is willing to serve as temporary instructor in Diaconology for another academic year. Prof. L. Selles succeeded him as vice-principal.

On January 15, 1982, the Lord took unto Himself the Rev. H. Scholten, M.Th., lecturer in Ecclesiology from 1969 till 1979. Since in a previous Principal's statement I gave a survey of his life and his work in our midst, we now simply thank the God of history for what He gave us in our brother Scholten. It was good to see the whole College community around his grave on the day of his funeral.

One of our students, Mr. G. Wieske, was privileged to be able to resume his studies after having been hospitalized for a serious operation. Our times are in God's hand.

3. ORGANIZATION

We now make the transition from Faculty and Students to the organization of our College as such. The main event was an Act of the 32nd Legislature of the Province of Ontario. It is the *Act respecting the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches*. Prepared by a Committee in which our trustee, Mr. C.M. Loopstra, LL.B., played an important role, introduced as a Private Bill by the Hon. Mr. George Kerr, member for Burlington South, the Act was passed by the House and received Royal Assent on December 11, 1981. Our institution is now incorporated and given the authority to grant the degrees of Bachelor of Theology, Bachelor of Divinity, Master of Divinity, and Master of Theology. Instead of two Boards — Governors and Trustees — there is now *one* Board consisting of eleven Governors. Six of these are ministers of a Canadian Reformed Church — they form the Academic Committee — while the other five Governors are members of the Finance and Property Committee.

This is the place and moment to express publicly our thanks to the Hon. Mr. George Kerr, here present, for his interest and involvement in our acquisition of legal status in the Province of Ontario. I recently read that Burlington Bay in former days was called Geneva Bay. I do not know whether historical appreciation led the member of Burlington South to defend the civil rights of Reformed people who are often called Calvinists. Issued from Geneva, we certainly honour all who are in high positions because of their God-given authority. We are grateful to you, Mr. Kerr, for

the help given to our small but academically sound institution.

In April, when the Board of Governors in its constitutive meeting together with the Faculty pored over new bylaws that refine the details of our organization, we had a memorable celebration of this joyous event.

Upon advice of the Board, the Senate now decided to grant the *Master of Divinity (M.Div.)* degree to those students who entered the College with a Bachelor's degree and have successfully completed four years of theological study. The Bachelor of Divinity degree (B.D.) is maintained for those who in the past had been admitted without being in the possession of a Bachelor's degree. The present graduation of Mr. Clarence Bouwman, B.A., is therefore the first occasion of the conferring of the M.Div. degree and marks the beginning of a new era.

Also in consultation with the governors the Senate decided that a student needs to attain a weighted average of 65% (C) in the final marks of an academic year in order to be able to continue his studies at the College. This decision will be implemented for the academic year 1982/83. Both the marks obtained and the degree granted should be indicative of the academic standards of a graduate school.

4. LIBRARY

As far as the library is concerned, my report will be short, since I do not wish to take away the impact of the words to be spoken by Mrs. L. Selles on behalf of the Women's Saving Action. Let it suffice to say that our library undergoes a steady and healthy growth. During my stay in Philadelphia, Mr. R.J. Kepple, the librarian of Westminster Theological Seminary, gave us an excellent deal when he sold more than six hundred volumes of high quality theological literature, especially in German, Dutch, and French. Prof. Drs. J.P. Lettinga, the librarian at our sister institution in Kampen, The Netherlands, agreed to a regular exchange of official publications of our churches. Now that the Women's Saving Action has reached a milestone, I express the heartfelt thanks of our entire College community to Mrs. Selles, the Lindhout family in London, and all those anonymous willing workers who gave us our necessary tools.

The modern powers of automation in general and computerization in particular have conquered even the serene field of librarians; they will require capital investment in the future

for which the help of our sisters in the Churches is still urgently requested.

5. CONCLUSION

Coming to a conclusion, we may say that in several respects the academic year 1981 - 1982 was an extraordinary period in the life of our Theological College. Our status is legalized. For the coming year we attracted five new students, of whom two are non-Canadian Reformed. This recognition by others is also noticeable in other contexts and contacts.

It renders us thankful to God who gives us a name and a place. It makes us aware of our calling and responsibility. In humility we solicit therefore, the prayers of God's people that our institution may remain a truly Biblical training ground of Reformed ministers, servants of Christ and of His congregation.

J. FABER



THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Published bi-weekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Second class mail registration number 1025.

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE

MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.

1249 Plessis Road,

Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R2C 3L9

Phone: (204) 222-5218

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION P.O. Box 54,

Fergus, Ontario, Canada N1M 2W7

ISSN 0383-0438

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Faber

Managing Editor: W.W.J. VanOene

Co-Editors: J. Geertsema, J. DeJong

IN THIS ISSUE

From Pre-Position to Pro-Position — D. VanderBoom	350
Theological College — Principal's Statement — J. Faber	352
Press Review — Children in the Worship Services — J. Geertsema ..	354
From the Scriptures — Second Thoughts — J. DeJong	357
International — W.W.J. VanOene	358
Blame Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 20? — G. VanDooren ...	359
News Medley - W.W.J. VanOene	360
A Ray of Sunshine — Mrs. J.K. Riemersma	361
Beginning a New Season — W.W.J. VanOene	363
Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund	366
Press Releases — Teachers' College	367
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	369

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 1982

Regular Mail Subscription Rates

Canada	\$20.75
U.S.A.	\$23.25
International	\$31.25

Children in the Worship Services

A QUESTION

In *NEW HORIZONS in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church* of May 1982, in the column "Letters to the Church . . .," a letter of a reader appeared with a question:

What are we to do with young children during the morning worship service — children from perhaps three or four years old to eight or nine? Do we expect them to sit quietly and unmoved during the service — like bumps on a log? Are they to draw pictures, to do puzzles, to read simple nursery-type books? May we have junior church at some point and remove them from the service? Should we have a children's sermon at some point — in their seats or up front in a circle? . . .

It seems that this is a critical matter in the larger question of retaining young people when they reach their years of freedom — and mostly absent themselves from worship because of sad experiences in their tender years.

AN ANSWER

In the same issue of this magazine, the first article dealt with this question. It was written by Mary Loeks, mother of three children, member of a RPCES (now PCA) congregation, and had appeared first in the RPCES Supplement to *The Presbyterian Journal* of November 25, 1981. She writes:

Commitment to Reformed and covenant theology has led many to a conviction that families ought to worship together as families. It is a noble goal; but is it a realistic one? Are we simply closing our eyes to some of the things that are happening when we come together for the purpose of worship?

I saw an otherwise normal ten-year-old boy working long division problems during a church service I visited last summer! I have often seen children reading books during a worship service, sometimes cleverly concealed between Bible covers, sometimes not.

Children endure church services by drawing, counting floor or ceiling tiles, wiggling and squirming, emptying their mother's purses and sometimes sleeping.

Is it possible for families, whose members differ in age, sex, interests, abilities and maturity, to worship together as families? Is it possible for

families to do anything worthwhile as families? I would answer both these questions with a qualified yes.

My yes perches precariously on two premises: commitment and preparation.

The author does not speak further about commitment. She presupposes that that is present. With respect to preparation she first makes a comparison with a picnic at the beach, requiring careful planning and the cooperation of all.

After this she writes about "**Preparation by everyone**"

At the top of our "don't forget to bring" list must be an expectant attitude. For reasons hard to fathom, the Almighty God Himself wants to communicate with us. He wants us to worship Him

So often many of us approach the Divine Potter as dried out, brittle pieces of clay. We would probably never voice such a sentiment, but our attitude is an "I dare you to get through to me, Lord." True worship is much more likely to happen if we come as soft, shapable pieces of clay, eagerly expecting God to speak to us.

Some earthly suggestions to aid our focus on the King of heaven:

1. Get enough sleep the night before.
2. Do ahead of time all the shoe polishing, shirt ironing and food preparation possible. Make sure the car has enough gasoline. Save for Sunday morning only those tasks which can't possibly be done sooner.
3. While you are busy with some of these more mechanical preparations, pray for your pastor and others involved in the worship service.
4. Get up even earlier than you think you need to on Sunday morning. Arrive at your place of worship in time to begin worshipping during the prelude.
5. Say "thank you" to the appropriate persons when something has been especially helpful or meaningful. Don't forget those persons who man the nursery, shovel snow from the church steps or pass out hymnals

With all these suggestions, I think, we can all agree. I would even say: they are self-evident and were practiced in Reformed Churches for many years. Is it not a matter of course that we should make sure to get to bed in time on Saturday? Is it not a matter

of course that we have Sunday as a day of rest, and therefore do on Saturday all the work for Sunday that can be done on Saturday? And is it not a matter of course that on Sunday mornings (although also on Fridays or Saturdays) a prayer for the ministers is very appropriate? They need it. And a prayer for all involved, for the whole congregation, is also very much needed. We should pray that the Lord may make us all pieces of "soft, shapable" clay, with whom He as the great Potter, can work. Such a prayer before the worship services in the family circle is a very good preparation.

However, when the author comes to the next point, "**Preparation for everyone**" I am less in agreement. She writes:

The major responsibility for this, admittedly, is on the shoulders of the pastor or the person delivering the sermon. But the responsibility does not have to be solely his. Many churches have effectively used some form of a worship service planning committee.

I am against "dominocracy," the minister ruling and dominating everything. But the responsibility for the worship services is not on the shoulders of the minister as such. It is the responsibility of the consistory. It should not be given into the hands of a planning committee.

It would be wise and correct to have the preaching of the minister as a regular point on the agenda of consistory meetings. Then the elders can not only comment on the manner of preaching and the contents of the sermons, but also talk about the needs of the congregation, whereby discussing with the minister, for example, which parts of the truth of God's Word or which elements regarding a Christian life need to receive emphasis for their congregation. This is a side remark.

But let us listen further to what Mrs. Loeks writes:

I submit some questions for the consideration of those who prepare sermons:

Can you put the sermon's main idea in the language of a five-year-old? . . . Where can we begin in our attempts to involve everyone in worship? Not every pastor feels comfortable with children's sermons or object lessons. Those might be a part of the service that could be led by someone other than the pastor. Children's sermons do not have to be part of every effective worship experience, but they can be helpful. They are especially so if the main idea of the sermon is an abstract one.

Are there other aspects of the worship service that even young non-readers can participate in? I have seen children tune excitedly back into the service when they heard a hymn or Scripture verse or catechism question they had memorized

Here this mother makes a good point. School, home, and church can cooperate! She continues:

When children have given money for a special offering in Sunday school or Bible school, it might be appropriate to have representatives of the children present their offerings as part of the worship service.

During an infant baptism, consider having the young children in the congregation come forward where they can see what is taking place. Explain briefly to the children what is happening, and why

During communion in one Christian Reformed Church, the congregation comes forward in a series of small groups and forms a circle. As older family members receive the elements, the pastor or another elder whispers a special message to each of the children. "God loves you, and wants this new school year to be a good one for you, Sarah." The message is often accompanied by some physical contact — a hug, a handshake, or a pat on the head

Occasionally, a family might help to lead a portion of a worship service. The children might lead the congregation in a memory verse or in a response to a catechism question. Someone might provide music, someone read Scripture, or another lead in prayer. The important thing for such a family to remember is that their objective is not to call attention to themselves, but rather to help all who will worship with them to focus on God.

With these last words I wholeheartedly agree: we should not focus our attention on ourselves, but on God. But I am afraid that the other suggestions do just the opposite: focus all the attention on the children. Here I disagree.

In the same issue of *New Horizons* a short article appeared written by Ken Ironside, "pastor of First OPC in Hamilton, Mass," with the title "Effective Use of Children's Sermons." From it I take the following:

Many churches have found the children's sermon to be an effective way to show that children are included in the church, and that worship is for them, also.

Nearly anyone can deliver a children's sermon, but it is good to have the minister do it frequently The simplest approach is to boil the adult sermon down to one point which the children can grasp

At the right time in the service invite

the boys and girls to the front. They can sit on the floor, the platform or the front pew — which is usually vacant. The preacher should now forget about the rest of the congregation and get down physically to the kids' level; if they're sitting on the floor, join them

In the August/September issue of *NEW HORIZONS*, in the column "Letters to the Church" a reaction appeared from a reader, who calls the group participation "more Plymouth Brethren than Reformed" in style. He points at the book of Robert Rayburn, *O Come Let Us Worship* (See Book Review of Rev. G. Van Dooren in *Clarion*, Vol. 29, page 288). He calls this book "a clarion call to return to the lofty principles of worship consistent with our Reformed heritage," and adds:

Due to the sublime nature of worship and the need to impress the concept of covenantal solidarity in worship on the minds of our children, Rayburn says:

There can be no doubt about the fact that a group of little children gathered around the pastor at the front of the church is indeed a most interesting spectacle. It is amusing to watch them, especially those who are precocious and uninhibited and who enjoy being on display before their parents and other adults. A church worship service, however, is not a time for the enjoyment of the antics of little children, precious

and important as each of them is. This is a time for corporate worship, and no segment of the congregation should be singled out for special attention

There is great value in teaching boys and girls from earliest childhood to participate in the worship services of the churches. It is a mistake to give them the impression that everything in which they take part must be tailored especially for them. They have their Sunday school classes in which instruction is on their level (p.221).

The writer of the letter, Mr. Craig L. DiBenedictis, continues:

He says, of course, that the pastor's sermon should have elements that even small children can understand. But the above is consistent with worship in the Old Testament as men, women and children assembled to hear the Law of God read (Deut. 31:12, 13). There was not a separate and special reading of the Law for children; such was to be carried on at home.

Is the worship service the place for more of Mister Rogers's Neighborhood, as the last issue suggests? Are we correct in teaching our children (in practice) that they are to go to church to be recognized? Should we not be teaching them that worship is for the recognition of God? Dare we even go so far as to say that children may lead in parts of the worship service?

Too many people attend worship with an entertainment mind set, judg-

PSALM 78

1. Give ear, my peo-ple, lis-ten to my teach-ing;
In - cline your ear, and let my words be reach-ing
Your heart and mind, and with their truth im-press you;
The par - a - ble in which I speak shall bless you.
My mouth will voice dark say-ings from of old,
Things we have heard, which us our fa - thers told.

ing the results accordingly; and too many churches accommodate. Are we going to foster the same misconception in the minds of our children?

The major strength and beauty of the Reformed alternative to worship has been its God-centered focus vis-a-vis the man-centered focus of other churches. Shall we preserve that alternative for our covenant children, or will egalitarianism of our culture and the broad church movement rob them of that alternative?

I can find myself quite well in the remarks of Mr. Craig DiBenedictis. But I would like to add a few of my own, for I think that also in our midst the same ideas and suggestions can be found as we read in the article of Mrs. Mary Loeks on the basis of about the same arguments: the children don't understand, etc.

In his letter, Mr. DiBenedictis refers to "Mister Rogers's Neighbourhood." I guess this appears regularly on T.V. in the U.S.A. The modern media use psychological knowledge to bring their programs and messages in a way that is refined and almost must captivate the attention. This is particularly so with T.V. T.V. offers special programs for children, adapted to their age and understanding, in a certain sense. We must ask the question whether our asking for special youth services and calling the children to the front during the service is not more inspired by the fact that we are all so very much used to T.V. with its adapted, man-centered programs, than by the Word of the Lord. T.V. makes it easy to pay attention, and easily captivates old and young. However, T.V. makes people lazy at the same time, and makes it harder to listen and concentrate on the spoken word only. I am convinced (and I am not the only one) that for many the regular watching of T.V. diminishes the ability to concentrate on the spoken and written word. Things must come to us in an easy, entertaining way. And a speaker, also a preacher, must entertain us to captivate us. This is also true for children, we feel. And therefore we want something special for them. Children find the church boring and therefore leave the church later. Here something is wrong, but in my opinion, it is not the worship service or the sermon. They will not as such drive children or young people out of the church, provided the pure doctrine of the Word of God is preached also to them (Art. 29, B.C.), and provided they receive a Christian and Scriptural education at home. Let me elaborate on both.

THE NEED FOR THE PREACHING OF THE PURE DOCTRINE

I am convinced that the preaching of the pure doctrine (teaching, instruction) of God's Word will have a positive effect on the youth of the church. But when the contents of the preaching is adapted to human tastes, or when the manner of preaching and teaching is adapted to those tastes so that it is entertaining, the congregation will be scattered, especially the youth. Faith comes from the Holy Spirit who works it in our hearts by the preaching of the holy gospel. I am not at all opposed to addressing also the boys and girls in a sermon. When Paul writes his letters to the churches, he also addresses children: "Children, obey your parents." I think it is a good thing that a minister sometimes speaks specifically to the children in his sermon. That makes clear to them that they belong in the worship service.

But special youth services, or having them come up front and sit down with them, or having the children go downstairs in order that they can have their own special "service," e.g., in the form of a Sunday School class, sets the youth apart and treats them separately. This is a wrong education. It gives them the erroneous impression that they need special treatment. And these specialties will not keep them in the church at all if they are not interested.

But, I hear someone say, those young children have such a hard time to sit quietly in the pew, while they don't understand what is said. This is not untrue. Therefore, parents have to be patient. They must understand that being quiet is not easy. But it is not impossible. Can children not do today what they were able to do a number of years ago? And — this is much more important — how are the children educated at home? This brings me to the second remark:

THE NEED FOR A GOOD CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT HOME

When a young child that does not go to school yet has a terribly hard time being quiet in church during the worship service, we should be careful and not press it too much. The one child is not the other. And going twice can be too much. At the very young age of four, once every Sunday *can* even be too much. It depends on the child. Wisdom is needed. Nevertheless, children must learn that they belong in church, and, when they grow older, they have to learn that it is the most normal thing

in the world that they go to church twice. They must also learn that this is normal, not because father and mother want it, not because they feel a need for it, but simply because the LORD, their Redeemer wants *them* there too. They belong there, just like father and mother. Going to church must be just as normal as eating and sleeping. It is, therefore, immensely important how father and mother themselves speak about going to church. For them it must not only be a normal thing that is never questioned; but father and mother should also speak about going to church as a thing that they *want* to do and *like* to do. They must show to the children that it is a joy for them to be in church and worship the LORD with His congregation, since it is a joy to do God's will.

Now it is true that a child does not grasp the sermon, and the younger it is, the less it understands and listens. But the child has parents. And the parents have promised the LORD that they would teach their child, to the utmost of their power. Father and mother are to speak about church and the service and the sermon in a positive way. They are to talk about it with the children, very simply relating what the minister preached about; what God says, promises, demands. Parents must stimulate the children to listen by positive reaction.

When parents complain about the church and the sermon in the presence of their children, or (always) criticize what is happening, when they criticize the minister and the elders, and the deacons, and their brothers and sisters — when parents are negative about the church, we can expect that children do not want to be part of it. Does the church and the service of the Lord live in the hearts and in the lives of the parents? Do they love both the Lord and His church, and do they show that in their words and in their deeds, seven days a week? Then, the older the children grow, the more they will learn to hear and understand and believe; and the more they will involve themselves. Faithful attendance of the catechism classes is important here as well. It helps the youth in understanding.

Let us ask ourselves: Are we all faithful to the Lord in our calling, as preachers, as consistories, as congregations, as families, as parents? Let us amend our lives where we need correction.

J. GEERTSEMA

FROM THE SCRIPTURES

“The LORD said, ‘Shall I hide from Abraham what I am about to do . . . ?’ ” Gen. 18:17.

Second Thoughts

The LORD is speaking here, but if we look for the person He addresses we are not able to find him. After hosting the three divine visitors in his tent, Abraham has gotten up to send them off. The narrative gives us the picture of the two angels walking on ahead, while the LORD and Abraham silently walk together a short distance behind them, cf. v. 22. In this silent moment, the narrator presents us with the *thoughts* of the LORD. As readers we are permitted to come behind the scenes and see how, as it were, in a human way the LORD comes to a decision. Only later does He actually speak to Abraham, v. 20ff.

The incident with Sarah had led to a rather chilly parting, and this moment appears to be somewhat embarrassing for Abraham. The LORD had just told Sarah that she would have a son, but His words only met with laughter and jest. The fulfilment of the promise seemed to far-fetched for Sarah. The LORD rebukes this laughter, but also had to endure it. If people laugh at what we say, we tend to stop speaking. Here, in a human way of speaking, the narrator shows us how the LORD overcomes the affront and decides to continue with His work of disclosing His will for Abraham and Sarah. We see His “second thoughts” in which He gives the reasons why He cannot but disclose the intentions of His heart to His servant Abraham.

The reason for this continued disclosure obviously does not lie with Abraham or Sarah, as if they were in any way deserving of it. Rather, it lies solely in the promise of the *covenant* that the LORD had made. The LORD binds Himself to His promise. He had only recently repeated it, and now He takes the *full* consequences of His stand. Passing over the weaknesses and shortcomings in the faith of His chosen couple, He, as it were, commits Himself still further to them. He discloses His intentions regarding Sodom and Gommorah to Abraham, and actually involves him in the administration of His covenant justice.

Thus, the real reason for this disclosure to Abraham lies in the Messianic promise, with all its implications. The existence of the promise with its demand of faith drives the LORD ahead to bring it into fulfilment, not only for Abraham, but also for his descendants. In mercy and judgment, the LORD is opening the way for the appearance of Abraham’s great Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ. Because He must come and is coming, the LORD cannot hide anything from Abraham, but, in effect, incorporates his faith and obedience in what He is about to do. For with this revelation, Abraham is called to a greater act of faith: he is called to make intercession for the people who now occupy the land bequeathed by the LORD to him and his de-

scendants. So faith triumphs in its recognition of the great mercy and justice of the LORD.

And what Abraham sees in both the destruction of the wicked cities and in the birth of his son Isaac is brought to its fulfilment in the work of Jesus Christ. In the Lord Jesus Christ and His work, His death and resurrection, the LORD discloses the *fullness* of His mercy and justice. In Christ, “He brings to nothing the things that are,” as He did with the wicked cities. In Christ, “He calls into existence the things that do not exist,” as He did with Isaac’s birth. The coming and work of Christ is the only ground for the ongoing disclosure of the LORD.

That is why the Lord Jesus was able to refer to the wicked cities of Abraham’s day in His own day, and simultaneously proclaim a heavier judgment for those who had seen Him and His works and yet did not believe, Matt. 11:20ff. In Christ, the LORD has disclosed Himself so much more than He had done in Sodom’s day; indeed, in Christ, the LORD has *fully* revealed Himself. In Christ, He proves that He could not hide Himself but had to speak. And yet, even when the fullness of revelation appeared, there were those who mocked and laughed. They rejected the promise in unbelief. Thus, after upbraiding the rebellious cities of His day, the Lord Jesus — as Abraham’s great Son — offers an obedient prayer of thanksgiving and awe at the wonderful and marvelous self-disclosure of the LORD, “I thank thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to babes; yea, Father, for such was Thy gracious *good pleasure (eudokia)*,” Matt. 11:25ff. The Lord Jesus praises the gracious good pleasure of the Father who is faithful in the full revelation of His covenant mercy and justice.

In the full revelation of Jesus Christ we, too, have so much more than Abraham had, just as the witnesses to the work of Christ had more than Abraham. He did not even know about those “second thoughts.” They are disclosed to us, and we may also see how the LORD has faithfully acted according to them throughout the history of His people. We may know that His “second” thoughts are really His *eternal* thoughts, His *eternal eudokia* being carried out in this world.

Indeed, we have more. The merciful and gracious Father has revealed what He is about to do. His mercy and longsuffering are great, but His judgment over Sodom and Babylon must come, Rev. 19:1ff. With the mighty power of the ruling and victorious Saviour so manifestly revealed to us, shall we not believe and obey — joining in the obedient prayer of intercession that fully exalts our God and King in the administration of His covenant justice in the world?

J. DEJONG



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.

LONDON (ANP)

The 28-year old priest Josef Dostla of Melnik (Czechoslovakia) has been arrested because he gave catechetical instruction in private homes. He was charged with violating art. 178 of the criminal law (violation of the government's supervision of religion).

He is the tenth priest to appear before the court within the space of one year. The maximum penalty for his offense is two years imprisonment. This was made known by Keston College, the English institute for the study of religion in communist countries. (ND)

GENEVA (EPS)

Two-thirds of Zambia's population is Christian. Spiritual leaders in this country called upon them to fast and pray in an effort to make the government abandon its plans to introduce marxist political theory into the schools.

Zambia's president, Kenneth Kaunda, denies that introduction of this course is in conflict with the religious education at the schools. (ND)

PARIS (KNA)

The growing shortage of priests in Brazil can be solved only by ordaining married men and women. "I cannot see any other solution for the pastoral crisis in my diocese," bishop Adriano Hypolito of Nova Iguaza declared.

Bishop Hypolito is in Europe at present and also pointed to social problems in Brazil. In his diocese 90% of the population lives at the brink of starvation. Many people suffer from the vast unemployment. The church has the mandate, according to bishop Hypolito, to fight for a fair

distribution of the land. Therewith conflicts have arisen between church and state. "The church does not fight against the government, but against the dominating class." (ND)

GOUDA

The 65-year old Baptist leader Iwan J. Antonov of the Russian city of Kirovograd was arrested on May 14, his fifth time. After completion of his previous prison term of two years he had been free for only ten months.

Because of his religious convictions he has spent eighteen years in prisons. Also his son Pavel J. Antonov and his son-in-law Konstantin Sysojev were arrested recently because of forbidden religious activities. (ND)

TORONTO (CP)

The pumpkin pie purchased from the church booth at Ontario fall fairs will cost seven percent more now.

As a result of Ontario Treasurer Frank Miller's May budget, church groups and other charitable organizations that sell prepared food in direct competition with a commercial enterprise must collect tax. Congregations selling food at a fair or catering to a wedding are included.

Another change means church groups holding weekly or monthly fund-raising events must collect tax on food sold.

The bill allows congregations to undertake a reasonable number of fund-raising events yearly and not collect tax if less than \$75,000 is raised. (KWR)

HENDRIK IDO AMBACHT

The Reformed Congregations (Gereformeerde Gemeenten) in The Netherlands experienced a slight growth during the year 1981. The membership grew from 16,137 to 16,214. The fifty-two congregations are served by two ministers and two retired ministers.

The Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands came into existence in 1953 when a split occurred in the Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands and North America, which had a total membership of approximately 70,000 in The Netherlands.

In 1980 the total membership of the Reformed Congregations in The Netherlands was still more than 19,000, with six ministers and two retired ministers. In that year more than three thousand members and three ministers broke with the federation. A fourth minister has since ac-

cepted a call to a foreign country.

Only twice since 1971 a student was admitted to the training for the ministry: one in 1976 and one in 1981 (ND)

LIMASSOL (EP)

Following six days in beleaguered Lebanon, the president of World Vision International, W. Stanley Mooneyham, announced that his organization will increase its emergency relief program from \$400,000 to \$1 million.

World Vision is currently supplying high protein foods, pharmaceuticals, blankets, tents, and cooking utensils procured in East Beirut and Cyprus. Those portions of the supplies not being included on convoys headed for southern Lebanon are being distributed through World Vision's partner agency in Beirut, the Contact and Resource Center. (CC)

VO

Office of the Counsellor for Agricultural and Social Affairs

Royal Netherlands Embassy
275 Slater Street, 3rd Floor
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9
Telephone: 1-613-234-5030

PRESS RELEASE:

In the first week of November next a Horticultural Mission from The Netherlands will visit Ontario.

The Mission will be organized by the Netherlands' Ministry of Agriculture in cooperation with the Netherlands' Ministry of Economic Affairs. In Canada the organization is in the hands of the Counsellor for Agricultural and Social Affairs of the Netherlands Embassy in Ottawa, Gerald Belgraver.

Members of the Mission are representatives of Dutch companies in the field of know-how and equipment for cleaning, grading, packing, storing, and handling of agricultural and horticultural products, specifically concerning potatoes, onions, carrots, glasshouse- and field-vegetables, fruits, and other horticultural products. Leading the Mission are officials of the Netherlands' Ministry of Agriculture.

During their stay in Canada the Mission will have meetings with officials and businessmen in Toronto and subsequently visit the Bradford and Alliston area, the Niagara Peninsula, and the area around London. The members of the Mission are eager to get in touch with importers, dealers and agents of horticultural equipment and installations, with wholesalers, packers-shippers, owners of coldstorage facilities, and with horticultural producers during special meetings to be organized in the different places to be visited. Canadians interested to meet the members of the Mission are requested to contact Gerald Belgraver in Ottawa, telephone number: (416) 234-0767 or (416) 237-5030.

Blame Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 20?

"Is not that poor and meagre Lord's Day 20 about the Holy Spirit the reason that we, Reformed believers, are so weak in the doctrine of The Third Person of the Trinity?"

Next to this question came the request from elders who have to teach Catechism classes because there is no "pastor and teacher": "We cannot fill a whole hour with that small basis in Lord's Day 20! Can't you give us some more substance?"

This request is readily answered by submitting what I used in my classes.

It is not complete.

There is no "controversy," for example, with a view to (Neo-) Pentecostalism. That would demand an additional section, part E, in which, among others, reference would have to be made to I Corinthians 12.

G. VANDOOREN

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Catechism, Lord's Day 20; Nicene Creed; Lord's Day 25; Form for Baptism, Page 1).

A. The Holy Spirit and Creation.

1. In the beginning, *Genesis 1:2*, "... and the Holy Spirit was moving upon the waters." (Some translate *Psalms 33:6*, "By the WORD of God the heavens were made, and all their host by the SPIRIT of His mouth.")
2. Every year: *Psalms 104:30*, "When Thou sendest forth thy SPIRIT, they are created; and Thou renewest the face of the ground."
3. At the end, *Matthew 19:28*, Christ calls the new heavens and earth "the regeneration."

B. The Holy Spirit in the work of redemption during the Old Dispensation.

1. He inspired the prophets, *II Peter 1:21*, "No prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the HOLY SPIRIT spoke from God."
2. He was given to men like Moses and David, as is clear from *Psalms*

51:11, "Take not Thy HOLY SPIRIT from me."

3. He guided Israel through the desert, as is clear from *Isaiah 63:10*, "Though they rebelled and grieved the HOLY SPIRIT."
4. He was promised to the *Messiah*. *Isaiah 61:1ff.* (compare *Luke 4:18-19*), "The SPIRIT of the Lord God is upon Me, because the LORD has anointed Me to bring good tidings"
5. He was promised to the *Messianic people* in the *New Covenant*, as we learn from *Jeremiah 31:33*, "I will make a new covenant with them . . . , and I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts." Also *Joel 2:28-29*, quoted by Peter on Pentecost, *Acts 2:17ff.*, "I will pour out MY SPIRIT on all flesh"

C. The Holy Spirit in the New Dispensation.

1. He "overshadowed Mary," *Luke 1:34*, so that our Saviour was "conceived by the HOLY SPIRIT."
2. He descended upon Jesus at His baptism, *Luke 3:22*, "And the HOLY SPIRIT descended upon Him" Then, *Luke 4:1ff.*, "Jesus, full of the HOLY SPIRIT . . . was led by the SPIRIT in the wilderness"
3. He was promised to the disciples as "the other Counsellor"; cf. *John 14:16, 17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-12, 13-15* (study these texts!) to "take it all out of Christ," "to lead them into all truth." Because the apostles represented the church, these promises are also for the church, be it in a secondary sense.
4. These promises as well as those of the Old Testament were fulfilled on Pentecost, *Acts 2:33*, "... having received from the Father the promise of the HOLY SPIRIT [i.e. the promised Holy Spirit], He [Jesus] has poured out what you now see and hear."
Also *Acts 2:39*, "For unto you is the promise [namely, that of Joel!] and to your children"
5. Therefore, since Christ is exalted

at the right hand of God, the Holy Spirit is called "the SPIRIT OF CHRIST," like in *Rom. 8:9*, "Anyone who does not have the SPIRIT OF CHRIST does not belong to Him."

D. The Holy Spirit promised to and working in CHILDREN OF THE COVENANT.

1. The Holy Spirit has been promised to them (see texts mentioned sub B 5.); accordingly they are baptized also "into the Name of the HOLY SPIRIT" (for explanation, see *Form for Baptism*, page 1).
2. For that reason He is called the SPIRIT OF ADOPTION, *Romans 8:15*, "... you have received the SPIRIT OF SONSHIP [or ADOPTION]." See also v. 16, "... by whom we call Abba, Father."
3. The Holy Spirit works faith, regeneration, conversion, a new and holy life by the preaching of the Gospel. One example, *John 3:3,5*, "... unless one is born of water and SPIRIT, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." See also vv. 6,8.
4. He leads us into the truth; see promises in *John 14-16* under C 3.
5. He is given as a guarantee or pledge of eternal life, as becomes clear from *Ephesians 1:13, 14*, "... when you believed in Him (Christ), you were sealed with the promised (!) HOLY SPIRIT, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we receive possession of it."
6. If, however, a Covenant child, by unbelief and sinful life, breaks the Covenant, he "grieves the HOLY SPIRIT," *Isaiah 63:10*; yea "quenches the Holy Spirit"; *I Thess. 5:19*; sins "against the HOLY SPIRIT"; cf. *Hebrews 6:4-6*, and then the Holy Spirit, though promised to him (her) and willing to make him (her) a living member of Christ, see *Form for Baptism* page 1, withdraws, and shows the other side of "storm and fire," *Acts 2:1-4*. Without the Holy Spirit there is no real life, only (eternal) death. ■

news medley

From the various bulletins it is clear that there is not yet all that much activity as far as our societies and the regular work in the Congregations is concerned. It also becomes evident, however, that the preparations are being made and that pretty soon everything will be going again.

Sometimes the space in the bulletins is filled with new rhymings from our *Book of Praise*, specifically the Psalm section. I am very happy about this, for it gives the Congregations an opportunity to become aware of the improvements which have been made. It was too expensive (and would have been only for a short while) to have a separate booklet printed which was to serve till the definitive *Book of Praise* is available; but it would have given the membership a better opportunity to become acquainted with the rhymings as Synod 1980 adopted them.

There is one thing, however, which I do not understand. All the Consistories received copies of the revised Psalmrhymings, and they received as many copies as there are office-bearers in a Church, plus one for the archives. Then I do not understand it when ministers still print the old rhymings e.g. in programs for wedding ceremonies or when even Hymn rhymings are taken from the "blue book," which rhymings have been replaced by Synod 1980 with the Hymns as they are found in the "green booklet." Have we, then, not made any progress? And should this progress then be withheld from the membership? Whenever I have to prepare a program for a wedding ceremony or for any other occasion when Psalms are sung, I most happily consult the booklet with revised Psalm rhymings and insert these new rhymings in the program. I'll be most happy when our "definitive" *Book of Praise* becomes available.

Don't ask me when this will be; I know no more than every one else, and what I may know more is sometimes by rumour. Everyone knows that we should never go by rumours! I have the impression — let me put it very carefully — that the present Committee is planning to come with a few proposals or suggestions to the forthcoming Synod and that, once this Synod has decided on them, it will be a matter of only one or two months and the book will be available to the membership. I, for one, will belong to those who are excited about that: now it happens frequently that I would like to include a certain Psalm in the services but do not feel free to do so because of faulty rhymings or other weaknesses. Once the new rhymings have been published and are in use, my choice becomes much wider. Then the only impediment will be when a tune is "unknown," but this is something which can be cured.

It is my sincere wish that we then may also get even more uniformity in the singing of the Hymns. Especially the *Credo* shows a large degree of variety when one attends services in various Churches. I think that the delay in adopting a final rhythm and the long time it takes for our "final" *Book of Praise* to appear have been beneficial: now we have been enabled to think about it and to see which way is the best way. We'll see what the Committee will come up with.

As I am speaking about things in general anyway, I may as well mention in one breath that there appears to

be quite some interest in the Massed Choirs Cassette which has been produced for the benefit of the Association for the Handicapped. Let me say that the Handicapped among us could not benefit more from this cassette than they do who purchase it and listen to it. Certainly, there are flaws, especially that people cannot refrain from coughing loudly (there seem to be no handkerchiefs to stifle the sound) and thus produce an unwelcome interference during an organ improvisation. But what we heard on the cassette (after having enjoyed the concert itself) only makes us desirous for more. From first-hand information I know that the first one thousand copies have almost all been sold already. If quite a few orders come in from the West, a new "printing" will have to be made. There won't be any objection to that, I think and may encourage the organizers to start thinking about a repeat performance, so to speak, in spite of all the work involved and the disappointments encountered.

One thing about this: Should we not be even more careful yet with the text of what we sing, even though it is in Latin? Does not "*Ave, verum corpus*" refer to the Romish mass? "Hail, true body"?

All right now, let us go on.

During the question period, "it is decided to send letters of thanks to the retiring office-bearers." This is a quote from Chilliwack's Consistory report.

A question period, strictly speaking, is only for asking questions and, possibly, getting answers. A question period should not be used for bringing up points for discussion and decision. If one has a proposal about certain things, this proposal should be brought to the attention of the Consistory in a proper manner and not during a question period. It sometimes happens that the question period is begun and that two hours later the brethren are still meeting, because so many things were raised — and discussed — during the question period that it amounts to a second meeting in the same evening. That should never happen. A question period needs not last any longer than ten minutes or a quarter of an hour at the most. If anyone has a matter to discuss, let him say so right at the beginning of the evening, that it can be put on the agenda.

However, the above paragraph was not written to give the impression as if I refer specifically to Chilliwack's Consistory. It is only an occasion to say these things.

When the last Consistory meeting before the ordination of new office-bearers is held, it is customary that they are addressed and thanked for their cooperation. Without their cooperation and diligence the Consistory could never have functioned the way it did function. It is good and proper to acknowledge this and to say so as well.

Chilliwack decided to send them a letter. That is another way of doing it.

What I wish to bring to the attention of our members, however, is in the first place the fact that the office-bearers do much work which is hardly ever noticed by the Congregation. Frequently they have to go out several evenings per week, and they do so without getting paid for it. It even costs them money, for there are not many office-bearers who present the treasurer with a bill for mileage. Actually, they should do this. I am convinced that every office-bearer should declare his mileage, to be reimbursed for it by the Church. It is up to him what he wishes to do with the money. It is fine if he wishes to use it for his children or for repairs to his car or for his school-

A Ray of Sunshine



The following is a quotation from

Calvin's Institutes:

"The need of Scripture, as a guide and teacher, in coming to God as a Creator."

Whether God revealed Himself to the fathers by oracles and visions, or, by the instrumentality and ministry of men, suggested what they were to hand down to posterity, there cannot be a doubt that the certainty of what he taught them was firmly engraven on their hearts, so that they felt assured and knew that the things which they learnt came forth from God, who invariably accompanied his word with a sure testimony, infinitely superior to mere opinion. At length, in order that, while doctrine was continually enlarged, its truth might subsist in the world during all ages, it was his pleasure that the same oracles which he had deposited with the fathers should be consigned, as it were, to public records. With this view the law was promulgated, and prophets were afterwards added to be its interpreters. For though the uses of the law were manifold (Book II. c. 7 and 8), and the special office assigned to Moses and all the prophets was to teach the method of reconciliation between God and man (whence Paul calls Christ "the end of the law," Rom. x. 4); still I repeat that, in addition to the proper doctrine of faith and repentance in which Christ is set forth as a Mediator, the Scriptures employ certain marks and tokens to distinguish the only wise and true God, considered as the Creator and Governor of the world, and thereby guard against his being confounded with the herd of false deities. Therefore, while it becomes man seriously to employ his eyes in considering the works of God, since a place has been assigned him in this most glorious theatre that he may be a spectator of them, his special duty is to give ear to the Word, that he may the better profit. Hence it is not strange that those who are born in

darkness become more and more hardened in their stupidity; because the vast majority, instead of confining themselves within due bounds by listening with docility to the Word, exult in their own vanity. If true religion is to beam upon us, our principle must be, that it is necessary to begin with heavenly teaching, and that it is impossible for any man to obtain even the minutest portion of right and sound doctrine without being a disciple of Scripture. Hence the first step in true knowledge is taken, when we reverently embrace the testimony which God has been pleased therein to give of himself. For not only does faith, full and perfect faith, but all correct knowledge of God, originate in obedience. And surely in this respect God has with singular Providence provided for mankind in all ages.

Unto Thy word of law incline my heart,
That all Thy precepts I may search and ponder.
From Thy commandments let me not depart;
To thoughts of gain let not my spirit wander
Restrain me lest I wistful glances dart
At vanities. O LORD, let me not flounder.

Thy statutes are the theme of all my songs
Wherever I as pilgrim may be dwelling.
All through the night Thy praise do I prolong
Within my heart, as from a fountain welling.
I've kept Thy law, I sing with joyful tongue;
Thy precepts are a blessing all-excelling.

Thy word is in the heavens fixed for aye;
Eternal are Thy faithfulness and mercy.
When Thou didst Thy creative might display,
The earth was set immovable before Thee.
By Thy decree, LORD, they stand firm today,
For all things are Thy servants and adore Thee.

O let my lips run over with Thy praise,
For Thy decrees Thou hast in me implanted.
My tongue will sing, a joyful anthem raise,
For in Thy statutes justice is presented.
Let Thy hand help me when Thy servant strays;
I've chosen, LORD, the precepts Thou hast granted.

Psalm 119:14, 21, 34, 65
Book of Praise

.....

Send your requests (with permission of the person involved) to:

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

fees, or to deposit it into the box for voluntary contributions. The mileage paid to office-bearers would show on the financial statement of the Church, and in this manner the Congregation would become more aware of the hundreds of kilometers which are devoured by the office-bearers in the course of a year.

Anyway, it is proper that the office-bearers be thanked for the work they did and for the cooperation which they showed. They will be the first ones to say that this is not necessary at all, that they did their work with many weaknesses and shortcomings, that it was defiled with sin, and they are right in all this. The final reward will come from the Lord their Master, this is another word which will be recognized in its importance. And yet it is proper also on behalf of the Congregation to thank those whose term of office has expired and who now will

have the opportunity to spend more time with their families and, perhaps, on their hobbies.

The Immanuel Church in Edmonton has some better perspectives now with regard to their building plans. The following paragraphs have been quoted from the *City Guide*.

"A report was made by two elders on the financial implications of building a church building this year.

"a) It was noted with gratitude that the gift, which had been previously promised to facilitate the splitting of the church and to make the building of another church building possible, has been received.

"b) After lengthy discussion on the report received, it was decided to propose to the congregation to proceed with the building of a church building as proposed by the Nauta plan, with the stipulation that it should not

increase the budget for 1983, but that the mortgage costs be carried by the regular Building Fund collections held each Sunday.

"c) It was decided to request br. N. to provide us with a floor plan and elevations of his proposal for the benefit of the congregation and to request our building committee to provide an insert for the next Sunday revealing the financial facts and figures as well as a miniature floor plan of the N. proposal.

"d) Council decided to call a meeting with the congregation on Friday, August 27, in order to provide the congregation the opportunity to assist Council with its advice so that a final decision can be made at a Council meeting to be held immediately after the meeting with the congregation (the same evening)."

The above mentioned meeting has been held in the meantime, and the next issue of *The City Guide* will inform us more amply about the conclusions reached. We'll have to wait for that.

As for further developments, our readers know that the Rehoboth Congregation in Burlington has been busy now for some time with plans to split the Church into two, or rather, to institute a new Church in Burlington South. Although this new institution is not yet a fact, the division of the Catechism classes counts already with it as if it were a fact. Apparently things are in an advanced stage of preparation.

The Consistory report speaks of a report that was received and discussed.

"The committee instructed to study the financial aspect of institution of Burlington-South reported. It was decided in principle that Burlington-South will be granted an equitable portion of the Burlington-West assets but that actual payments will not begin until January 1987 and that all financial arrangements will be presented to the whole congregation for approbation."

I always have problems with this "equitable portion" part. "Equitable" means "fair" and the question comes up, "What is fair? How is this to be calculated?"

Is a calculation on the basis of membership fair? Or does it have to be taken into account how many members came in lately or how many years the members belonged to that Church? Does it have to be taken into account how much the members contributed for the maintenance of the ministry of the Gospel? If the last-mentioned factor has to be taken into account, it could be that a "new" church receives a proportionately much larger part of the assets than the "old" church. It could also be that the "new" church receives hardly anything. . . . I wish the brethren much strength and wisdom to come to an acceptable conclusion.

The Ebenezer Church in Burlington decided to have three collections for the Smithers mission work. That is then for the rest of this year. "The whole matter of raising funds for this purpose will be reviewed after these collections are held." If I understand it well, the decision to have collections does not have effect beyond the end of this year.

Smithers receives support from most of the Churches. Fergus also decided to support Smithers in their endeavour to a certain amount. Judging by the yield of special collections, Fergus decided to have a collection for this work every fifth Sunday of the month and to stop them whenever the amount pledged is there. We soon may hear what Smithers decided regarding the calling of a minister for this work.

One Consistory report contained a remark which gives me the opportunity to say something about the

point in question. I won't mention the name of the Church and only quote. "The personal question period is made use of; in particular mention is made of the need to retain suitable Sunday attire during the worship services."

I am not absolutely certain what exactly is meant. One could get the impression that there are some in that Congregation who partially undress during the services. However, I don't think that such is the meaning.

Let us understand it in this manner that the need is expressed to come to Church properly dressed. Then I cannot but express my wholehearted agreement with this desire.

I haven't been in the Netherlands for more than twenty years, but when I hear the "reports" of visitors to that country, there is one thing which I see popping up every time: that the manner in which quite a few people dress when coming to Church is sloppy, to say the least. Jeans and similar garments are the order of the day. Fortunately, we see this very seldom among us. I hope we'll never see it either, for when we come together as Church of the Lord, we appear before the countenance of the Most High God. True, we no longer have sacred buildings, and the name "sanctuary" should rather not be used for our meeting places. Yet we are to bear in mind and realize that we are standing before the Most High God when being assembled together as the Church of the Lord. This awareness should reflect also in the manner in which we dress. Even when it is a hot day this is no excuse to be dressed sloppily. Every one understands that you don't dress on a hot day as you do when the temperature is twenty below, but light clothing can be just as neat and proper as the heavy clothes we wear in wintertime.

There are restaurants where no one is served unless he wears a tie.

Proper dress is an absolute requirement there.

Would it not be there where the LORD wishes to meet His people with all the fulness of His grace and mercy?

VO

Church News

CALLED and ACCEPTED for the special ministry of Home Missions among the Indians in the area of Smithers, B.C.

REV. C. VAN SPRONSEN

of Smithers, B.C.

* * *

CALLED to Carman, Manitoba.

REV. M.C. WERKMAN

of Lincoln, Ontario.

OUR COVER

Thousand Islands, Ontario

Courtesy of: Ministry of Industry and Tourism, Hearst Block, Queen's Park, Ontario.

Beginning a New Season

On the occasion of the start of a new society-season, we had a meeting at which we discussed our societies, their importance, and their activities. The wish was expressed that at least some of what was said there be made available to a wider circle, and we do so with pleasure. It will be understood that what follows is only a summary of what was said during this meeting.

* * *

The basis for a good society-life is to be laid in the families. For the well-being of the Church and for the flourishing of the societies it is necessary that the relations within the family are good and there the desire for study and for more light is to be instilled into the hearts of the children. It is in the families in the first place that the children have to learn that the Word of God is to be consulted with every step that is taken and with every course that is chosen.

Of the office-bearers it is said that one of the requirements of their office is that they shall train themselves in godliness and diligently search the Scriptures which are profitable in every respect, that the man of God may be equipped for every good work. These words apply just as much to each and every member of the Church of Christ: train yourself in godliness and diligently search the Scriptures, for they are profitable in every respect.

We are to search the Scriptures. We *all* are to do this, as the Lord Jesus has commanded us. Only in this way we can know Him and the riches which the Father has given in and through Him. Besides, the apostle says that the Scriptures are *profitable in every respect*.

“Searching” means more than just reading a few verses. It means that we shall try to understand these verses, that we shall see and understand them within the context, in their place within the framework of God’s whole Word. It also means that we shall try to understand them in their relevance for our Church life today, for our personal life, for the political and the social life.

We are to do this in the family

circle. It is also the first purpose of our coming together in our society meetings: that together we search the Scriptures. They are our first and foremost concern.

This does not mean that we shall talk about the Scriptures and about them only. Nor does it mean that we are to do our best to make little theologians out of the members of the society. It does not mean either that we shall never have an introduction about any other topic than parts of the Scriptures.

But the Lord our God speaks very concretely in His Word. He never gives us abstract statements which are nice to know but with which you cannot do anything in daily life.

We live in a world which asks for the value and the practical effect of the things people do or should do. If people think that something is not profitable, they won’t do it and it has no place in their life. Thus many people discard religion, at least in daily life, for you cannot do anything with it, they say. It may be good for the Sunday and it may be profitable even when you arrive at the pearly gates; as for the rest it is very unprofitable: you cannot do anything with it in practical life.

If we should let our thoughts go in this direction, our society life would be completely worthless. If the study of God’s Word is profitable only with respect to obtaining permission to enter at the moment of our death, we had better use our time for other things, for things which are more profitable. Then the Sunday and a few minutes set aside for reading a passage from Scripture would be more than sufficient.

The Lord assures us, however, through His apostle that the Scriptures are profitable. They bear fruit and knowing them bears fruit in all of life.

Is it not our duty, as partakers of Christ’s anointing, to speak as a Christian about each and every thing in life? How can we speak as a Christian about politics, about the economic life, about the relations between the nations if we do not know the Scriptures?

It was not without reason that the LORD told His people Israel that these testimonies should be on their

hands; this means: they should dominate and regulate everything God’s people were doing with their hands. Whether it was labour in the field or work in the tent, whether it was scholarly work or taking care of the cattle in the field: whatever their hands were doing should show that these hands were directed by the words which the LORD spoke to them. Thus it shows that the Word of God was profitable: the blessing upon all their labours was inseparably connected with the Scriptures, with knowing them and observing them.

Israel experienced how profitable the Word of God was. Were they not blessed whenever they asked for the commandments of the LORD and whenever they obeyed them? Were they not prospering in their undertakings when the Word of their God was on their hands? Was not, on the other hand, the LORD’s anger evident in the very products of the soil or the lack of them, in the very yield of their fields or the lack of it whenever they departed from the ways of the covenant? Were the Scriptures profitable or not?

No, we should never observe the commandments of the LORD *in order to be blessed and in order to prosper* in our undertakings. We don’t even have to talk about that. It is something else, however, to realize that the blessing can be received only if one follows the words which the LORD has spoken and goes in the direction which He has pointed out.

In order that we may be able to do this we are to know God’s Word, to search the Scriptures. When God’s Word is to be bound to the hand this means that one has to know what the LORD requires in daily life and how one should organize one’s labour, how one should do one’s work, what the rules are by which one should let oneself be directed in one’s political activities and social contacts and relations.

Here the society work is of such great importance. To discuss together what the will of the Lord is for our daily work can only be beneficial for this work and, via this, for ourselves and for the whole community of God’s people. Our discussions of the Scriptures should always be directed to getting an answer to the

question, "What are we told here?"

When a sermon is delivered, the Congregation goes away hungry if the preacher confines himself to explaining what this meant for Israel then, for Abraham in his days, for Paul on his journeys, for the Church at Corinth in 60 A.D., and so on. The Congregation expects — and justly so — that it shall hear, "This is what the Spirit says to the Church."

Should it be different then when we discuss the Scriptures at our Society meetings? Could we be content with describing, "This is how it was then," without, at the same time, coming to a conclusion as to "This is how it *should be now*"? When the historical books of Scripture are discussed we could never be content with knowing exactly how everything was done in olden days, exactly which road the Assyrian and Babylonian armies took, and so on. *All* the Scriptures are profitable and this means that we are to study them in order to find their message for this day and age. The words of the Lord remain steadfast and they keep their validity and power throughout the ages. The dispensations may then have changed, this does not mean that even one letter has fallen to the ground unfulfilled.

In order that we may know the will of the Lord for our daily life and thus may be able to confess His Name in every respect, it would be very good if the provisions were studied which the LORD gave through His servant Moses. When do our societies study the book of Exodus beyond chapter 20 or the book of Leviticus? Granted, these are not the easiest parts of Scripture to study and to prepare an introduction on. Should we, however, not know what the difference is between a burnt offering and a peace offering? What is the meaning of the flour, the salt, the honey or of the prohibition of these ingredients? Our understanding of these parts of Scripture would enable us to speak more sensibly and knowingly as members of Christ, partakers of His anointing, about the questions of social life, about work, about politics.

It is not so that the LORD has given us all sorts of practical solutions, rules for conduct in this case, rules for conduct in that situation, and so on. Yet what we learn when studying God's Word is the *pattern* after which the Lord wishes us to

live, the road which He wishes us to follow. The practical application is left to us. What we are to realize is that those who fear the Lord and think of His commandments to do them speak about *all* things from a different spirit and from a different viewpoint than all others in this world. Speaking from a different spirit is possible only when we have been soaked, so to speak, in the Scriptures. It happens too often that we hear a Church member speak about the practical things of every day life, about his work, his income, his relation to other workers, his stand with respect to his employer, etc., in a way which differs in nothing from the manner in which an unbeliever speaks about these things. These same Churchmembers sit in Church every Sunday and hear that we are to be different in everything. Yet they do not realize sufficiently that this also affects and covers their daily work and whatever they encounter in the course of this work.

The reason for this is that the Scriptures are known and understood so little. For real study of God's Word so little time is taken at home — if any time at all! Besides, when things can be discussed together and when mind can sharpen mind, the benefit is much greater. It would, therefore, be a beautiful thing if the societies had the interest of all the members and if this resulted in a better understanding of the Scriptures which are profitable in every respect.

When stressing the need to study the Scriptures, we do not wish to claim that we should not study anything but certain books of the Bible. On the contrary, this would not be profitable. We are to direct our attention to the broad spectrum of the human life, which is our life, our life in its totality. This brings history and the history of the Church into focus. History of the Church and history of the nations are closely connected. It is even a big question whether we can separate them. The history of the Church in a country is so interwoven with the history of this country itself, its nation, that the one cannot be discussed and studied without the other. One could say that studying the history of the church in a certain country is like studying for a degree: when studying for a degree one has a major and a minor or perhaps even two minors. When the main attention

is directed to the history of the Church, we could call that the major, the minor then being the political or sociological history of the country. When, on the other hand, one pays special attention to the political history of a nation, this is the major, the minor then being the history of the Church there during that period. Never can the two be separated except with ruinous results for one's understanding of both.

Could one ever understand the decline of Spain, Italy, France — to mention these only — without having a thorough knowledge of what happened to and was done by the Church in these countries? The decline of these nations from the top of glory to a very low level cannot be understood unless we see how the reformation of the Church was suppressed and — as far as Spain is concerned — practically eradicated. The persecution by the Inquisition was so fierce and so total that practically no remnants of the reformation were left in that country. And when the Church declines, the rest goes downhill as well, at an ever-increasing speed. Deformation in the Church always brings with it a decline on the national level whereas, on the other hand, faithfulness in the Church is of inestimable importance and blessing for the nation, for the Word of God is profitable in every respect.

When, therefore, studying the history of nations or of the Church in particular, we cannot do so without knowing the Scriptures and what the Lord says about His people and about the nations, about justice and equity, about the position of the authorities and the need for them to submit themselves to the great King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not so that we are able to point to a certain specific sin or iniquity and then can point out exactly how this contributed to what followed after and to what extent. Yet when we have grown into the Scriptures, so to speak, when we have become permeated in our thinking by the Word of our God, we see the pattern in the history of Church and nation and draw the lessons from it.

Studying the past does not bring any benefit if the lines are not drawn to the present and if we don't feel that we are wholly involved. We have to search the Scriptures in order to be able to see that hand of the Lord our God in the history of Church and na-

tions.

It was one of the sins of Israel that they did not take the past into consideration and that they lived as if the Lord had never done anything in the past. They did not take into account the wonderful works of their covenant God. They tried to come loose from their history and acted as if they did not have so many centuries of special care behind them.

We, too, saw it some years ago: whatever the establishment had and was was rejected. The new generation did not wish to have anything to do with the past. They were going to bring a completely new world, a world which was not tainted by the mistakes and evils of the former, the older generation. But thus they were totally cut loose from their moorings and were being tossed to and fro on the waves of uncertainty, for they had nothing to fall back on.

As we do not wish to close our eyes for what the Lord has done in the past, during history which is also our history, we study this past, being at the same time aware that the Lord Jesus Christ has made and is making progress. We see the increase of filthiness and corruption in the world and realize that this is one of the ways which satan is using to express his great wrath. He knows that his time is limited: he lives and works on borrowed time, so to speak. The more he rages, the more he proves that the kingdom is coming. Did the Lord Jesus not say that, when these things begin to happen, we should lift up our heads knowing that our deliverance is near?

While believing that His kingdom is coming, we also believe that this can be demonstrated. We do not go through life with our eyes closed and we refuse to let religion be confined to a few hours per week or even one whole day per week. We believe that we are Christians all the time and that the Lord has given His revelation for each and every situation.

This, however, we cannot see except as a fruit of serious study. We are to realize that it is impossible to sit down for just a couple of hours to look up a few commentaries and then to write our introduction; or, if we have an introduction on a social topic, to read one or two articles or chapters on it and then to write down some generalities from which no one benefits.

When, e.g. we are discussing

capital punishment, we may certainly quote what Mr. A. said about it and what Mr. B.'s opinion is, but first of all we shall have to ask what the Lord says about it in His Word. Then we are not ready with quoting a text from Genesis and one from Romans, but then we are to take into account all the Lord says in His Word about sin and satisfaction, about retribution and restitution.

It follows from all this that also the topics are to be chosen with great care and with some knowledge of the issues that are involved. A good preparation by the Board will greatly improve later work and discussion. It would, e.g. not be very wise to decide that a certain book of the Scriptures shall be discussed during the coming season and that this shall be done so that the first meeting chapter 1 is taken, the second meeting chapter 2, and so on. No, the board will have to study the book and to see how the division is to be made. Then it is possible that two or three chapters are to be taken together, or that one chapter has to be split into two separate topics. A good preparation is absolutely necessary not only for the individual member who has to prepare an introduction but also for those who have to set up a schedule.

As for variety of topics, in the days when I attended Young People's Society we had an abundance of topics. The League of Reformed Young Men's Societies had taken care of the printing of outlines and these were followed by fat volumes in which the necessary further elaboration and explanation were given. We had outlines on political topics, social topics, history, church history, Old Testament, New Testament, Confessions.

I do not wish to claim that the situation was ideal, because in many instances the scholastic thinking of the thirties had crept into these outlines and their explanation. What has to be stressed, however, is that the attention was drawn to the broad spectrum of the human life. It would be most beneficial if we had something like that. In earlier years outlines were published and social and political topics were brought to the attention of the societies, but the whole endeavour seems to have petered out, and this in spite of the fact that we have more people now than we had in the earlier days who are able and have the duty to give us

leadership in seeking our way through life and seeing our calling in every aspect of life.

If anyone should remark that we come together to study the Scriptures, to search the Scriptures, the reply has to be, "Definitely so!" However, if anyone would wish to study social topics or the political situation without searching the Scriptures, this amounts to trying to wash one's hands and to get rid of grease or paint or stain by just rubbing the fingers together without using soap or detergent or solvent. That won't get them clean! Likewise studying the social questions and trying to get wise politically without searching the Scriptures does not bring one any wisdom or true insight.

Society-work and society-life does have a social aspect: it is good and nice to meet each other, to talk together, to drink coffee together, and to exchange news and views. We certainly should not neglect this aspect. But when we take things seriously, society-life and society-work is something which requires much and strenuous effort. After all, one gets out of things only that which one puts into it. And the more one puts into something the more others benefit from it and the more one enriches oneself.

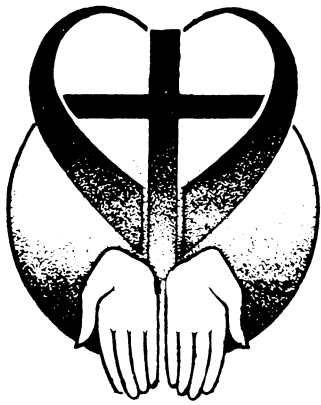
When thus our societies flourish the Church flourishes; and when the Church flourishes the country and nation must experience the benefits from this. We have seen the proofs of it in history. History is not a collection of interesting facts from the hoary past but history shows us how the kingdom of God is coming and was coming, how the hand of the Lord guided everything and how He brought things to what they are right now, in this age and on this date.

In order to see this we have to be made wise unto salvation by the Word of our Gcd.

Thus we may go to work also in this new season, helping one another, edifying one another, exhorting one another. Search the Scriptures, that we may prove that we are partakers of Christ's anointing and speak about everything led by the Holy Spirit.

Then we shall see how the kingdom of God is coming also by our work at the societies, and, trusting in God, we shall give meat to our prayer, "Maranatha, come, Lord Jesus."

VO



Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

Hunger — a continuing problem

- Every two seconds in 1981 a child died. Most of those deaths could have been prevented with adequate food, immunizations, and clean water.
- A dog in Canada eating two cups of dog food a day receives 1400 calories and 123 grams of protein. Millions of children in today's world receive less than the daily minimum 1500 calories and 55 grams of protein necessary for survival.
- 49 million people could be fed annually with less than a quarter of the food that is lost or squandered in North America.
- There are approximately 500 million permanently hungry people in the world.
- The rich 30% of the world produces about 60% of the food and consumes about 50% of it.

or

Imagine the human family as ten children at the dinner table, dividing up the food. The three healthiest load up their plates with generous portions of meat, fish, milk, and eggs. Two more take just enough to meet their basic requirements. The remaining five are undernourished. Three of them — sickly, apathetic children — stave off the hunger pangs with bread and rice. The other two cannot do even that. One dies from dysentery, the other from pneumonia, which they are too weak to ward off.

Even if the charge of exaggeration or (ever-present) inflation were to reduce the above figures somewhat, the statistics would still be staggering . . . not thousands, but millions of hungry people! It is difficult for the mind to grasp. We are so far from the situation and even in the midst of economic recession are still living what must surely be described as comfortable lives.

We push our laden buggies to the supermarket checkout, peer in satisfaction at the abundance of garden "veges." We have stored away for the winter in the downstairs freezer, sit down to delicious three-course dinners, second helpings if you please (unless you're watching your weight), and even the occasional magazine picture, slides, television news reports do not help us grasp the reality of poverty and starvation elsewhere. Behind the overpowering statistics are people, real people who are suffering, not often dramatically as in the shrivelled limbs and bloated bellies we are confronted with on the news now and then, but most often quietly, invisibly. Their bodies often function at half pace. They get sick too soon; they die too soon — and all because they do not enjoy a basic right that the rest of us take for granted: the right to a nutritionally adequate diet.

Causes of world hunger are legion. Poverty, climate, political oppression, trade policies, overpopulation: all these play a role and interact to create what is a complex problem indeed. It is tempting to pinpoint a single cause (and proclaim its solution) to the mammoth problem of world hunger, but that is unfortunately simplistic and unrealistic.

Mechanization, for example, has been seen as a way to speed food production, yet if employed in areas where those workers who are no longer needed in agriculture cannot find non-farming jobs, the problem could be compounded rather than solved. Similarly, advocating less meat consumption because of the charge that our grain-fed cattle consume huge amounts of grain which could be used to sustain human life, could have damaging effects on local farmers if not incorporated as part of a total plan to release the grain saved to the stomachs of the hungry poor.

Simply increasing food production is not the answer either, important though it is, and impressive strides have been made in the past twenty years through the discovery of new strains of rice and wheat with much higher yields than the old varieties. Food storage and climatic conditions also need to be considered.

No, this is no simple issue with a single, easy solution. If any lasting assistance is to be given, hunger's social and economic allies need to be investigated as well, problems identified, and our voice raised so that it is heard where government policies are set and decisions affecting the Third World made.

It is easy to be overwhelmed by statistics and by the complexity of the problem, and to despair of ever doing anything that will make a difference. We can also react with what amounts to callousness. Reports from refugee camps can be discarded as dramatics, and figures of those malnourished or dying seen as sad but rather unreal . . . a very distant grief. We must beware of becoming cold-hearted — saturated by the seeming undiminished need in the world. We must allow our hearts to be touched and expanded by those suffering, each one an individual with loved ones, hopes, dreams — just like you and me.

Paul wrote to the early Christians, "So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith" (Gal. 6:10). Christian love begins with the family of faith, but it doesn't stop there. According to opportunity, we are to be neighbours to all men, loving in Christ's Name those beyond our borders too. And loving certainly involves more than a vague emotional reaction. Love is an action verb, to be demonstrated in tangible ways. It involves much more than saying sympathetically, "Go in peace, be warmed and filled" (James 2:16). It means doing what we can to ensure that our neighbour *is* warmed and filled.

How can we do that? Well, certainly by becoming better informed as to the causes of world hunger. Through reading relevant titles and keeping abreast of world news and political situations. (Read Arthur Simon's *Bread for the World* and also the Christian Reformed Board of Publications' title *And He Had Compassion on Them* for more in-depth analyses of world hunger as well as concrete suggestions for a Christian response to the problem.) Then, as

informed Christians we must have a voice in areas that matter. (We hope to write more on this in a future issue.)

Titus 2 tells us as Christians to "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour through living sober, upright and godly lives in this world." "*Upright-ness* includes practicing true justice to one's fellowmen, for that relationship comes under God's life-bringing law. *Sobriety* means having been made wise by God's Word. It includes sensitivity to the limitedness of the earth's resources and to the need to distribute them, not according to ability to consume and waste, but according to need. *Godliness* means remembering that oil well and mine, grain field and feed lot, marketplace and dinner table, are all furnishings of God's temple and that man's use of them must worship Him to whom they belong" (*And He Had Compassion on Them*, p. 51). Board of Publications C.R.C., 1978.

On a personal scale we can also make a difference by being good stewards of our finances and giving

what we can so that others may live. Your gifts to CRWRF, no matter how small, also help to relieve world hunger. Monies given to relief organizations (including our tiny but growing one) do form a noticeable percentage of all foreign aid given by North Americans. The dollars and cents pared in order that others may share *do* make a difference.

Right now, CRWRF's main commitments are to a *Primary Care Unit* which administers much-needed health care in the slums of Pusan, Korea, and to *Achego Children's Home* in Kenya, a home now providing food, shelter, and a Christian upbringing to forty children — but which we hope to expand, with your support, in the near future, so that a few more needy children may be reached.

Your gifts are also used selectively to meet needs in times of real crises, as in 1980-81 when starvation stalked Somalia and the situation was critical. The money, sent through World Vision, not only provided "bandaid" help to relieve starvation, but also was used to improve

sanitation, develop a water supply, and train Somalians to perform basic health care. Always we give with the prayerful goal of not only bringing to those who hunger physical bread and water, but also introducing them to the Bread of Life, the Living Water.

Let us not despair or become callous when confronted with the staggering statistics on world hunger. Let us rather read, think, and pray about our personal and collective response. Let us all strive in His might to live sober, upright and godly lives, that some of the suffering in this world might be alleviated — in His name, and to the praise of His great name!

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF
P.O. Box 793
Burlington, Ontario L7R 3Y7

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

PRESS RELEASE

of the National Board Meeting of the Canadian Reformed Teachers College, held June 26, 1982, at the Cornerstone Church in Hamilton.

1. After opening the chairman welcomed everyone to the third general meeting of the governors. He gave a short review of the various activities and reports which will be given later.

2. *Roll call.* Present were: G.J. Nordeman (Burlington), J. Gelderman (Burlington), C.J. Nobels (Brampton), W. van Assen (Carman), B. DeVos (Chilliwack, Abbotsford), Mrs. C. Meliefste (Coaldale), H.J. Nobel (Hamilton), J. Pieterman (London), S. Tuininga (Neerlandia), A. van Overbeeke (Orangeville), H.J. Homan (Smithville, Lincoln), P. Vanderpol (Surrey, Cloverdale, Langley), W. Gortemaker (Winnipeg), and T.M.P. Vandervan (principal of the College). Absent with notification: C. Wiersma (Chatham) and R. Klaver (Smithers).

3. Agenda and minutes of last year's general meeting were read and adopted. Minutes of the last executive meeting were adopted.

4. *Incoming mail.* Two letters were read and briefly discussed.

5. *Secretarial report.* This report pointed out various highlights of the past year.

6. *Principal's report.* Memo (# 17 of this school year!) was handed out. Each point

was dealt with individually; questions were permitted after each point. We dealt with *A. I. academic progress, II. organization, III. facilities, IV. relation with CARE committee. B. Preparation for the academic year 82/83. I. students, II. staff, III. organization, IV. facilities, V. part-time courses, VI. lodging and transportation. C. Miscellaneous. I. look into recognition, II. look into financial assistance.*

Future staffing. Both the principal and the chairman gave the meeting some background information as to why we were discussing hiring a third full-time lecturer for 1983/84. A lengthy discussion followed this. A number of suggestions were made; these will be followed up and we will advertize for a third full-time lecturer for 83/84.

By now it was lunch time. After lunch Mr. J. Gelderman presented us with the financial report and the proposed budget for 82/83. Points mentioned:

7.1 *Update on the present financial state.* It looks like we will be able to end this year without going into the red. This is reason for much thankfulness. Costs each month are approximately \$6000.00

7.2. After the whole (new) budget was read, each point is dealt with separately. Various items dealt with were:

— *Newsletters.* They will be issued as often as the amount we have budgeted for it will allow us to.

— *Travel money.* Those who come from outside Ontario may ask for assistance to

pay for traveling expenses, up to a certain amount.

— *Tuition fees.* These are on the low side but cannot be changed any more, since it was already stated to the students.

— *Membership fee.* For the coming year, the fee has to be set at \$125.00. It is hoped that many more brothers and sisters will become members of the college.

7.3. Budget is adopted.

8. *Public Relations Report.* There are still some congregations where no support is given to the college. Mr. J. Pieterman will look into the activities of the committee and see what can be done to activate all congregations.

9. *Article VI of the Constitution.* This Article reads at present: "Enrolment is open to members of Canadian Reformed Churches. Enrolment of others is subject to the approval of the Board of Governors." During the past year a difficulty arose because of the interpretation of this article. The Executive Committee proposed some changes. A lengthy discussion followed. The board of governors has been instructed to come up with a new wording for this Article; this will be sent to the membership. Voting will be done by mail.

10. *Permanent Meeting Date.* From now on, the national board meeting will be held at the end of March/beginning of April.

11. *Ratification of Executive Committee's Actions,* dealing with the past year.

Motion is carried.

12. *Election of Officers.* This will be dealt with at the Executive Committee meetings.

13. *Closing.* The chairman thanked everyone for coming out. A special thank you to Mr. H.J. Homan and Mr. C. Hoff for all the work done over the past years.

After prayer the chairman closed the meeting.

A. VAN OVERBEEKE

PRESS RELEASE

of the Executive Committee Meeting, of the Canadian Reformed Teachers College held August 20, 1982 at the Cornerstone Church in Hamilton.

1. After opening, the minutes of May 28 and June 26 are adopted. Business arising from these minutes will be dealt with during the meeting.

2. *Outgoing/Incoming correspondence.* Nothing.

3. *Finance Committee Report.* Expenses slightly exceeded the income. No exact figures available due to the holidays of various members and to the postponement of the meeting (twice).

4. *Membership Committee Report.* Mr. C. Hoff gave a written report for the treasurer and a written report for the board updating an earlier one which dealt with the membership of various places. The London society will be asked to continue being in charge of this work. Questionnaires will be sent out, with minutes, to each society. Money should be remitted monthly to the treasurer. More members are needed for our teachers' college!!

5. *Building Committee.* For September almost everything is ready. All will be ready in time. Committee is asked to see what will be needed in the future. We are still in need of room dividers.

6. *Principal's Report.* (No Memo.)

I Part-time staffing. Mr. Vandervelde will be teaching Bible; Mr. Leach will be teaching church history. Rest of the staffing was settled earlier. The theological students will not be teaching.

II There will be 8 students in the first year; 5 in their second year, and 2 in the post-graduate course. Altogether: 15 students. All students have been provided with a suggested boarding house.

7. *Other business* (Third full-time staff member; Article VI) will be dealt with at the next meeting. Since not all members were present we will also leave the completion of the office division until the next meeting.

8. Next meeting will be held September 10, 1982, D.V. From then on we hope to hold meetings on the second Friday of every month.

9. After prayer the meeting was adjourned.

A. VAN OVERBEEKE

Consulaat-Generaal Der Nederlanden

CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

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

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

ARATZ, M.S.C. laatstbekende adres: in 1954 was betrokkene woonachtig in Canada.

BUSH, I.D.R. geboren 2 september 1917 te Haarlem, laatsbekende adres te Haarlem, op 28 april 1949 naar Canada vertrokken.

VAN DAM, A. geboren 15 september 1919, laatstbekende adres te Slijk Ewijk, op 13 april 1953 naar Canada vertrokken.

VAN DINTHER, Hendricus, geboren op 17 september 1917 te Gemert, laatstbekende adres: Mortel (ker) straat 265, op 21 mei 1948 naar Canada vertrokken.

DE GROOT, Mense Meijert, geboren op 31 december 1907 te Kampen, laatstbekende adres: 173 Secord Lane, Burlington, Ontario.

HOEKSTRA, Heilke Helena, geboren op 7 december 1904 te Leeuwarden, laatstbekende adres: Bleeklaan 12 te Leeuwarden, op 16 april 1951 vertrokken naar Canada, bestemming Hamilton, Ontario.

HONING, Willem Joost, geboren op 14 maart 1893 te Rotterdam, laatste woonplaats 's-Gravenhage, op 30 januari 1948 vertrokken naar Haliburton, Canada.

JANSEN, Franciscus Joannes, geboren op 12 januari 1951, laatstbekende adres: Dinterseweg 14 te Nistelrode, op 2 maart 1982 naar Canada vertrokken.

DE JONG, Gerrit, Laatstelijk woonachtig te Zeist, laatstbekende adres: R.R. #1, Pinteron, Ontario.

VAN DER LINDEN, Adrianus J.A. geboren op 10 februari 1953 te 's-Gravenhage, laatstbekende adres: Stille Veerkade 10, 's-Gravenhage, op 13 augustus 1980 naar Canada vertrokken.

MEIJER, P.H. geboren op 20 april 1917 te Utrecht, laatstbekende adres: Abel Tasmanstraat 27 bis, Utrecht, op 22 november 1951 naar Canada vertrokken.

PAUW geb. Polak, Julia, omstreeks vijftig jaar.

POLAK, Jaques, leeftijd omstreeks 45 jaar.

RIDDER, P.J.G., laatstelijk woonachtig in Arnhem.

SCHOLTEN, Frederikus Gerardus Maria, geboren 12 december 1951 te Grootebroek, laatstbekende adres: Dijk 4, Enkhuizen, vertrokken naar Canada op 13 januari 1982.

SPRONG geboren van Klinken, Hilke, naar Canada vertrokken in oktober 1957.

THALEN, Harm, geboren op 20 december 1893 te Oosterhesselen, laatstbekende

adres: R.R. #2, Wellandport, Ontario, naar Canada vertrokken op 27 januari 1950.

WESSELING, Catharina Maria, geboren op 2 oktober 1922, laatstbekende adres: Groenendijk 92, Hazerswoude.

EIJKHOUT, J.Th. geboren op 22 oktober 1917, laatstbekende woonplaats: Heidebloemstraat 3, Groesbeek, naar Canada vertrokken op 22 mei 1963.

BLEKKENHORST, H.G.A., geboren 18 juni 1917 te Amsterdam, laatstbekende adres: Henry Dunantlaan 87 te Diemen op 29 augustus 1973 naar Canada vertrokken, bestemming St. Catharines, Ontario.

DE BRUIJN, Johanna, geboren 2 februari 1926 te Amsterdam, laatstbekende woonplaats Rotterdam.

EISING, Hendrik, geboren 3 december 1955 te Beilen, laatstbekende woonplaats in Canada: Box 207 La Broquerie ROA 0W0, Manitoba.

GLASIUS, Dirk, geboren 27 juni 1917 te Amsterdam, Laatstbekende adres: Lepelstraat 38, Amsterdam, op 14 mei 1957 naar Canada vertrokken, bestemming Brantford, Ontario.

VAN HOORN, Franciscus, geboren 21 april 1914 te Heerlen, laatstbekende adres: Zuidsingel 4 te Middelburg, op 27 februari 1956 naar Canada vertrokken, bestemming Winnipeg.

JONGENELEN, Gerardus Christianus, geboren 28 februari 1906 te Dinteloord, op 13 juni 1950 naar Canada vertrokken met bestemming Hensal, Ontario.

KIRKOVE, Frans Joseph, geboren 19 augustus 1917 te Jakarta, laatstbekende adres: Schimmelpenninckstraat 1, Vlissingen, op 28 maart 1968 naar Canada vertrokken.

SCHENK, Jan, geboren 19 augustus 1917 te Rotterdam, laatstbekende adres: Liesveld 109, Vaardingen, op 27 april 1973 naar Canada vertrokken.

WAGENAAR, Siegfried Johan, geboren 4 mei 1931 te Nordhorn, op 17 oktober 1951 naar Canada vertrokken.

VAN DER WESTEN, Johannes Wilhelmus Jozef Maria, geboren 5 mei 1948, laatstbekende adres: den Brabanderhove 2, Zoetermeer.

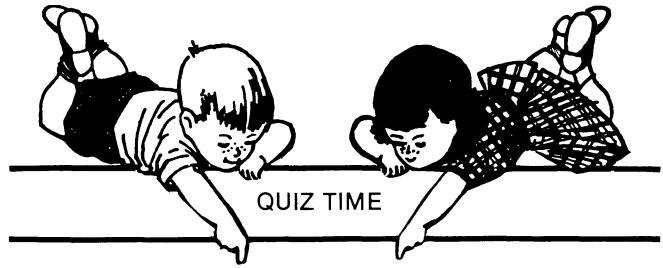
HEMS, Adrianus, geboren 21 januari 1917, naar Canada vertrokken op 3 april 1962 met bestemming Galt, Ontario.

FOK, Franciscus Petrus Melchior, geboren 6 oktober 1938 te Utrecht, laatstbekende adres: Spaarnwoudestraat 44, Haarlem, naar Canada vertrokken op 31 december 1980.

JANSSEN, Petrus Antonius, geboren 26 november 1917, laatstbekende woonplaats: Mierlo, naar Canada vertrokken op 9 juni 1954.

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

our little magazine



Hello Busy Beavers,

How would you like to go to school in a one-room schoolhouse?

How would you like to write sums, sums, and more sums on a slate?

How would you like to memorize lesson after lesson by chanting it out loud again and again?

Strange ways to have school, don't you think? Lots of girls, and especially boys learned that way, though!

What a difference with your bright and orderly classrooms!

I hope you all have a good school year learning about the wonderful world God made.

And also how to serve Him in it.

* * *

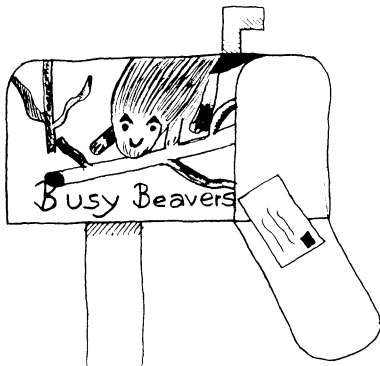
FOR YOU TO DO

Can you solve these riddles about schools?

1. What kind of children were allowed to bring a little bag of stones (called calculi) to school to help them figure out the answers to arithmetic questions? (Are *you* allowed to bring a calculator to school?)
2. Who had the noisiest schools of all?

Look in your Book of Knowledge or encyclopedia for the answers. Anyone who sends me the answers will receive a bookmark reward!

* * *



From the Mailbox

Hello *Margo Hofsink*. It was nice to hear from you again. Did you enjoy your holidays? Are you happy to be back in school?

Thank you very much for your contribution to the BIRTHDAY FUND, *Edith Hofsink*. Did you enjoy doing the quizzes? I wish you lots of success at school, Edith!

GIVE A TIP!

What was your very favourite book you read this summer?

Why did you like it so much?

What did you learn from it?

Will you tell the Busy Beavers about it?

Be sure to give the TITLE and AUTHOR clearly.

Give us a tip on some good reading!

Busy Beaver *Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg* wrote:

"Here are pairs of words that have something in common. Find in the second list what it is they have in common and write the letter in the blank."

- | | |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. clock, person _____ | 9. bed, person _____ |
| 2. bird, person _____ | 10. needle, person _____ |
| 3. pianos, locks _____ | 11. river, person _____ |
| 4. window, lamp _____ | 12. lake, river _____ |
| 5. kite, cat _____ | 13. airplane, bird _____ |
| 6. comb, person _____ | 14. car, chair _____ |
| 7. bicycle, car _____ | 15. ruler, yardstick _____ |
| 8. bicycle, piano _____ | |

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| A both have seats | I both have pedals |
| B both have wings | J both have wheels |
| C both have teeth | K both have heads |
| D both have tails | L both have eyes |
| E both have 2 feet | M both have mouths |
| F both have keys | N both have faces |
| G both give light | O both have sand |
| H both measure | |

Parts of your Body

by Busy Beaver *Miriam Vanderwerf*

Unscramble please!

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. yee _____ | 6. beaknboe _____ |
| 2. snoe _____ | 7. kusll _____ |
| 3. rae _____ | 8. tosachm _____ |
| 4. trhae _____ | 9. hmubt _____ |
| 5. nedboma _____ | 10. fnigrse _____ |

Busy Beaver *Margo Hofsink* sent in some jokes for you.

1. Dit: I see your arm's in a sling!
Dot: Yes, I get all the breaks!
2. Nurse: Doctor, there is an invisible man in the waiting room.
Doctor: Tell him I can't see him!
3. Doctor: What seems to be the problem?
Patient: I eat dates.
Doctor: What's wrong with that?
Patient: Off calendars?

Have you all sent in your entries for our Summer Contest?

Do it very soon, please!

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

With love from your,
Aunt Betty