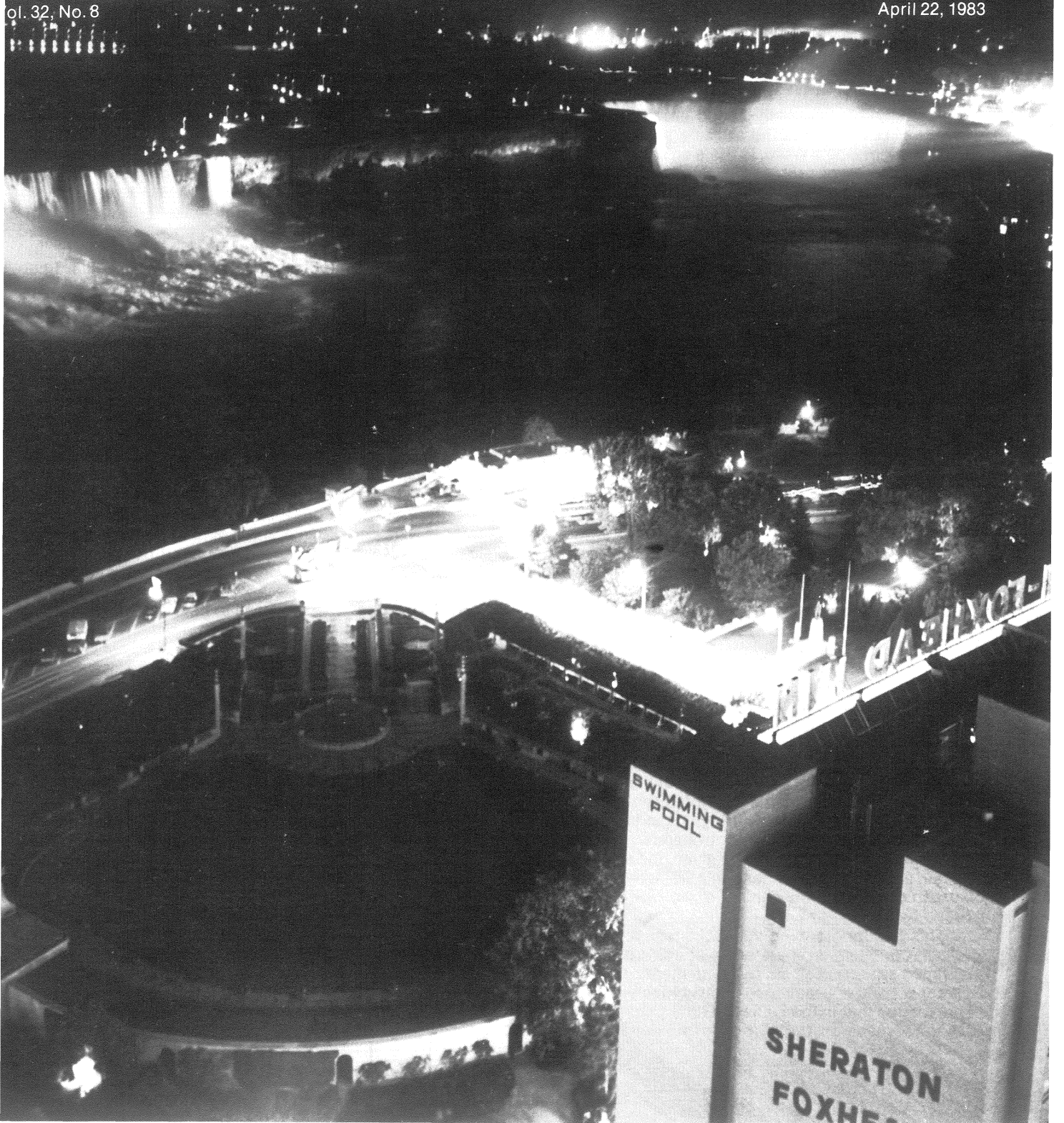


# Clarion

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# Some Aspects of Counseling<sub>2</sub>

## 5. *Sickness or sin?*

On page 28 of his book Adams calls mental illness "A Misnomer"; that means: a wrong or unsuitable name given to something. According to him, mental illness does not exist. He puts it this way: "The Scripture plainly speaks of both organically based problems as well as those that stem from sinful attitude and behaviour; but where, in all of God's Word, is there so much as a trace of any third source of problems which might approximate the modern concept of 'mental illness'?"

Adams sees only two categories: organic malfunctions and sinful behaviour. Some so-called mental illnesses can be caused by organic malfunctions, but then there has to be a clear reason. He writes: "Organic malfunctions affecting the brain that are caused by brain damage, tumors, gene inheritance, glandular or chemical disorders, validly may be termed mental illnesses. But at the same time a vast number of other human problems have been classified as mental illness for which there is no evidence that they have been engendered by disease or illness at all. As a description of many of these problems, the term mental illness is nothing more than a figure of speech, and in most cases a poor one at that."<sup>6</sup>

Adams agrees that there is a correlation between psychological stress and illness, but in such cases he sees the psychological stress as a result of sinful behaviour and as a sickness-causing attitude. He does not recognize sickness as a cause of stress and psychological problems. He argues that in many cases illness is pretended to cover up a sin and to escape the necessity of amendment of life.<sup>7</sup>

It is very important to realize the consequences of this theory. Adams agrees that some so-called mental illnesses are caused by "organic malfunctions." He mentions, among others, brain damage, a tumor, chemical disorder. But at the same time he states firmly that in cases for which there is no evidence that they have been engendered by disease or organic malfunctions, we should not use the term "mental illness," but call it a result of a sinful attitude. He even states that, according to the Bible, there is not a trace of any source of "mental illness" apart from organic disorder or sinful behaviour.<sup>8</sup> What does that mean? It inevitably brings us to the conclusion that, in all cases where "no evidence" of "disease-engendered" phenomena can be given, the mental illness is a "sin-engendered" sickness. In other words: if no proof of organic malfunction can be given, the behaviour is caused by sin.

This has far-reaching consequences for the way we deal with our sick brothers and sisters. In a recently (re-)published speech Prof. Dr. C. Trimp mentioned an important aspect and consequence of this reasoning. He writes: "That means that in the course of time, through the result of medical research, the territory of sin has been reduced

considerably. A very incredible idea!"<sup>9</sup> What he intends to say is this: The result of medical research has shown, in many cases, that there is an organic cause of mental disorder. Adams himself mentions chemical disorder. He even refers to cases of so-called "schizophrenic persons" who act very strangely because they see or hear things which do not really exist. According to a recently published theory, this can be caused by a chemical malfunction, a so-called "adrenochrome," which disturbs the eyesight or hearing. People hear and see things which do not exist. Adams calls this "perceptual distortion." His conclusion is: "A number of those who are currently labeled 'schizophrenics' could no longer be considered 'mentally ill' (as if their judgement were impaired), but would have to be reclassified as 'perceptually ill.' If perception is the problem, there is nothing wrong with the mental responses to what is perceived. If a book seems to be flying toward you (as your senses wrongly tell you it is), the right thing for the mind to do is to send signals to the arms to protect the head. Seemingly bizarre gestures, therefore, make sense when they are rightly interpreted as protective response. If faulty depth perception wrongly tells you that something is about to bump into you, then for you to jog to the side suddenly is the correct thing to do. In other words, the counselee's mind is not sick; he is only seeing things wrongly and is, therefore, reacting in a proper way mentally to what he perceives wrongly."<sup>10</sup>

It might be an interesting discovery, but this story tells us at the same time that a person who was previously "labelled" as someone who suffered from a sinful behaviour and a "sin-engendered sickness" all of a sudden has to be "reclassified" as "perceptually ill." The sin which previously was supposed to have caused his strange behaviour is replaced by an organic defect, and all this thanks to medical research. Is this the way we are supposed to deal with our sick brothers and sisters? Does our admonition and accusation of sinful behaviour depend on the results of medical research? Do we blame the patient, until the doctor has found a reasonable explanation or an organic defect? In some cases the physician may never find out what is wrong, but still there can be a good reason why the patient acts the way he does. Is he therefore to be condemned as a sinner who suffers as a result of his own wrong attitude or unconfessed sin? That is what brought Prof. Trimp to the conclusion that, as a result of Adams' theory, the territory of sin seems to be reduced considerably by the result of medical research. Certainly an incredible idea!

We consider this to be one of the weaknesses and even a dangerous point in Adams' theory. Basically it means that as long as we cannot see an organic reason for an abnormal behaviour, we simply blame the patient for it and we call it "sin-engendered sickness," a strange behaviour caused by a sinful attitude or a pretended illness to cover up unconfessed sins. That is a very hard and

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merciless approach to brothers and sisters who suffer mental illness and who are desperately in need of Christian help and support. It all is a consequence of identifying the Biblical notion of soul with the medical concept of psyche or mind. This theory completely ignores the fact that a mind can be sick or in disorder as well as every other part of the human body.

Adams agrees that there is “a grey area between, where it is uncertain to both whether a problem stems basically from organic or non-organic sources.”<sup>11</sup> In his theory, however, he does not pay sufficient attention to this reality, and therefore he falls into the trap of generalization: treating all alike.

## 6. Mental illness

Mental illness does not exist, according to Adams. He knows of only two sources: organic malfunctions and sin. It is “either-or.” There is no way in between. He states that the Bible does not give so much as a trace of any third source of problems.

We do not agree with him in this respect. His whole concept of “either-or” is incorrect. The Bible does not speak of such categories. The Bible does not give such a scheme, dividing all cases into two groups. Recently Prof. Dr. J. van Bruggen pointed out in an article in *De Reformatie* that, in Matthew 4:24, among those who were healed by Christ were mentioned people with “various diseases.”<sup>12</sup> A list is given there, and in that list also “demoniacs” are mentioned. Was that, according to Adams, an “organic illness,” or is Matthew wrong when he calls this a disease? And in Matthew 17:15 the sick boy is called an “epileptic,” or, in other translations, “a lunatic.” Was that an “organic” disorder or a “sin-engendered” illness? He was healed when Jesus cast out a demon.

In Matthew 8:16, 17, we read that Jesus cast out the spirits with a word and healed all who were sick. No distinction is made between “organic” and “sin-engendered” illnesses. Verse 17 says: “This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, ‘He took our infirmities and bore our diseases.’”

Also in Luke 6:17, 18, we read about “a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the sea-coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured.”

Prof. van Bruggen, in his article, pays special attention to exorcism or the casting out of demons. That is not the same matter as we are dealing with here. However, what he writes is important also for our topic. He comes to the conclusion that the New Testament does not make a qualitative distinction between the healing of the sick and the curing of mental illness.<sup>13</sup>

The Bible does not make a sharp distinction between “organic” illness and “sin-engendered” sickness as Adams suggests. It is not a matter of “either-or.” Sin is certainly involved, also in many organic illnesses. The Bible shows clearly that every healing of the sick was a matter of Christ’s taking upon Himself our infirmities and our iniquities. But at the same time we have to be aware of the fact that not all cases of mental illness are caused by a specific sin or a sinful attitude of the patient.

Adams says: “The Scripture plainly speaks of both organically based problems as well as those problems that stem from sinful attitudes and behaviour; but where in all of God’s Word is there so much as a trace of any

third source of problems which might approximate the modern concept of ‘mental illness?’”<sup>14</sup> Our answer to this suggestive question is: the Bible does not make such a clear-cut distinction between either organically based problems or problems that stem from sinful attitudes and behaviour. A human being is a unity, created by the Lord with a body and a mind. Both can be sick. It is even so that the two often go together and that the one interferes with the other. Sickness of the body will be reflected in someone’s mental condition and mental illness can disturb the proper functioning of the body.

We have to call for repentance according to the Word of God, but that should not be confined to people who are mentally ill. We should not approach a depressed person only with the message: “Repent, believe in the Lord, and you will be cured.” Prof. Trimp puts it this way: “You can no more repent of apathy than you can of the flu.” Mental illness and sin cannot and should not be identified with each other. We cannot repent of mental illness. Neither can we use medicines to strengthen our faith. Sin and illness are two different things, and they belong in different categories.<sup>15</sup>

We also have to keep in mind that frustrations can have a strong influence on someone’s mental development and the way he reacts to our approach. Prof. Trimp mentions the example of a boy who is very upset and frustrated because his father is an alcoholic. He hates his father. Too often he has been beaten when his father came home stone drunk. Damage is done to his “soul,” and because of that he might react in an unusual way, at least according to those who do not understand his feelings. When an office-bearer tries to comfort him with the beautiful words of Psalm 103:13, he becomes even more upset. “As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him” is something he does not understand. That is not a matter of unbelief or a sinful attitude. He simply cannot think about a father as someone who cares. He needs help and understanding to overcome his mental injury.<sup>16</sup>

When someone is deeply depressed or apathetic, it is not enough to say: “Believe in the Lord, rejoice in the Lord always; your depression is ‘sin-engendered,’ that means: caused by unconfessed sins.” That would be the kind of “help” Job received from his friends, but in the end the LORD showed how wrong they were. When we say such things to deeply depressed people, we only make them feel even more desperate and no one should be surprised if it ends up in an attempted suicide.

We have to be aware that a sick mind needs help no less than a sick body. This does not mean that an office-bearer is supposed to “refer” some cases to a specialist. He does not “refer to” at all; he has to continue his task, but the doctor should be involved as well. A pastor is supposed to visit and to help someone who suffers from a stomach ulcer, but that does not take away the necessity of seeing a doctor. And the fact that the doctor visits the patient does not make pastoral care superfluous. They have to work together; both have their own task and responsibility, closely related, but different nonetheless.

## 7. Help from unbelievers

Another aspect should have our attention, and that is the question whether we can accept help from a psychiatrist or other counselor who is an unbeliever. Already as far as a family physician is concerned, it is important

— Continued on page 170.

# Proof texts

## for the Heidelberg Catechism

Synod Cloverdale 1983 is drawing near. It may seem premature to make such a remark in springtime, while the event will not take place until November. But since important reports have to reach the churches nine months before the opening date of Synod, we have entered the period in which the consistories receive a fair weight of paper on which is printed the product of the labours of several committees. Since the Canadian Reformed Churches stress the autonomy of the local congregations, they convoke a general synod once per three years. But precisely this fact makes the year of a synod an important period of serious study for the consistories. Now that the churches are in the process of modernizing the language of their creeds, confessions, and liturgical forms, we may especially expect some effort of the congregations to check the work of the committees.

The translation of the Confession of Faith (the so-called Belgic Confession) and the Canons of Dordt was the task of one committee, and the completed draft should be on the table of the consistories in the coming month. Another committee had the task to improve the first (1974) and second (1977) drafts of a new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, and the churches may therefore now expect a third and, as we hope, final draft, to be inserted in the new edition of our *Book of Praise*.

In connection with this new draft translation of the Heidelberg Catechism, I would like to draw some attention to an interesting, but easily forgotten, aspect: the proof texts for this instructional tool.

What are those proof texts of the Heidelberg Catechism? One could think of the Scripture passages that are expressly quoted in the explanation of the doctrine itself. The use of a new Bible translation must lead to some important questions. How do we deal with the text of the Heidelberg Catechism if this text deviates from the Bible translation?

Let me give some examples, first from another new translation — that of the Christian Reformed Church

(1975). This translation followed the first German edition of the Catechism. This method is different from the one our committee followed. We took as basis both the German and the Latin text of 1563 and took into consideration the Dutch text of 1611 and the present English text as well. It is an eclectic method, and the result is that our new translation resembles the present English text more closely than its Christian Reformed counterpart does. I will not now elaborate on this difference in translation methods; I mention it only as background for the following quotation from the preface of the new Christian Reformed translation:

In keeping with synodical instructions, biblical passages are quoted from the Revised Standard Version. This has occasioned some problems since the biblical quotations in the German edition derive from a text based on the developing *Textus Receptus* in the sixteenth century which contains some additions not found in the Greek text underlying the Revised Standard Version. These additions are indicated in the text of the Catechism with accompanying footnotes in questions 4, 71, 77, and 119.

In Answer 4, we find the words that you shall love the Lord your God “with all your strength.” The institution of the Lord’s Supper, as quoted from I Corinthians 11 in Answer 77, entails the words, “Take, eat.” In a note we read then that earlier and better manuscripts omit these words.

Our Canadian Reformed committee, however, has simply followed the text of the second edition of the Revised Standard Version. We were of the opinion that if we accepted a Bible translation as basis for our Creeds and Confessions, this Bible text should dominate; we did not want to bother Catechism students with remarks about “earlier and better manuscripts.” There is one exception, and it is an important one. It concerns the text of the Lord’s Prayer. In the RSV in Matthew 6, the reader can see that other, some ancient, authorities add in some form,

“For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Our committee decided to leave these words in Answer 119 and consequently not to alter the contents of Answers 128 and 129.

In Answer 71, we maintained the words, “He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). The second edition of the RSV included verses 9-20 in the text and now has in the marginal note the remark that in most authorities verses 9-20 follow immediately after verse 8. I cannot see the reason why the Christian Reformed new translation of the Heidelberg Catechism goes further than the RSV and disturbs the students with the remark: “Earlier and better manuscripts of Mark 16 omit the words, ‘He who believes and is baptized . . . condemned.’” Is it really necessary to insert such debatable scholarly remarks in the text of a Church confession, especially when it is meant for the instruction of God’s Covenant children?

Since our committee followed the RSV translation, the question came up whether we should not adjust the Heidelberg Catechism also in those answers in which there is a clear *allusion* to a Bible text that now changed. Three instances come to my mind, two of them in the discussion of the Lord’s Supper and one in connection with the seventh commandment.

In Answer 75 we read that Christ’s body was offered and *broken* on the cross for me, as certainly as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me. But in the RSV the words of the institution read: “This is my body which is for you” (I Cor. 11:24; see also the text in the present edition of the Heidelberg Catechism, A. 77). Should we then not omit the thought that Christ’s body was *broken* on the cross, before a smart Catechism student asks how we can square this with the fulfilment of Exodus 12:46, Numbers 9:12, and Psalm 34:20, as found in John 19:36? In passing, I still wonder why Synod Smithville 1980, without argumentation, decided “to retain in the words

spoken at the communion, the words 'broken' and 'poured out' instead of the word 'given' (art. 136). At least, the churches now receive the proposal to read in A. 75 of the Heidelberg Catechism the following sentence: As surely as I see with my eyes the bread of the Lord broken for me and the cup given to me, so surely was His body *offered for me* and His blood poured out for me on the cross.

The second instance is the allusion to Ephesians 5, to be found in the expression that we become more and more united to Christ's sacred body, by the Holy Spirit, who dwells both in Christ and in us, so that, though Christ is in heaven and we are on earth, nevertheless, we are flesh of His flesh and bone of His bones (A. 76). Everyone who compares Ephesians 5 in the King James Version with the Revised Standard Version, will see that the RSV leaves out that we are of Christ's flesh and of His bones. I wonder whether the churches would not do wisely to follow new Bible translations and therefore to leave this also out of the Heidelberg Catechism. The committee did not dare to do so, but we should at least consider that omission could show reverence for the Bible text and could help prevent wrong, mystical ideas.

The last example is the statement in Answer 109: Since our body and soul are both temples of the Holy Spirit, it is His will that we keep both pure and holy. Did you ever think about the question why the Heidelberg Catechism mentions both body and soul and speaks about temples in plural? The reason must be that older translations, like the KJV, read in I Corinthians 6:20: therefore glorify God in the body, *and in your spirit*, which *are* God's. Possibly a copyist did not regard Paul's assertion "that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost" spiritual enough and he added, therefore, your spirit (or your soul as the Catechism has, in the meantime changing Paul's singular "temple" into plural "temples"). The RSV, however, restores the original text: Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body (vv. 19, 20). Our committee for the translation of the Heidelberg Catechism found a compromise between old and new and gives this proposed reading: Since we, body and soul,

are temples of the Holy Spirit, it is God's will that we keep ourselves pure and holy. At least this reading gives less occasion to a dualistic doctrine of man.

When we speak of prooftexts for the Heidelberg Catechism, we do not only think of the Scripture passages quoted in the explanation of the doctrine, but also of those that have been added as aids for the instruction in the Christian religion in the Reformed schools and churches. The last clauses of the committee's mandate read as follows:

- e. To establish what the original prooftexts are and to see whether the selection can be improved by replacing, deleting and/or adding and to include them in the "Draft Translation, 1979."
- f. To provide an index to cross-reference the Three Forms of Unity.

In the report to the churches the committee states that it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain what the original prooftexts are. No ecclesiastical assembly ever gave approval to such prooftexts. As a result, we only have certain editions of the Heidelberg Catechism which included prooftexts, and I may add that J.N. Bakhuizen Van den Brink, in his standard edition of the authentic texts of the Three Forms of Unity (Amsterdam: Bolland, 1976, p. 37), speaks of a "bijna mateloze vloed van Bijbelteksten" in the Dutch edition of Thysius, just before the Synod of Dordt 1618/19. One of the treasures in my library is *Schatboek der verklaringen over den Nederlandschen Catechismus* (my edition is of Hommius and Spiljardus, t'Amsterdam, 1657). It contains the catechetical explications of Zacharias Ursinus; they are lectures, published by one of his students, and translated into Dutch by Festus Hommius, the later clerk of the Synod of Dordt. The title of the Spiljardus edition makes clear that he now quotes the Scripture passages according to "the public translation" (Statenvertaling) and that he enriched the work not only with applications but also with a Scriptural harmony of the Dutch Forms of faith. When one compares the prooftexts of Spiljardus with those in our present Dutch and English Catechism editions, one will understand what is meant by that expression of an almost limitless flood of Bible texts. The first question to be answered, therefore, is: What do we want? A set of prooftexts that is manageable in a Cate-

chism class or an endless row of trees because of which nobody sees the forest any longer? My formulation betrays my preference.

Our sister churches in The Netherlands studied the same matter and published a report in their Acts of the General Synod of Arnhem 1981. One major problem encountered was that in the first editions the references are only made to the Bible chapters and not the specific verse(s). This necessitated some guesswork. Moreover, the Dutch deputies pointed out that the list of prooftexts was not meant "als handboei bij de Schriftuitleg, maar als handreiking bij het gebruiken van de confessie" ("not as handcuffs for the explanation of Scripture but as helps in the use of the confession"). Our sister church-



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## COUNSELING — Continued from page 167.

whether he is a believer. It is even more important when a psychiatrist or a psychologist becomes involved or when counseling is received from a social worker. Then people start to manipulate our mind.

Of course, that is very important, and if possible we should look and ask for help from a Christian counselor. But in fact it is not always possible to find such a person. Therefore we have to take measures to prevent unnecessary damage and harm. And, fortunately, there are quite a few possibilities to work together and receive help from people who are not true believers in the way we should like to have them.

There is one thing you have to keep in mind as far as doctors are concerned and that is something very often forgotten or underestimated: the task of the physician, the family doctor, as well as the specialist, is: to serve the patient. The doctor is subservient to the interest and the well-being of the patient and not the other way around. The specialist has to adapt himself to the wishes and the preconditions of the patient. I know that in the past the impression was sometimes given that the patient did not have any influence whatsoever, and that he was not even allowed to ask questions or to be informed about details of his own health or the kind of therapy or treatment that he was going to receive. He was not allowed to get information from his own medical record. Fortunately, today there is better communication and most doctors are willing to listen and to take into consideration the feelings and wishes of their patients.

In my opinion, the pastor can play an important role in making people aware of their own task and position. When a member of the congregation has to see a psychiatrist, he has to make clear right from the beginning that there are some preconditions; like this: I am a believer, and my faith is not a matter for discussion; divorce is not an option to solve my problems, neither is abortion. Then, if he is in doubt about the intentions of his doctor, he can ask the specialist whether he is willing to help him under these conditions. It is up to the counselor to say yes or no. But my experience is that most doctors, also unbelievers, are willing to cooperate and to respect someone's feelings. But, of course, he first has to know about it. How can a doctor respect someone's Christian lifestyle if he does not know about it? The problem is that people who need the help of a psychiatrist often are not prepared or able to speak up about these matters. Therefore it is important that the office-bearers give support,

advice, and guidance; they can make them aware of these things and help them to overcome these problems.

Sometimes even direct contact between the pastor and the specialist is possible. That depends on the circumstances and, for the better part, on the personalities of both of them: the pastor as well as the psychiatrist. Quite a few physicians are willing to cooperate and to discuss matters with the pastor; of course, never without the consent and foreknowledge of the person involved.

It is clear that you have to be reasonable in such cases and you have to accept certain limitations. Most doctors do not appreciate too much unrequested advice or too many suggestions as far as the therapy is concerned.

There is one thing we should never ignore in this respect, and that is confidentiality. We should never talk behind a patient's back. Confidentiality is a *conditio sine qua non* for all proper and effective help. Sometimes an office-bearer may hear things he is not even allowed to report at a consistory meeting. The reason why people often don't open up is the fear that their problems will go all over the place. True, a consistory meeting is a closed session, and no one is supposed to divulge what has been said there, but the reality is different in many cases. A secret shared with so many people is no longer a secret.

### 8. Some practical cases

In conclusion I should like to mention some practical cases to illustrate what has been said. Very often a counselor has to deal with family problems and disturbed or disrupted relations within a family, either between parents and children or between the parents themselves; the one is often a result of the other. It is not always easy to find out what the real reason or cause of the conflict is. The people involved are not aware of the deeper background either. It takes a lot of effort, time, patience, and

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#### CORRECTION

In the article on Discipline two corrections had to be made as far as the age of excommunication is concerned.

Somehow again an error crept in.

In vol. 32, no. 4, page 71, column 3 we dealt with the guidelines, given by the General Synod Sneek 1939/40.

This passage should read as follows:

"As far as the age is concerned, Synod decided that, as a rule, this announcement shall not be made before they have reached the age of twenty-five years. In cases of very offensive apostasy, it can be done at the age of twenty-one years."

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es and their deputies now have to evaluate their comprehensive list of texts critically, and our committee was therefore not able to benefit from a final product of revision by our Dutch counterparts.

Everyone who will study the list presented by our committee will see that some critical work has been done. Several texts have been left out, and others have been added. We could also benefit from the work done by the Christian Reformed committee in their new 1975 edition. In formal respect, our committee followed their example in arranging the references in the order of the Bible books. I think that this is of practical

and pedagogical value.

It is impossible to elaborate on the choice of the committee; hundreds of texts are involved. May one use, e.g., Psalm 49:7-9 for the truth that no mere creature, let alone a sinner, can bear the weight of God's eternal anger against sin and satisfy for others? (A. 16, or A. 14 in the Christian Reformed edition). Are all references to the book of Job in Answer 13 tenable? Or should we leave the words of Eliphaz out? Why does Answer 66 for the sacraments refer to Isaiah 6:6, 7 and 54:9? Is the reference for the division of the ten commandments into two tables relevant? One could easily multiply the

questions, and the answers will often be debated. The committee recommends that the list be approved by General Synod for use by the churches as an aid in the understanding and usage of the Heidelberg Catechism. The churches should maintain the freedom of exegesis, and one could even question whether the list should be officially approved. Could Synod not simply recognize the work of a committee and have it printed as an aid for Catechism preaching and teaching? At least some homework is to be done before and during Synod Cloverdale 1983.

J. FABER

understanding to find out what is really going on. Quite often sexual problems are behind the scene. It is not in the first place the task of a pastor to solve such problems, neither is it his specific skill to counsel in such cases. Still it can be extremely important to approach such cases in the right way, because they can have far-reaching consequences: unfaithfulness, extra-marital relations, and even divorce can be the result of it.

Lack of support, bad counseling, or no counseling at all can and will make things worse. It goes without saying that such problems must have their influence and, in fact, do have an enormous impact on spiritual life. Sometimes problems can reach such a stage that people lose their courage, their faith, and become completely desperate. Proper counseling is necessary to prevent things from going from bad to worse. In such cases, so-called "nouthetic" counseling is worthwhile and necessary. We have to call sin sin, and we don't have to neglect or ignore the reality of sin and the necessity of repentance. But at the same time we have to realize that it is not enough only to call for repentance. People know very well that they are wrong, but they are unable to change their life and to get rid of certain things without help. That is also a reality we have to face.

It can be necessary in such cases to ask for professional help and counseling, not only by the pastor, but also by other professional helpers. It stands to reason that the choice of counselor and his personal attitude is very important.

Another frequently occurring problem is alcoholism, a rather complicated matter. You have to find out why someone tries to escape reality by drinking. If you give the advice "quit drinking" without trying to solve the problems behind the scene, you are like someone who mops up the laundry room without turning off the tap (in Dutch they say: *dweilen met de kraan open*). Don't underestimate the problems involved. Professional help is often needed to kick the habit.

I should like to mention one more case, and that is paranoid schizophrenia. Why is it that so many cases become manifest these days? Did people change, or is it only a matter of imagination? No it is not. The reason is that in the past many cases were not recognized until it was too late and the consequences became fatal.

It is sometimes difficult to recognize and to find out what is going on. Especially in such cases contact and cooperation with a physician is necessary. When someone is confronted with such a case for the first time, it is not easy to distinguish between religious problems, imagination, and psychiatric phenomena. But, as we have seen, even Adams comes to the conclusion that schizophrenia can be caused by "organic malfunctions." We don't believe that an evident organic malfunction is a necessary precondition to acknowledge that a person is sick.

Recent medical developments have shown that in many cases there is an organic reason behind mental illness. Probably more cases will be discovered. Other sources may never be found. However, that is not decisive. Pastoral care and the necessity of repentance does not depend on the result of medical research. We all need repentance, every day of our life. But we also have to be aware of the fact that some brothers and sisters are sick and need help — psychical help — because they are mentally ill.

### 9. Conclusion

Finally I should like to quote one of the letters to the

editor, mentioned above, and published in *Nederlands Dagblad*. It was written in the form of a poem and (translated into English) it reads like this:

No dream . . . . . A crowded Church  
Text Luke 17:11-17  
"When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her."  
People had their judgment ready:  
This widow must have been a terrible sinner . . . .  
Her husband had died.  
Now she had to bring  
her son  
to the cemetery.  
The Lord must have had His reasons for that!  
But: "He had compassion on her."

\* \* \* \* \*

No dream . . . . . Real history.  
Job. Sitting in his misery.  
His friends accusing him.  
Eliphaz says, "Tradition proves  
that the wicked will be punished."  
Job cries: "Miserable comforters you are!"

\* \* \* \* \*

No dream . . . . . A psychiatric clinic.  
Eyes full of anxiety,  
crying for help.  
"Psychical need does not exist in the Church,"  
one says.  
No help.

\* \* \*

"Psychical distress is sin,"  
another says.  
No help.

\* \* \*

Eyes full of anxiety,  
crying for help.

\* \* \*

"No need, don't ask a specialist,"  
the next one says.  
No help.

\* \* \*

Don't dream!  
Face reality!  
Recognize the need and the distress  
and help  
professionally!

\* \* \* \* \*

Burlington, ON

W. POUWELSE

<sup>6</sup> Jay E. Adams, *Competent to Counsel* (Grand Rapids, 1982) p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> Prof. Dr. C. Trimp, *Dienst*, j.g. 30, nr. 6, nov./dec. 82, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 37.

<sup>12</sup> Prof. Dr. J. van Bruggen, *De Reformatie*, j.g. 58, nr. 20, p. 306.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, nr. 21, p. 321.

<sup>14</sup> Adams, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup> Trimp, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, p. 15.

## FROM THE SCRIPTURES

*“. . . in those days, says the LORD, they shall no more say, ‘The ark of the covenant of the LORD.’ It shall not come to mind, or be remembered or missed; it shall not be made again.”* Jer. 3:16b

# Better Days

It is remarkable to note in this passage how the prophet speaks in jubilant tones about the disappearance of the ark. For years it had held a central place in the worship of Israel, and even after the division of the kingdom, it was not forgotten. How could Israel forget how the LORD had both spoken to them and delivered them through the intercession of the ark? There the tables of testimony were kept; there the LORD spoke from between the cherubim. He had promised that He would speak to Moses from the mercy seat, Ex. 25:22. And the LORD was faithful to His word, Num. 7:89. How can Jeremiah seemingly speak so lightly of it and look with eagerness to the day that it would not be present any longer?

The LORD had not changed; He was faithful to His Word, and the ark remained the symbol of His presence. The mercy seat was the testimony of atonement for God’s people. But where the LORD had not changed, both Israel and Judah had changed. They had forgotten the LORD and had fallen in love with the objects of worship that the LORD had given them as symbols and signs. Israel was faithless and made her own signs and symbols, and practiced spiritual harlotry with them on every high hill and under every green tree. Yet she still lived in envy of her sister Judah. Judah meanwhile fell in love with the temple goods which fell to her, and practiced spiritual adultery with them. She was proud of the ark, the temple, and other blessings, but she did not truly turn in humility and repentance to the LORD.

What happened is obvious. Heartfelt repentance and trust in the LORD had all but disappeared. The religion of God’s people was a purely external exercise, without integral, honest, and committed participation. How then could the LORD act on behalf of His people and perform His wonders for them? For He had taught them that He could never be totally identified with the ark. He was the Holy One, who dwelt between the cherubim, whose heavenly glory was present with the ark. From above the ark He showed Himself as the exalted ruler of all the earth, the God who takes up the cause of His people, Ps. 80:1; 99:1, 2. Never could the exalted LORD of heaven and earth be *confined* to the ark. That turn of attention in Israel and Judah was nothing but idolatry.

Therefore Jeremiah looks ahead to the time when the ark will no longer be present in Israel’s worship, and he speaks of that time as a *better* time. Why? Well, not only does this time imply the reunification of Israel and Judah, it also implies the rediscovery of true religion, the *true* service of the LORD. It is a time when clichés give way to serious speech, and artifacts and relics give way to reverent worship.

That reunification already begins after the return from exile. But the true reunification of the houses of Israel and Judah comes much later. And Jeremiah’s words clearly reach ahead to this time, the time of Christ. For the ark may only be forgotten when it has been replaced by something better, and when a better way of access has been given to God’s people. That better way comes with Christ’s work. Through His death and resurrection, heavenly glory is no longer restricted to a remote and hidden place among God’s people. The holiness and glory from above is shed abroad to all believers, and the Church may share the fulness of the glory of God and hear His voice daily, living in unbroken communion with Him.

This is the glory of the New Testament dispensation, in which the LORD has established the heavenly Jerusalem on earth and gathers men from all nations to her, Gal. 4:26. The completed work of Christ now opens the heavens for us, so that we may draw near in faith to God and be ingrafted into the new Jerusalem. Ark and temple are now obsolete; the temple curtain has been torn in two, Matt. 27:51. The breach is healed, and the LORD freely gives His blessings to His children. He lives and dwells in our midst in all His heavenly glory!

Thus, we no longer need to inquire about the ark. It need not be missed or remembered any longer. Something greater has come to us! We have been united with the saints of old and also have received a share in the Spirit of heaven, the Holy Spirit who directs our hearts beyond the external symbols to the true and sincere worship of our Lord and King. Through His Spirit we also know that even though the ark has disappeared, what it symbolized is still with us and will be with us in greater measure after Christ’s return. The dwelling of God among His people does not diminish, but only becomes richer all the time.

No wonder, then, that John sees the ark of God once again on Patmos, in a vision dealing with the end of days, Rev. 11:19. The LORD brings back the same ark of the covenant that we may forget! And there He shows that He is always the same, and that even when He removes His divinely appointed symbols, “the substance and truth of them remain with us in Jesus Christ, in whom they have their completion,” Belgic Confession, Art. XXV. Knowing this, we are all the more urged not to externalize our faith or to rest in outward things. As the hour of full communion and the moment of the heavenly dwelling of God in our midst draws nigh, let us worship with hearts faithful and sincere.

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.*

### GRONINGEN

In the Roman Catholic St. Joseph Church in Groningen a "marriage" was "solemnized" between two women. As far as is known, this was the first time it happened in The Netherlands. The ceremony was a private one and was conducted by the priest C.A. Heymans of Groningen.

Reacting to this fact, a spokesman for the bishop stated that a marriage between two persons of the same sex is not possible within the Roman Catholic Church. The above "marriage" was wholly against the will of the bishop. The spokesman did not deem it unlikely that measures would be taken against the priest. (ND)

\* \* \*

### MÜNCHEN (EPD)

A descendant of Martin Luther was baptized recently in the Holy Ghost Church in München. It was the four-months old son Maximilian of the Wolf-Schweingel family. Maximilian belongs to the fourteenth generation after Luther.

Of all the descendants none carries the Luther name any more. This name disappeared in the middle of the eighteenth century when the last direct descendant bearing the Luther name died. At the moment there are still some 800 descendants left all over the world. Luther had three sons and three daughters.

On the occasion of an exhibition dealing with the Reformer in the national museum of Nürnberg a reunion of all descendants of Luther will be held towards the end of April. (ND)

\* \* \*

### WASHINGTON (AP)

The number of divorces granted in the United States declined last

year for the first time in two decades, the government reported.

In 1982, 1.18 million couples ended their marriage, 3 percent less than the 1981 figure, the National Center for Health Statistics said in its annual report on American vital statistics. The number of divorces had almost tripled since 1962, when 413,000 marriages were ended.

The center said the divorce rate declined from 5.3 per 1,000 people in 1981 to 5.1 per 1,000 in 1982. In 1982, the divorce rate was 2.2 per 1,000. (CN)

\* \* \*

### LEXINGTON, KY. (RNS)

While the World Council of Churches still has a favourable view of the government of Zimbabwe, a leader of the ecumenical group says charges of army atrocities against civilians in the African nation should be thoroughly investigated.

Dr. Cynthia Wedel, an Episcopalian who serves as North American president of the WCC, said in an interview that the group would not want Prime Minister Robert Mugabe's government shielded from investigation simply because the WCC supported him during the war against white-minority rule in Rhodesia.

The World Council of Churches has been closely identified with the black-nationalist cause in Zimbabwe and came under heavy criticism after its Program to Combat Racism made an \$85,000 grant to the Patriotic Front guerilla coalition led by Mr. Mugabe and his then-ally, Joshua Nkomo, in 1978. (CN)

\* \* \*

### WASHINGTON (RNS)

The president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops has asked President Reagan for a meeting to discuss charges by top administration officials that the Church seeks to advance Marxist interests in Central America.

Archbishop John Roach of St. Paul and Minneapolis expressed "concern" in a letter to the president about the remarks made separately by Secretary of State George Shultz and Vice President George Bush. The letter, coming at a time of tension between the church hierarchy and the Reagan administration, was made public here by the United States Catholic Conference, the social action arm of the U.S. bishops.

The nation's Catholic Bishops have differed sharply with administra-

tion policies in Central America, most recently in testimony to Congress in support of dialogue to end the 3-year-old civil war in El Salvador. On his trip to the region, the pope also appealed for "dialogue and reconciliation" in the country.

Mr. Shultz, underscoring the administration's opposition to negotiations between rebel and government forces, had attacked "churchmen who want to see Soviet influence in El Salvador improved . . . When you follow policies bound to result in that effect, that's what you are doing." The policies he referred to concerned the question of dialogue. (CN)

\* \* \*

### KUWAIT (DPA)

A conference of Islamic banks in Kuwait called upon all Muslims wherever they may be no longer to deal with banks which pay and demand interest. This was made known by the press agency of Kuwait, Kuna. The participants in this conference are of the opinion that interest is the same as usury and usury is forbidden, according to the Islam.

The conference is of the opinion that Muslims who have moneys with the banks that use the interest system should take out their money and invest it with banks which adhere strictly to the rules of the Islam. This does not necessarily mean a sacrifice, since the Islamic banks are allowed to pay "appreciation prizes."

The Islamic banking system includes that gain and loss in financial transactions is shared by the banks and their clients. (ND)

\* \* \*

### JERUSALEM (RNS)

No more than six Israeli Jews have converted to Christianity during the last several years, says Israel's Interior and Religious Affairs Minister Yosef Burg.

Responding to parliamentary questions on enforcement of the Israeli law which forbids missionary activity, Dr. Burg said the law was implemented by the attorney general, mostly through efforts "on the educational-social plane." He said a ministry survey of the conversions that had occurred indicated that missionary efforts were not involved and that converts had not been offered anything material for becoming Christians. (CN)

\* \* \*

# news medley

It is difficult to say something new when congratulating couples whom I mentioned also on a previous occasion and about whom I gave some very personal information. Since we begin with mentioning our brothers and sisters when they have been married for forty years, we again find ourselves in a position to refer to them when the Lord has given them five or ten or even fifteen years after that event. Then we do not wish to repeat what we said before but could ask our readers to look it up in previous volumes of *Clarion*. We ourselves see the pictures of five or ten years ago quite frequently, namely when we bind the volumes upon the request of brothers and sisters who wish to keep the magazine and wish to be able to consult it once in a while. We have made a whole list of couples who will celebrate this year, and this helps keeping track of things. Many of the bulletins arrive just as irregularly as *Clarion* itself, and they are not of much help either at times.

Whether it will be in this issue or was already in the previous one I don't know, but you were or are able to see the pictures of two couples who will celebrate their fiftieth wedding anniversary within a few days of each other: Brother and sister J. Van Dijk of Cloverdale will celebrate on the fifth of May, brother and sister W. VanderMolen of Chilliwack will do the same on May 8th. All four of them enjoy a reasonably good health and we are thankful with them for the mercy which the LORD has shown to them during all these years. I have not known them for all the time they were married, but anyway for the larger part.

I have known brother and sister Van Dijk since about 1948; my acquaintance with the VanderMolens goes back "only" till 1952. "Still ancient," some younger readers may say. Yes, we realize that time goes on and that we are speaking about the older generation.

Brother and sister Van Dijk used to live in Melissant on the island of Goeree Overflakkee. We saw each other every three months, when I had to go to the island to conduct services in Middelharnis. Sometimes we met at a Classis, but then it was only brother Van Dijk, of course who was there. Later on they moved to Canada and in their house in Smithers, B.C. many a service was conducted. That was in the days when Houston was the 'mother-church' and Smithers could boast of only a rather small 'house-congregation.' From Smithers they went to Coaldale, and now they are living in Cloverdale, B.C. Sorrow and grief have not bypassed their home and family, but their trust is in the Lord and they endeavour to live by His Word. Congratulations.

As for brother and sister W. VanderMolen, they used to live in New Westminster, from where they moved to Surrey, from there back to New Westminster, and then to Chilliwack. Perhaps I skipped a station, but they did not move all that often, certainly not as often as many others who seemed to be out to get out of spring cleaning every time by moving.

Both brother and sister VanderMolen have always been active in the work of the Lord and have always

lived in dependence upon our heavenly Father. In their family they experienced both great joy and tension, but counting the blessings they must say, "Yes, these are far more than we can number." To you, too, sincere congratulations from all of us.

We remain in the personal sphere for a few more minutes.

From the Toronto bulletin — and from the bulletins of other Churches that were advised by Toronto — we learned that the Vegter family has arrived in Canada on furlough from Irian Jaya. They plan to stay till the end of June. Then they go back to their field of labour. The Churches in Ontario will undoubtedly make good use of their stay in Canada in order to learn about the work of mission which is done on the far-away island. And we know from experience that the Vegters are eager to talk about their work. In this manner we feel more the bond that exists and are brought closer to the work for which we give our contributions and for which we offer up our prayers. Have nice holidays and gain new strength.

I mentioned Toronto here. One more item from this Church.

"The next council meeting will be held, the Lord willing, on March 23, 1983, when we will meet with the consistories of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches in Bowmanville and Woodbridge. The consistory of the Woodbridge Church is serving as host and Rev. J. Mulder will introduce the topic 'Scriptural Data for Church

## 50th Wedding Anniversary



*Mr. and Mrs. W. VanderMolen hope to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 8, 1983, the Lord willing.*

*They were married in Schoonoord, The Netherlands, lived in Groningen, from where they emigrated to Canada in 1951.*

*After an active career in the real estate business, while living in New Westminster and Surrey, BC, Mr. VanderMolen retired some years back and they moved to Chilliwack. Both enjoy relatively good health.*

*They have been richly blessed with two sons and five daughters, thirty-eight grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.*

federation.' " From this brief item we can see that there is no isolationism with us but that we are eager to speak with all who wish to consult with us about the way which the Lord wants us to go. Maybe we'll read more about the contact in future bulletins or communiques.

For visitors to the Chatham area who know about the dates when the Lord's Supper used to be celebrated there we mention that a change has been made. "Starting June '83, Lord's Supper will be celebrated on the second Sunday of the month instead of on the third as is done now. This is to bring it in line with Lord's Supper celebrations in other congregations and also not to interfere with school spring break."

Now you know it for the future. It is not in every Church that the Lord's Supper is celebrated on the second Sunday of the month. Guelph, e.g., has it on the third Sunday of every other month, we have it on the fourth.

It might be a good idea to mention in the Yearbook on what Sundays the Lord's Supper is celebrated. I know that the Church at Lincoln mentions it in the Yearbook, but many Churches do not. Yet it would be quite handy for visitors to a certain place. Think about it.

Another point which I saw in the Chatham bulletin was that "It has been brought to the attention of the consistory that an earlier decision is not adhered to, namely standing at front exit of minister and elder at end of service. It has been proven not to be effective and for that reason was discontinued."

It did not happen too often that I had to walk to the exit with an elder and to wait there till everyone was gone before I could return to the Consistory room to put off my gown and also to depart for a nice cup of coffee, but the few times I had to do it, I did not see much sense in it either; the only ones who talked to me were old acquaintances who had nothing new to say but were happy to have an opportunity to exchange a few words. They could have done this just as well if I had been allowed first to go to the Consistory room to change. By the time I could do so, the parking lot was practically empty anyway. I can well find myself in Chatham's decision. This is obvious.

Only one more news item from a Church. Yes, the harvest is meagre this time, but we hope for better results next time.

Carman's consistory had "One matter brought up at an earlier homevisit . . . It was asked 'Would it be an improvement when voting for office-bearers to keep the number of votes each brother receives confidential?' Consistory decides not to change the existing procedure at this time because it is not convinced that this change would constitute an improvement."

What was suggested here has been suggested more often in the past. And in case a brother receives only a small number of votes, it could appear advisable. However, we are used to telling the complete results of an election, and we can understand the interest in the results which has always been shown by the congregations. Although it does not make any difference with how many votes someone was chosen, and although it might make one who was not chosen and gathered only a few votes feel somewhat better if the figures were not revealed, yet I think that the Carman consistory chose the wisest course by not bringing about any change in this respect. Besides, experience teaches that, but for a few exceptions, the voting usually is rather close. Those are the nicest elections, I find. Anyway, the point has again been brought to everyone's attention.

## 50th Wedding Anniversary



*On May 5, 1983, John and Nellie Van Dijk hope to celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary. They were married in 1933, at Stellendam, The Netherlands. Mr. Van Dijk is now 83, Mrs. Van Dijk 72 years of age. They both are in good health and live in their own home in Cloverdale, BC. They are both very active: Mr. Van Dijk is a faithful member of the Men's Society, Mrs. Van Dijk keeps the whole family in knitted and crocheted articles. They both also take an avid interest in politics.*

*During their years of marriage they were blessed greatly, although they also experienced grief: one son died by drowning at the age of seventeen; one daughter was killed in a traffic accident. They are comforted by the knowledge that these children are with the Lord and that they themselves also may belong to the faithful Saviour.*

*The picture shown here is of a fairly recent date and therefore shows the actual situation.*

Yes, and now in answer to a question. I was asked why I mentioned only the form for the ordination of ministers when stating that the decision of a consistory that in future cases the elders would take part in the imposition of hands was illegal. I was also reminded of the fact that in several instances in the past the elders did take part in this imposition. Was that, then, also illegal?

Yes, it was.

In order not to argue from the Form only, I advise everyone who has the Acts of Synod 1968, to look up Art. 4 of the Church Order. You can find it on page 118. There we provide expressly that the lawful calling shall consist "Finally, in the public *ordination* before the congregation, which shall take place with appropriate stipulations and interrogations, admonitions and prayers and by the imposition of hands BY THE OFFICIATING MINISTER (AND BY OTHER MINISTERS WHO ARE PRESENT) agreeably to the Form in use for that purpose.

This is the manner in which we have promised each other the ordination shall be done. The emphasis in the last part of the article is mine, as you understand. It

## 55th Wedding Anniversary



makes it clear that no one has the right — for as long as this provision stands — to ask others to take part in the imposition of hands when a candidate is ordained.

I don't wish to repeat what I wrote about it the other time. Therefore the above may suffice. If any Church should come with a proposal to the next Synod to provide that the imposition of hands shall be done by the officiating minister and the local office-bearers and by no one else, it can be assured beforehand of my whole-hearted support. Whether this helps is something we'll have to see.

Sorry that I cannot tell you any more about the churches. On the one hand this may be proof that everything continues without too many shocking events interrupting the regular routine. In any case: we are grateful for the many good things we may read and pray that they may continue under the blessing of our Lord.

VO

*Mr. and Mrs. Albert VanderVeen hope to celebrate their 55th Wedding Anniversary on April 26, 1983.*

*They were both born in the Stadskanaal area, and after their marriage in 1928 moved to Valthermond (Dr.), where they operated a bakery and store for 23 years.*

*With their four children they emigrated to Canada, and have now lived in Burlington for 30 years. They are still able to enjoy their family and church activities, as well as keeping busy with their house and garden.*

## PRESS RELEASE

*Third annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Teachers College Association, held April 9, 1983, in Hamilton, ON.*

The chairman opened the meeting in a Christian manner and welcomed all present. In his opening address he emphasized that the Lord has blessed this work, although he expressed a little concern that the membership does not come from every possible area. It should be our goal in this coming year to increase the membership base from every possible area.

The following governors were present. G.J. Nordeman (Burlington), R. Lenting (Watford), J. Pieterman (London), P. Vanderpol (Surrey), H. Nobel (Hamilton), C.J. Wiersma (Chatham), G. Van Woudenberg (Smithville), W. van Assen (Carman), J. VanderVen (Principal of the College), S. Tuininga (Neerlandia), W. Gortemaker (Winnipeg), J. Jonker (Orangeville), and C.J. Nobels (Brampton). Absent with notification were: C. Meliefste (Coaldale), R. Klaver (Smithers), and B. de Vos (Chilliwack).

The secretary's report highlighted the important events since the last annual meeting. He concluded his report saying we have much to be thankful for again and that all praise be to God.

The principal also reported. He dealt with a review of the current academic year and preparations for the year 1983/84. Discussed in detail was the matter of remuneration for practicum teaching. It was decided to leave things as they are at

present. Although the present facilities are adequate, a few improvements are requested. The Building Committee took note of this request. This summer, D.V., there will be two graduates, the first for the College. A total of 21 students are expected for the year 1983/84. It was noted that our students are eligible for the Canada Student Loan Plan, provided they qualify in the normal manner. Now that the College has been in operation for two years, the experience gained during these two years should be used to better serve our schools across Canada.

A report was given by the Building Committee. The committee is of the opinion that our future facilities should be combined with the future new facilities of the Theological College, if that is possible.

After a delightful lunch, the meeting was resumed. The budget for the 1983/84 school year was discussed and adopted. The increase is 32% over last year, due to increased enrollment and the addition of the third full-time staff member. In order to cover this budget, the membership fee also needs to increase. It was decided to raise the membership fee 28% to \$160 per year. During the discussion, it was decided to study the amount of remuneration teachers will receive for obtaining certain educational degrees.

The Statement of Revenue and Expenses, as per March 1, 1983, received due attention. With thankfulness we noted that at the present time we are able to meet our financial commitments. However, our financial basis needs constant strengthening. To increase our member-

ship in all congregations, a contact person will be sought to promote the College.

The actions of the Executive Committee in 1982/83 were ratified by the Board. The meeting was closed with a prayer of thanksgiving.

For the Board,  
C.J. NOBELS

Church  News

CALLED to Carman, MB:  
REV. P.K.A. DE BOER  
of Watford, ON.

ACCEPTED to Ottawa, ON:  
REV. G.H. VISSCHER  
of Houston, BC.

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# PRESS RELEASE

Press release of the meeting of the executive committee of the Board of Governors of the Canadian Reformed Teachers College Association, March 18, 1983.

The chairman, G. Nordeman calls the meeting to order and opens in the normal Christian manner. For the benefit of the treasurer, J. Gelderman, who is present at this meeting, the financial matters are moved to the top of the agenda. Mr. Gelderman gives a detailed explanation on the first six months of operation for the current school year. There is evidence that the rate of income is slowing down while expenses remained at the regular level. The treasurer urges the executive to really emphasize public relations in order to keep the Teacher's College "in front" of the member's eyes.

Next the draft budget comes under discussion. This budget is to be presented to the annual meeting. It is evident that the budget will increase quite a bit since a third full time staff member has been hired. It is also noted that this is expected to be the last large increase in the budget in the foreseeable future. It does mean, however, that some increase in membership fees may be required unless an increase in membership is realized. The financial aspects having been dealt with, Mr. Gelderman leaves the meeting.

Minutes of the meeting of Feb. 18, 1983 are adopted and business arising from these is dealt with. Incoming and outgoing correspondence is read and discussed where required. The public relations committee makes report. It is clear that there are quite a number of societies from which there is little or no support. Should support be received from these areas, this would significantly ease the present budgetary difficulty.

The principal makes his report. The lectures by Dr. Faber could not commence as scheduled since the enrollment was not large enough. Initially the interest shown had indicated that a greater enrollment was forthcoming. Preparations for the Annual meeting are made. Invitations to Governors were sent out. This year we will have the first graduates from the College. A semi formal graduation evening will be held at a date yet to be determined. A draft for a diploma is presented, discussed and adopted. The next executive meeting will be held D.V., April 15, 1983. The meeting is adjourned and closed in prayer.

For the executive,  
C.J. NOBELS

## OUR COVER

Niagara Falls, Ontario. Photo courtesy Ontario Ministry of Tourism.

# PARALIPOMENA

## UPDATING THE LIST OF SINS

### Outdated

As you know, we as churches are in the process of updating our list of sins. The one we used till now in the Form for the Holy Supper was somewhat outdated, some said. Who among us would be guilty of being "sorcerers, fortune-tellers, [people] who charm cattle [what is that?] . . . and who confide in such enchantment [what is that!]"? Whatever it is, it is outdated, isn't it? But then I open my daily newspaper and there is the column of fortune-telling. It wouldn't be there any longer if there were no interest in it. And the other day I read of secret cults who not only practice human sacrifices but do strange things with animals, to say the least. One wonders . . .

### Up to date

The new form has new things, new sins. Has it? I read, with all due respect, the results of the committee of experts, and I find there "modern" sins: "abuse of alcohol and drugs," and — ha! are we ever up-to-date — "practising homosexuality."

A word or two can be said about that, I think. First, if I read my Bible, I find that "abuse of alcohol" was the first sin after the flood. That's pretty old. About "homosexuality" I have two questions. Is it new? I think of Sodom and Gomorrah and of the Roman Empire as described in Romans 1. There was plenty of homosexuality in those olden days, maybe even more than nowadays. But my second question: What exactly is meant by "practising homosexuality." Of course I know what that is. But I have heard (without knowing all the ins and outs) that in the Christian Reformed Church, following their Dutch sister churches (not ours!), they make a distinction between "being by nature (?) homosexual" and "practising homosexuality." The latter is condemned according to our new form, but what about the former? If one in his mind, desires, and thoughts is a homosexual, is that not sin, not condemned by Scripture? I just ask; I just wonder. And I conclude: "updating" is not all that easy.

### "According to the Ten Commandments"

The old and the new list both are set up in the order of the Ten Commandments. I found a similar one somewhere else. We all may benefit by using it. I quote it because I like it better:

1. Have I placed God first in my life? Have I avoided all idolatrous and superstitious practises? Have I laughed at religion or the church or the holy ministry?
2. Have I taken God's Name in vain by cursing, swearing falsely or using an oath in trivial matters? Have I angered others so as to make them curse or blaspheme God? Have I gone to fortune-tellers?
3. Have I attended church and holy communion regularly? Have I paid attention while in church, listened, believed and lived accordingly? Have I neglected my daily devotions?
4. Have I honoured my parents and pastors? Have I shown reverence to the "hoary head"?
5. Have I borne hatred against my neighbour? Desired revenge? Am I "on the outs" with someone? Have I hurt someone in body, mind or feelings? Have I helped the sick and needy?
6. Have I associated with lewd companions? Did I entertain lascivious thoughts? Sing smutty songs? Tell or listen to unclean stories or look at indecent pictures? Did I dress modestly? Have I fled fornication in thought, word or deed?
7. Have I stolen anything? Or damaged property? Or been dishonest?
8. Have I borne false witness? Spoken evil of my neighbour? Engaged in gossip and slander? Judged harshly?
9. & 10. Have I coveted unjustly anything that belonged to my neighbour? Have I been envious?

Thus far that list. I know, it isn't perfect; it is even mixed up in the numbering of the commandments. I also realize that it is more for personal use than for official use for discipline. Still . . . keep it handy till the next Supper. Keep it handy always.

CHRONICLER

## A Ray of Sunshine



*Matt. 5.6. **Blessed are they that hunger. Hunger and thirst** I take to be an instance of synecdoche, for the toils of want, the lack of necessities, indeed the loss of one's rights. When Matthew writes **hunger . . . after righteousness** he gives a particular for the general. He heightens the indignity, that all their anxious sighs are straining after nothing but what is right. In other words, **Blessed are they** who confine their prayers to seek provision only of what is fair — and still languish like starving men. Though their torment of anxiety may bring them derision, yet is it a sure preparation for their blessedness, for they shall be filled at length. At the end God will hear their sighs, will satisfy their just desires, as it is His work to fill the hungry with good things, as we see in the canticle of the Virgin.*

*From a commentary on Matthew,  
by JOHN CALVIN*

### What Is Prayer

Is it measured words that are memorized,  
Forcefully said and dramatized,  
Offered with pomp and with arrogant pride  
In words unmatched to the feelings inside?  
No . . . prayer is so often just words unspoken  
Whispered in tears by a heart that is broken . . .  
For God is already deeply aware  
Of the burdens we find too heavy to bear,  
And all we need do is to seek Him in prayer  
And without a word He *will* help us to bear  
Our trials and troubles — our sickness and sorrow  
And show us the way to a brighter tomorrow . . .  
There's no need at all for IMPRESSIVE PRAYER  
For the minute we seek God HE IS ALREADY THERE.

HELEN STEINER RICE,  
from *Someone Cares*

*We received a letter from Mrs. Beintema, Chatham, telling us how much Charlie appreciated the many cards he received for his birthday. In the meantime he underwent corrective surgery on his feet. He had to walk in casts up to his knees for six weeks. His walking has greatly improved. Thank you, brothers and sisters, for giving Charlie many happy hours!*

*Mrs. Beintema also wrote us that Marinus Foekens, her brother, has moved to a different ward. This is an improvement. Please note the change of address below. Marinus is doing well. He really appreciates receiving cards. Charlie and Marinus are both keeping scrap-books.*



*I quote: "When Marinus comes home for the weekend he right away gets out the CLARION with his camp pictures in it, to show off.*

*It sure is nice that our special children have a place in the communion of saints. Thanks once again to everyone from all of us. Yours in Christ",*

*The Beintema and Foekens families.*

*The Lord willing, Marinus will celebrate his 31st birthday on April 19.*

### MARINUS FOEKENS

Oxford 2  
Southwestern Regional Centre  
Cedar Springs, ON

*Arlene De Wit hopes to celebrate her 22nd birthday on April 23, the Lord willing. Arlene attends workshop daily; she also keeps herself busy with knitting and rughooking. She is a good worker and last year received a trophy for that. Arlene is blind on one eye and sees a little with the other one. Happy Birthday, Arlene!*

### ARLENE DE WIT

Barnston Island  
Surrey, BC  
V3T 4W2

### Something to think about:

Whenever times for you are hard,  
Or troubles cloud your day,  
Whenever you've a heavy load  
To carry on life's way;  
Go forth, seek other burdened folk,  
And you shall find at length,  
In helping them, a secret joy,  
A new, undreamed of strength.

*Please send your requests to:*

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

## PATRIMONY PROFILE 11

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Not wishing to act too hastily, he also decided to ask the advice of others. In the first half of October 1833 — perhaps the 8th or 9th of the month — he wrote a letter to the Rev. D. Molenaar. In this letter de Cock mentions the correspondence with Hofstede de Groot and tells Molenaar that de Groot advised him “to establish a human church, a Calvinistic Dort Church, or whatever I wish to call it, but to leave the Divine Church of Jesus Christ, who has forbidden me to follow men, even though they should be more learned and more pious than Augustine and Calvin were in truth.” “One of the circuit ministers,” de Cock wrote, “said at our latest meeting that what our Catechism says in questions and answers 8 and 10, namely, that God is terribly displeased with our original as well as our actual sins, etc., was ungodly and blasphemous. No wonder that parents have great difficulties with having their children baptized by such ministers or going to the Lord’s Supper with them. Do their children have to remain unbaptized? About two weeks ago, when with the explanation of Lord’s Day 29 I quoted Article 29 of our Belgic Confession, one brother was so touched in his heart by it that after the service he demanded from me to be received as a member here — although he lived in another place — and to have his son who is already three or four years old baptized. I answered him that I considered his request fair and well-founded and promised that I would discuss the matter with the consistory and hoped to be enabled to act according to the Lord’s will and command. We did discuss it and a few members of the Consistory were somewhat hesitant. Therefore we decided to ask your sentiment in this regard and also that of Baron van Zuylen van Nijeveldt.”

The Rev. D. Molenaar was not slow in replying. Already on Oct. 12, 1833, he wrote a lengthy letter back. He informs de Cock that he was no longer able to consult with Baron van Zuylen van Nijeveldt, “since this dear and always-for-Zion-praying man had fallen asleep in the Lord the day before.” Molenaar then points to what he said in his *Address* in 1827 and declares that the situation proves more and more that he was right. There is, however, one change for the better: among the God-fearing there are more and more who are waking up. Restoration is not hopeless but the question is, “How are we to wage the battle?” Definitely with the armour of Ephesians 6, but the battle is mostly *negative*.

“The enemies,” Molenaar wrote, “wish to press us to attack, to leave the Netherlands Reformed Church, and to revolt, for then on our side the guilt and effects would be unoverseeable. A schism is the

most pernicious thing that can be imagined; I daily pray to the Lord to prevent it. It is not necessary either. We are and remain, for our own persons and together, in possession of the truth; if we therefore would leave the Netherlands Reformed Church, we would incur the risk of losing the truth and solidity; that is not necessary and should not happen.”

Reading the above, we can already predict what Molenaar’s advice is going to be. He certainly kept the promise he made when he had been discovered to be the writer of the *Address*. He writes that he is very much opposed to leaving children unbaptized, because such is contrary to the doctrine of the Church. He himself would have his child baptized even if a minister preached contrary to the doctrine of the Church and if that minister read the form in such a manner that he distorted it.

For this, Molenaar gives three reasons. In the first place, he says, it is his, not my, responsibility that he errs; secondly, it is the fault of the Church Order of 1816 and 1817 that such ministers have so much freedom, and as long as that is not corrected we cannot expect any improvement but only deterioration; and thirdly, I answer the questions of the form in the meaning and spirit of our Reformed Church and not according to the human distortion of it by some minister, something which he could be told beforehand, if necessary.

Molenaar would, therefore, object to baptizing a child from another congregation, “not because it is not permitted to do so — on the contrary, this very afternoon a child from a neighbouring congregation will be baptized here — but because one has to act carefully towards one’s neighbours and colleagues (even though they may be erring), especially with the existing church order, and one has to avoid all appearances of evil.” De Cock should rather, Molenaar writes, try to lead the father in the direction as outlined in Molenaar’s letter or wait till he conducts a service in that particular congregation. “It will be possible, methinks, to find something that can be done in the way of righteousness.”

As for another question posed by de Cock — how to deal with persons who show sufficiently in doctrine and conduct that they neither are God-fearing themselves nor side with the God-fearing but wholly oppose the truth — Molenaar says that the only thing that can be done is “to keep on teaching, admonishing, and warning them in the spirit of love and meekness.”

After such advice we are not impressed at all by Molenaar’s brave words at the end of his letter: “Finally, my brother, the Lord shall arise to battle. He is already standing with His winnowing fork in His hand to purge His threshing floor. The enemies see it with fear that more and more voices are raised. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church. Let us be of good cheer. Let us remain steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. When the enemy approaches like a stream, the Spirit will lift up the banner.”

From de Cock's answer it is clear that he is very disappointed in Molenaar, although he writes that he read the latter's letter with pleasure. In a very friendly and polite, but nevertheless firm manner, de Cock makes clear that he does not believe that the battle is to be negative on the part of the believers. That certainly comes from the flesh, not from the Spirit, he declares. And as for the caution to which Molenaar urged him, he says that "there is a caution which in His servants is displeasing to God, namely, that carnal caution to which our own nature and the devil continuously wish to pull us, and which fears man who can kill the body more than God who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell; and such caution, I fear, penetrates here when in this respect we forsake and leave the congregation of the Lord from love for or fear of man."

Concerning Molenaar's three arguments, de Cock remarks that the thesis that it is only the minister's responsibility that he errs conflicts with II Corinthians 6:14-18; that if men such as Wycliffe, Huss, Luther, and others had submitted to the anti-Christian Church government, they never would have been cast out and persecuted; and that de Cock himself had been thinking in the same direction, but that such a course no longer satisfied him, because it would require the possibility of thinking the best of each other, something which is no longer possible in the present situation where ministers have openly declared themselves to be enemies of the truth. De Cock also enclosed a few copies of his edition of the Canons of Dort.

#### *A Committee Visits*

From the Register of Baptisms it appears that on September 29, 1833, a child was baptized who did not belong to the Church at Ulrum, and the minute book of the consistory registers (on October 4, 1833) the decision to do so. Until the day of de Cock's suspension, a total of sixteen non-member children received holy baptism in Ulrum.

It did not take long for a complaint to reach the Classical Board of Middelstum. It came from the Rev. A.P.A. de Cloux of Vierhuizen. Reason: on November 3, 1833, de Cock had baptized two children from Vierhuizen. A second complaint came in on November 18, and a third one on December 9. Apparently no time should be lost.

The Classical Board did not know what to do with those complaints. As the Rev. Molenaar had already pointed out in his letter to de Cock, there was no provision in any regulation that prohibited such action. At a special meeting on November 8, 1833, the Board appointed a committee to investigate the matter in Ulrum. Word was received on the 11th of November that the committee would visit Ulrum on the 18th.

Hendrik de Cock was convinced that this was a matter which concerned not only the minister but also the rest of the consistory. Therefore the consistory was present in the parsonage when the commit-

tee arrived. No prayer was deemed necessary by the committee, for their only mandate, they declared, was to see whether the complaint was true and whether de Cock intended to continue the practice.

Rev. de Cock replied that he was of the opinion that parents have to present their children for baptism at such a place where they are convinced the Reformed doctrine is preached purely. Therefore he was going to continue baptizing such children unless a law could be pointed out to him with which such action would conflict.

Thereupon the committee declared that their mandate had been completed. One of the members, however, Dr. A. Rutgers of Breede, had a brief discussion with de Cock, but declared emphatically that he did so as a *private* person and not as a committee member. Apparently they discussed a few passages from Calvin's *Institutes*. Rutgers argued in an ensuing correspondence that Calvin is of the opinion that the apostles worked in the whole world but that ministers now are bound to work only in their own congregations.

From Rutgers' letter it is also obvious that he did not understand the *real* reason for the parents' requests and for de Cock's determination to continue baptizing children of any (believing) parent requesting it. He wrote to de Cock, "From this I conclude legitimately that you are to administer baptism in your own congregation . . . and are to consider the baptism administered by other ministers (belonging to the outward church of our Lord Jesus Christ, whatever their sentiments may be) as of equal value with your own administration of baptism. You *add* nothing to the worthiness of holy baptism, and they do not take away from it, even though they deviate from the doctrine in some part, since you are only the *hand* through which it is done. By baptizing children from other congregations you strengthen the parents in their prejudice that your administration of baptism is worth more than that of other ministers belonging to the outward Christian Reformed Church . . . . But certainly you reject with determination the error of the Donatists who measure the value and power of baptism by the worthiness of the one who administers it." Rutgers concludes with the wish that de Cock, before Monday, will add something to his statement that he will continue the practice, since the report of the committee would have to be sent away on that day.

In his reply, de Cock refutes Rutgers' appeal to Calvin and repeats his request "to be convinced, in case he should err, on the ground of God's Word and the basic laws of our Church." Dr. Rutgers seems not to have replied to that letter. The report will have been sent without any addition.

— *To be continued.*



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# school crossing

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## A. Current Trends of Equalization

Most of our schools use a salary grid to determine the annual salaries of their teachers. The grid or schedule, has a number of categories which indicate academic qualifications and a list of yearly increments, depending on years of teaching experience. A teacher who has a B.A. degree and has taught three years, can therefore be told exactly what the annual salary will be. Besides following such a system of determining salaries, most schools offer a number of benefits as well.

I wonder to what extent males and females are treated exactly the same, when it comes to wages and benefits? May a school board reserve the right to pay a male teacher more because he has to support a family? May a female teacher be excluded from the benefit package because her husband is obtaining them as well, although perhaps at a higher cost?

According to the *Employment Standards Act*, this is not only impossible, but also *illegal*. Recently, in an Ontario private school, a female teacher took the board to court because she was paid less than a male teacher even though the two did essentially the same kind of work and had similar qualifications. Section 33 of the *Employment Standards Act* states that:

No employer or person acting on behalf of an employer shall differentiate between his male and female employees by paying a female employee at a rate of pay less than the rate of pay paid to a male employee, or vice versa, for substantially the same kind of work performed in the same establishment, the performance of which requires substantially the same skill, effort and responsibility and which is performed under similar working conditions.

The argument of the board in question was that it would be derelict in its duty and responsibility, if it could not use the needs of each of its employees as *one important factor*, in determining salaries. A hearing into this controversy tossed out this type of reasoning and ordered the school board to "cease and desist from such conduct." According to the judge,

Section 33 clearly spelled out the equality of both males and females as far as remuneration was concerned. The conduct of the school board was found to be inappropriate. The non-compliance with Section 33 meant that the female teacher had to be paid an extra sum of money, so that she would receive the same annual stipend as the male teacher.

This current trend in equalization deserves further scrutiny and consideration by all our schools. According to the laws of the land, the needs of an employee do not play a role in the setting of an annual salary. Your comments to this precedent-setting court case are welcome.

## B. Grading our Schools

(Responses to the question: "What, according to your opinion, is the single most important problem facing our schools?")

Quite a few letters were received and I would like to thank everyone who took the time to formulate a concern. The replies were collated and ranked in order of priority. The results were as follows:

### 1. Lack of a good, solid curriculum.

What is taught in Canadian Reformed Schools is basically material from the public school system or from Christian Schools International. Not enough work is being done by our teachers and by the boards, to develop subject outlines based on our Reformed beliefs.

### 2. Lack of interest and improper attitudes.

There seems to be an increasing lack of interest in education by a number of members in our churches. This becomes especially evident when many stop their financial support after the children have gone through the system. Some parents show little interest in the education of their children and only get involved in school activities when something has gone wrong. Lack of interest means lack of finances and if this continues, there will be no future for our schools. Teachers do not appreciate their jobs sufficiently and demand too much in the way of salary increases and other benefits.

### 3. Lack of respect.

Courtesy and respect are not

taught sufficiently in our homes and schools. This often brings about poor attitudes and destruction of property.

### 4. Lack of qualified teachers.

Too many schools have suffered in the past from a lack of teachers. Those who do teach, are often not qualified or have little idea what it means to teach in a Reformed school.

All the comments could be placed into these four areas. Although some of us might disagree with the order of priority, not much needs to be said as to the validity of these concerns. Hopefully, as our school system grows and matures, these problem areas will be tackled in a responsible way!

## C. Christian Schools in the Public School System?

According to a recent newspaper article, public school trustees and teachers are considering opening a Christian alternative school for residents of the Waterloo region (Ontario). The main aim of a Christian school, operated by the Waterloo Board of Education, would be to provide "a Christian perspective on the normal curriculum." In addition to a stress on discipline and simple common courtesy, the school would emphasize Judeo-Christian values and daily physical education, according to a member of the committee studying the school's feasibility. Teachers at the school "would have a strong commitment to Jesus Christ" and would be chosen from among the board's existing teaching staff. The curriculum would devote more time to the Bible, prayer and the meaning of religious holidays. The committee reported that the school's cost would be minimal and that it could be opened in an existing school where there is a declining enrollment.

Whether the feasibility study is being done because of a decline in enrollment and a surplus of teachers, or because of a genuine concern for the moral fibre of our society is not made clear. A development such as this does stir some interest — perhaps the official recognition of private schools is not far off.

Until next month (D.V.)!

NICK VANDOOREN  
John Calvin School  
607 Dynes Road  
Burlington, ON

# our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

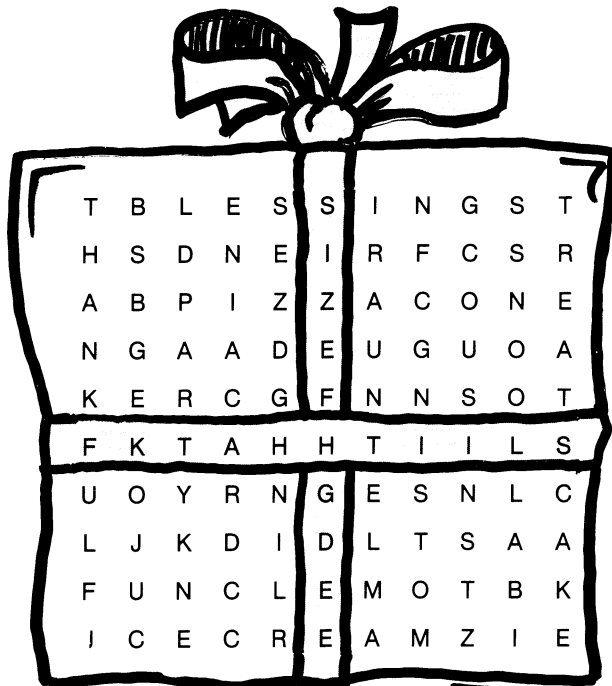
How do you celebrate birthdays at your house?  
 Does one of the family bake a special cake?  
 Do you make each other cards or little gifts?  
 How does your family celebrate birthdays?  
 Do you play jokes on each other wrapping up funny things?  
 Do your grandparents come and bring you presents?  
 Birthdays really are fun days.  
 Birthdays are fun days because we are happy and thankful the Lord gives us health and families that love us.  
 And lots of other blessings, too.  
 Too many to count.  
 No wonder birthdays are such happy days.  
 And I think you have fun with your friends besides all that! Am I right?

Busy Beaver *Pauline Leffers* made the design for a BIRTHDAY WORD SEARCH

treats  
 party  
 thankful  
 blessings  
 cake  
 joke  
 sing  
 fun  
 grand



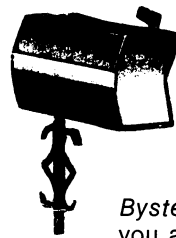
ice cream  
 balloons  
 card  
 cousins  
 aunt  
 uncle  
 friends  
 pizza



And now that we're talking about birthdays anyway, let's wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating a May birthday a very happy day with your family and friends.  
 May the Lord bless and keep you all in the year ahead.

# may

Henrietta Huinink	2	Les Haan	17
Sheila Van Sydenborgh	2	Cynthia Barendregt	19
Hilda Buitenhuis	4	Sandra Veenema	19
Sharon Knol	4	Carol Doesburg	20
Mary-Ann Van Woudenberg		Tracy Bos	21
Geraldine Hamoen	4	Cecile Van Woudenberg	21
Theresa Terpstra	5	Henny Oussoren	21
Jennifer Jelsma	6	Derek Hoogstra	23
Vicky Van Egmond	7	Becky Heemskerck	25
Lawrence Stam	7	Florence Visser	26
Linda Knol	8	Jim Witteveen	26
Yvonne Wiegers	10	Elaine Hamoen	27
Peter Kok	11	Anna-Lynn Vander Woude	27
Rona Kleefman	12	Donald Woltjer	29
Jody De Groot	13	Bryan Bos	31
Charlene Van Woudenberg	16		



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Cheryl Bysterveld*. Thank you for a very nice letter. Are you allowed to help on your farm, Cheryl? Bye for now. Write again soon.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Aimee Jagt*. You are a real Busy Beaver already, I see, sending us a big word search puzzle! Keep up the good work!

Did you get to eat maple sugar on your class trip, *Becky Heemskerck*? Thank you for a funny letter. It was nice to hear from you again.

Did you go to Bronte Park during your March break, *Debbie Jagt*? And do you practise your music every day? Thank you for the puzzles, Debbie.

And thank you for your puzzles, too, *Nicole De Haas*. That should keep the Busy Beavers busy for a while! It did me! Next time send the answers, too, all right? What are you singing in your choir, Nicole? Are you having a concert?

I'm very happy with your picture, *Teena Buzeman*. Thank you. Be sure to keep your membership card in a safe place! Do you practise your music every day, too, Teena?

Hello *Henry Sikkema*. Thank you for a very neat letter, and the quiz, too. How were your holidays, Henry?

### RIDDLE FUN

by Busy Beaver, *Debbie Jagt*.

1. What falls but never breaks?
2. What bow is impossible to tie?

