

*...and the glory  
of the Lord  
shone around*

Luke 2:9b

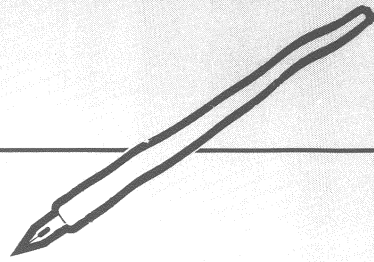


### Psalm 92:1-4 and 12-15

It is good to give thanks to the LORD,  
to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High;  
to declare Thy steadfast love in the morning,  
and Thy faithfulness by night,  
to the music of the lute and the harp,  
to the melody of the lyre.  
For Thou, O LORD, hast made me  
glad by Thy work;  
at the works of Thy hands I sing for joy.

The righteous flourish like the palm tree,  
and grow like a cedar in Lebanon.  
They are planted in the house of the LORD,  
they flourish in the courts of our God.  
They still bring forth fruit in old age,  
they are ever full of sap and green,  
to show that the LORD is upright;  
He is my rock, and there is no un-  
righteousness in Him.





## *I will remember. . . .*

*I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD;  
Yea, I will remember Thy wonders of old. I will meditate  
on all Thy works, and muse on Thy mighty deeds.  
Thy way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God?*

*Psalm 77:11-13*

The end of the year is always a time of remembrance. We call to mind the most important and significant events of the year past. We remember the happy occasions, the highlights, as well as the tragic events and dark spots in our life.

Somewhere else in this issue you will find a review of the most important things in our church life in the year of our Lord 1984.

This year has been a year of many remembrances. There were many things to be remembered, not only in our church life, but also in our national political life and in international developments.

This year has been characterized by an increase in violence. Police officers have been murdered as never before. In the international political arena we have heard of assassination attempts and "successful" assassinations. Economically we are in deep recession and the end is still not in sight.

Psalm 77 speaks about the deeds of the LORD. "I will remember Thy wonders of old." At first glance there seems to be not that much reason for shouting. Do we see the wonders of the LORD?

Still, if we "meditate on all His works" we really have plenty of reason to be thankful.

We are living in a free country and we can serve the Lord without any hindrance. The Lord is gathering His Church, also in this part of the world and He takes care of His people. He preserves His congregations.

Especially this year has been a year of remembrance for the churches here in Canada as well as in our sister-churches in The Netherlands. To begin with the latter: this year we remembered the fact that 150 years ago the Lord worked reformation in His Churches. In the first secession we are allowed to see the wondrous works of the Lord. It certainly was a dangerous situation. Freedom of preaching was allowed on the pulpit. The ministers did not have to pledge full allegiance to the three forms of unity *because* they are in accordance with the Word of God. They only had to accept the confession *in so far* as it was (in their own opinion) in accordance with the Word of God. In the first secession a church, wandering away from the true doctrine was brought back to the preaching of Holy Scripture.

We also remembered that 40 years ago the Lord again worked a reformation in His Churches. In the Liberation of 1944 the churches were set free from the binding of a human doctrine which contradicted the Word of God. The indubitable testimony of the Lord concerning His promises as a ground for baptism was replaced by a presumption of regeneration. The trustworthiness of baptism depended on the performance of man. If someone turned out to be an unbeliever, his baptism apparently had not been a "real" baptism. Again the church-

es were brought back to the old adage "Sola Scriptura."

Both events took place in "the old country," but 1984 was a remarkable year with many things to be remembered also for the church life in this part of the world.

It is 60 years ago that the Protestant Reformed Churches were formed. In the Christian Reformed Churches in this part of the world the Synod of Kalamazoo 1924 decided to make the doctrine of "Common Grace" the official doctrine of the churches. This led to a secession, which started in Grand Rapids. The result of this reformation was the existence of the Protestant Reformed Churches. However, the sad thing is that these same churches in 1950, in the so-called "Declaration of Principles," took a stand which came very close to what had caused the Liberation in The Netherlands. This triggered a new reformation and resulted in the existence of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches.<sup>1</sup>

This year it was 30 years ago that the first National Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches was held. On November 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9, 1954 in Carman, Manitoba, the brothers came together. It was still a small group. Many things have happened since. From the seven ministers who were present at the first synod, three have passed away namely, the Revs. G. Ph. Piefers, H. Stel and J. van Popta. Two of them are retired from active service namely, the Revs. W. Loopstra and G. van Dooren. Two others are about to retire within a year namely, the Revs. L. Selles and W.W.J. van Oene. (The names and titles are mentioned and spelled according to the Acts of Synod.)

Many things have changed. The blessings of the Lord have been manifold. Every year is called a year of the Lord, Anno Domini. Especially this year we had many things to remember and to be thankful for. The future might seem to be dark, but we know better. It is the future of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is coming to make all things new. His glorious return will be the end of the history of mankind and the beginning of a new dispensation. It will be the final destination of mankind, to serve our God and Creator eternally on a new earth, to serve Him in perfection. Then no "reformation" will be necessary any more. We will be all one in Him who has made us His own possession.

At the end of this year we will meditate on all the works of the Lord, we will muse on His mighty deeds. His way is Holy. What god is great like our God?

W. POWELSE

<sup>1</sup>In the issue August 10 we dealt more extensively with these matters. In *The Standard Bearer* the (Protestant Reformed) Professor H.C. Hoeksema made some comments on our article "Backgrounds of the Liberation." We hope to reflect on his remarks in the near future.

## Luke 2:9

*“ . . . and the glory of the Lord shone around them.”*

### Darkness of the world

Dr. Morgentaler, the man of the abortion clinics, won his case before an earthly Ontario court. The abortions performed in his Toronto clinic were declared not to be a criminal offence. Although a human jury did not condemn his murderous work, we know that the divine Judge, who is also the Giver of life, has said: “You shall not kill.” This concerns also the unborn.

Murder of unborn children is a clear sign of the rejection of God the Creator and of Christ Jesus the Redeemer of life. Since Christ is the light that shines in the darkness, rejection of this light makes people wander around in darkness. This evil of abortion, in which modern man plunges himself, very often leads to dark despair. How can a mother kill her own child and not feel guilty deep inside her soul? How can a man go on and on with the murder of infants and remain truly human? Abortion is darkness and leads to darkness.

Over against this black darkness of the world that is instigated in hell by the deceiver and murderer from the beginning, we place in this article the glory and light in Ephratha's field shining around the shepherds in the night in which Jesus, the Son of God and Saviour of the world was born. While the shepherds were keeping watch over their flock in that dark night, suddenly the glory of the Lord shone around them.

### God's glory in the Old Testament

What is that, the glory of the Lord? In the time before the birth of Christ, God's people used a word for the glory of God which word we do not find in the Old Testament, as we do not find the words “triune” and “trinity” in the New Testament either. And like the word “triune” expresses so well the faith of the Christian church, so that word for the glory of God expressed so clearly the riches of this glory. This word is “shechinah.”

“Shechinah” means literally “that

which dwells.” It is derived from the verb that means “to dwell.” Another word, also derived from this verb, is the word for tent-tabernacle. The tabernacle is the dwelling place of the LORD. He dwells in His tabernacle. The “shechinah,” “denotes the visible majesty of the divine Presence, especially in reference to God's dwelling between the cherubim on the mercy seat in the tabernacle and the temple of Solomon. . . . It is frequently used as a periphrasis for God to indicate the presence of God among His people.” The Scripture passages on which the meaning of this word is based “. . . convey the idea of a most brilliant and glorious light, enveloped in a cloud, with usually only the cloud visible, but in some instances, the glory itself becoming apparent,” (The New Smith's Bible Dictionary).

In glorious majesty, enveloped in a cloud, the LORD appeared to His people Israel on mount Sinai, when He made His covenant with them. At the consecration of the finished tabernacle, the glory of the LORD filled it. The same happened when King Solomon dedicated the temple to the LORD. When Moses drew near to the LORD and entered the cloud and later on came back to the people, his face shone brightly.

This glory of the LORD, or this glorious divine Presence among His people holds the promise of blessing, of help and salvation, of mighty tender care and effective love, although this glorious majesty of the LORD in the midst of His people can also become a consuming fire, namely, when people harden themselves in rebellion against Him. In Isaiah 2 we read, “And men shall enter the caves of the rocks and the holes of the ground, from before the terror of the LORD, and from the glory of His majesty, when He rises to terrify the earth.”

Also the prophet Ezekiel speaks of the glory of the LORD. It was terrible for God's people, when this glory of the LORD, seen in a vision by the prophet as dwelling above the cherubim wagon, left the temple and the city of David and the land of Israel because of the wickedness

of the people. However, in the last chapters of his book we read that Ezekiel saw a return of God's people out of captivity, a rebuilding of the temple and the return of the glory of the LORD. When God's glory left, salvation left and ruin took its place. With the return of the LORD's glory, His favour, His blessing, His steadfast loving care came back.

Not only Ezekiel, also Isaiah prophesied about the coming of the glory of the LORD with its salvation. For instance in chapter 40, we read about the coming herald who would pave the way for the LORD. And then “. . . the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together.” In chapter 60 we read those well-known words: “Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the LORD will arise upon you, and His glory will be seen upon you.”

One more aspect must have our attention. The majestic brightness of God's glory appeared to Israel enveloped in a cloud, both at mount Sinai, and in tabernacle and temple. Moses and Elijah were not allowed to behold God face to face in His glorious majesty. The conclusion of the apostle Paul is that God dwells in an unapproachable light. No man, no sinful man, can see God in all His glorious light and live.

We can conclude that the glory of the LORD in the Old Testament is an indication of the LORD's own “Personal” glorious presence in the midst of His covenant people for their well-being and salvation.

### God's glory at Christ's birth

When we now turn to the event of the birth of Christ Jesus, and the glory of God revealed at that occasion, we first point at the great contrast here. The birth of the Lord Jesus was under very humble circumstances. He was born in a stable, because there was no place for Him and His mother and “father” in the inn. This birth under such humble and poor cir-



cumstances was fully in accordance with Isaiah 53, "He had no form or comeliness that we should look at Him, and no beauty that we should desire Him. He was despised and rejected by men. . . ." (vv. 2,3). Nobody would conclude from this humble birth that here the great Son of David, the Messiah, also God's Son, was born.

However, if there ever has been a reason to salute the birth of a prince, it was the birth of this great Prince of peace. People, His people, had to know the great work of redemption of Israel's God that was started in this birth. They had to know who was born: the great Seed of the woman. People had to know who this Child was. But there was only one who could tell. That was the LORD God Himself.

When God works His great redemptive works, He adds His explaining prophetic word, so that His people may understand what He is doing. That is what we have also in Luke 2:6-14 (See Year-end issue of *Clarion*, Vol. 22, 1973). In vers 6 and 7 Luke describes the fact of the birth of the Christ, while in vv. 8-14 he gives us God's explanatory message regarding this birth. This means that the revelation of the glory of God to the shepherds is part of that divine prophetic explanation.

The only begotten Son of the Father, God the Son, took upon Himself the nature of man. He came into the flesh to dwell among His people and to redeem them. Here it became true in all fulness: Immanuel, God is with us. It is that truth which was expressed in the appearance of the glory of God.

There are two aspects that make this appearance of the glory of God at the occasion of the birth of Christ even more remarkable. The first is that the text says that the glory of God was not shining around the angels but around the shepherds. These herdsmen were in the middle of that glory. It appeared there to and for them and it enveloped them. They were taken up, so to speak, in the glory of God. They dwelled in it. The second aspect is that the glory of God was here not hidden in a cloud, but shining around them in great brightness. It made them fear. They were frightened. But they were not consumed. For the glory of God had come with salvation and joy. These two aspects underline that joy and full salvation in God's glorious presence.

However, around the shepherds the glory of God was only for a few moments. Then it disappeared again. But these short moments were a promise for the coming and remaining glory of God in which all those who loved the appearance of the Lord will walk on a new earth in all eternity. But it is not only for later on. The

apostle Paul writes that the believers, living in the freedom of the Spirit of the Lord, "with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being changed into His likeness, from one degree of glory to another." The glory that comes is already present, although it is hidden from the eyes of many.

Yet this present glory is visible for those who have eyes to see. It is the glory of the living Christ working through the power of His Holy Spirit in those who through faith are connected with Him as the branches are with the vine. It is the glory of a true redeemed Christian life for the Lord and in love for the neighbour. It is the glory of walking in the light of Christ that shines through that Christian life. Heavenly power breaks away the darkness of unbelief, sin, and judgment.

It is our calling to let that light shine in a dark world — in our dark world — with its desecration of life, its rebellion,

its murder, its new (im)morality, its greed, deceiving and lying.

The light of Christ Jesus, the Saviour, does not shine in the little light bulbs with which a pagan Christmas tree is decorated, and with which the houses are adorned during these dark days at the end of the year. That light shines into the darkness through a redeemed life of obedient faith, in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour.

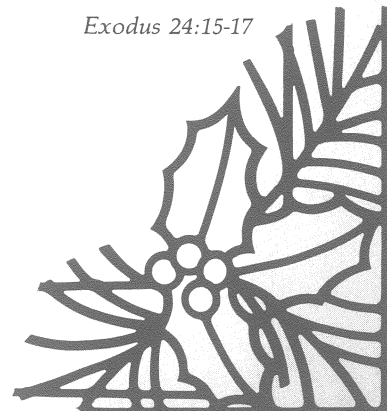
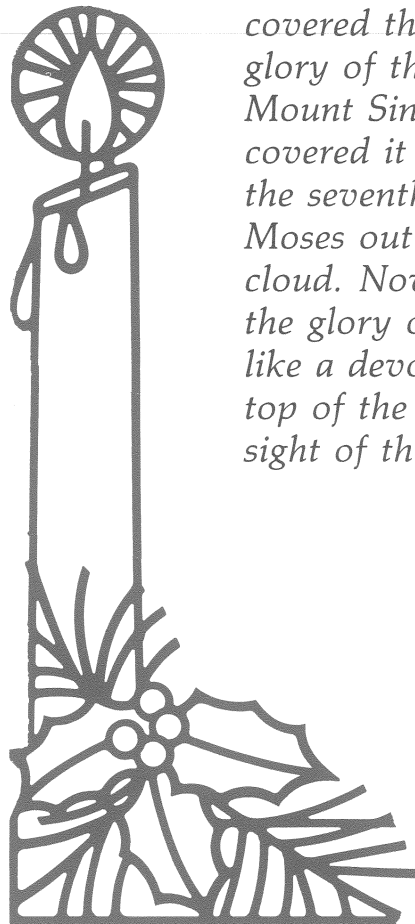
Light, love, and life belong together, like darkness, hatred and murder or death. And these oppose each other in that enmity of the beginning between woman and serpent, Christ and Satan, church and world, faith and unbelief.

May that light of Christ that protects life in love shine forth in and from our homes and lives to the honour of our Saviour.

J. GEERTSEMA

*Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD settled on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days; and on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. Now the appearance of the glory of the LORD was like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the sight of the people of Israel.*

Exodus 24:15-17



# Christmas with Morgentaler: A celebration of life in a world of death

## Christmas — what is it?

What is Christmas all about? There are those who say that it is all about gifts and giving, about shopping and debt accumulation, about generosity and benevolence. This may be called the materialistic perspective. There are others who say that Christmas is really a social affair, a time when we let bygones be bygones, when old grudges and complaints are drowned in a sea of liquor and in an atmosphere of backslapping frivolity. Christmas dinner follows Christmas dinner, family gatherings become all the rage, and wistful thoughts are exchanged about why can the world not always be like this, full of merriment and bliss, albeit with the aid of liquids of endless variety.

Is this what Christmas is all about? I guess if you are traveling the road of agnosticism and unbelief, it is. Nevertheless, such is not and can not be the Christian response. This is not to say that believers ignore the aspects of giving and fellowship altogether; however, these aspects are tempered by the knowledge

that these things are not the first and primary things. Christmas is not predominantly a materialistic or social event, it is the remembrance and celebration of a redemptive event. Then we look back over the centuries and we recall what God has done for His people and the cause of their salvation. We recall the fact that in the fullness of time "God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons" (Gal. 4:4,5).

## Christmas — a many-sided feast

Only now when we examine that redemptive event closely we discover that there are many currents running through it. The birth narratives of the Lord Jesus reveal a Davidic emphasis (cf. Matt. 1:20; Luke 1:27, 32, 69; 2:4). They also reveal an emphasis upon the Holy Spirit (cf. Matt. 1:18,20; Luke 1:15,35,41,67; 2:26, 27). Then too one can say that they have in them a temple motif (cf. Luke 1:9,22; 2:27,37).

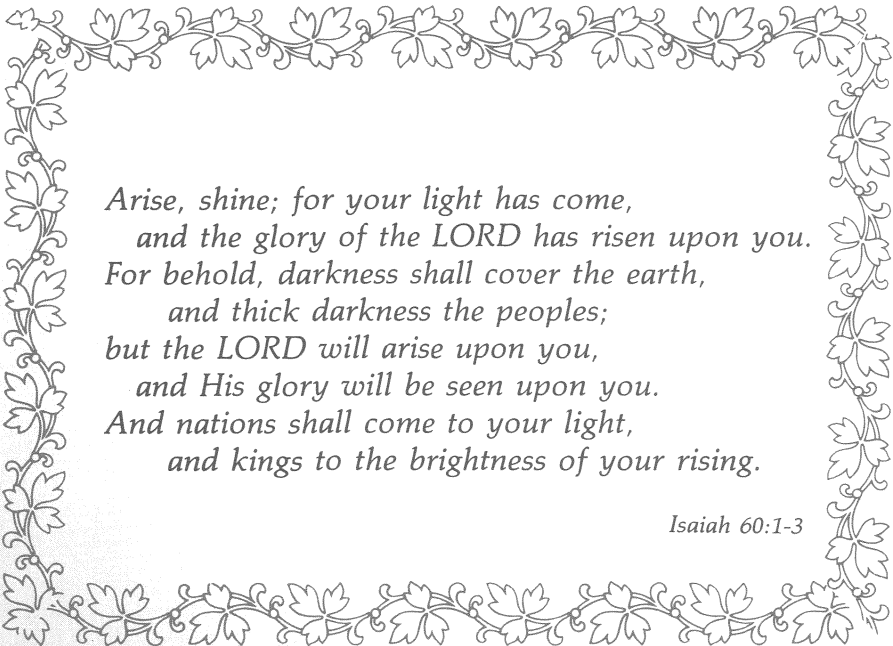
## Christmas — a celebration of life

Amidst all of these motifs, and more that we have not touched on, there is one that we would like to draw your attention to especially, and that has to do with life: human conception, fetal growth and infant birth. The gospels relate the miraculous conception and birth of John the Baptist, and the even more miraculous birth of the Saviour. The first birth comes about because the Lord blesses the two human agents, Zechariah and Elizabeth, at an age when those kind of blessings are no longer expected or deemed possible. It is reminiscent of Abraham and Sarah. The second birth comes about in a way that no man would ever deem possible or predictable, through the agency of God's Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary. It has no parallel anywhere.

Yet these narratives do more than spotlight on miraculous conceptions, they also touch on fetal existence. Elizabeth feels the babe leap in her womb (Luke 1:41,44). In every way she and Mary recognize the humanness of the offsprings that they carry in their wombs. They are with child, with children whom God has given and whom God will use for the salvation of His people.

Finally, these gospel accounts climax in the birth of new life. John is born and there is great rejoicing in the household of Zechariah and Elizabeth. The Lord Jesus is born and is greeted with the rejoicing of the angels. Shepherds come and go glorifying and praising God. Wise men come to worship and to offer him gifts.

Hence we can say that one of the things that characterizes Christmas is a celebration of life. At this time of year we recollect the fact that the birth of God's Son constitutes the greatest birth ever. Never has the conception and birth of a child had greater implications for Him and for the world. For Him it would mean an existence on this earth of humiliation and recrimination, of suffering and death, ultimately, of resurrection and glory. For this world it would mean the fullest dawning of God's salvation, of the need for



*Arise, shine; for your light has come,  
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.  
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth,  
and thick darkness the peoples;  
but the LORD will arise upon you,  
and His glory will be seen upon you.  
And nations shall come to your light,  
and kings to the brightness of your rising.*

*Isaiah 60:1-3*



repentance and faith, of the offer of life in the deepest, broadest, richest sense.

### Christmas — life amidst death

Christmas should thus remind us of life, of the coming of the Son of life to bring life to this world dead in sin. Nevertheless, here is the great contradiction, men love death more than life. Modern man wilfully advocates and puts into practice a policy that calls for the extermination of human life. Millions of unborn infants are murdered and never receive the opportunity to experience life in all of its fullness.

Dr. Henry Morgentaler sets up one abortion clinic after another. He is charged with one offense after another. He is acquitted by one jury after another. He is allowed to continue his butchery.

And he is not alone. Across this nation of ours he is joined in his efforts by colleagues who are involved in the same infamous practice as he, only they do not seek the limelight. Today there are many doctors who wear two faces, a face of life and a face of death. In the same day, they use their skill, knowledge and training both to save life and to destroy life.

Is it thus any wonder that we speak of Christmas 1984 as a "celebration of life in a world of death"? We are called upon to celebrate the greatest birth in all of history but we cannot escape the bitter irony that all around us birth is denied because of human intervention and destruction.

### Abortion as an attack upon God

Surely, such a development cannot help but call forth a number of reactions. Among all of God's people it must create a response of disgust and anger. With God, it must provoke an even greater displeasure. For if we study the Word of God then we are called upon to say a number of basic things about human life.

#### a. Human life finds its ultimate origin in God

There is no mistaking the fact that Genesis 1 and 2 present God as the Maker, Creator and Inventor of man. Contrary to the opinions making the rounds today man is not a product of chance; life is not the result of a process of spontaneous generation. Scripture says that man came into existence by the direct command of God and by the direct activity of God. "The Lord God formed man of dust from the ground; and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (Gen. 2:7).

Man is God's handiwork. He is the potter, we are the clay. Clay is never allowed wilfully to destroy clay, for that would violate one of the basic rules that God has established. Scripture teaches

that for man it's "hands-off" what God has made, unless the Lord commands otherwise.

What this means as well is that a proper view of human life rests on a proper view of God. When the latter is absent, the former can so easily be compromised. An evolutionist will have fewer scruples about abortion because his view of life is accidental. Man's existence is an accident. There is no order, no plan, no purpose to life, because God is not. In this regard one begins to see why a man such as Morgentaler can do what he does. After all, he is a signatory to the Humanist Manifesto II which says, "We can discover no divine purpose or providence for the human species. . . . No deity will save us, we must save ourselves." You see, God is dead, the individual is king. And if that individual wants to practice abortion, euthanasia, suicide and sexual permissiveness, why not?

#### b. Human life finds its uniqueness in God

Connected to the previous point is also the fact that God the Creator, when He made man, made him unique. Man does not belong to the animal kingdom. He is not an advanced primate. God made him with a body and a soul. God breathed into him the breath of life. God made him to reflect His image and likeness. Man is special.

There are many Christians who state that one of the strongest arguments against abortion is the fact that man is made in the image of God. Hence, abortion entails the destruction of God's image bearer. Now I can respect and understand this argumentation; however, I would call into question its correctness.

It is said of Adam and Eve that they were made in this image, but can that still be said automatically of fallen man? I suppose it all depends on how you define this "image." A close look at Genesis 1 leads us to conclude that image there refers to *man's person and man's task*. God makes man with certain qualities, abilities, characteristics (the Catechism speaks of "righteousness and holiness") and then God expects man to use these gifts in the exercise of his dominion.

We often say that man as the image of God is comparable to the position of the Governor-General in Canada, and that is a fitting comparison. Only we must also call to mind that not just anyone is appointed a Governor-General. Certain qualities are needed. So it is with man. God created him for a task, an office, a position, but he also gave him the tools and abilities to do the job.

Only, and here the fly is in the soup. Man rebelled against his God and that rebellion entailed both a perversion of his abilities and a denial of his office. Man,

the image of God, no longer reflects that image in his fallen nature. From Genesis 5 we learn that while Adam was made in the likeness of God, his son Seth was made in the likeness of Adam, in his fallen likeness. A corrupt race produces a corrupt offspring.



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Yet, that is not the end of the tale. For in and through Christ Jesus it is possible for man to be restored to this image. Through the ministry of His Word and Spirit man can be remade and redirected. He is clothed with the gifts of the Spirit and he is able to exercise that three-fold office of prophet, priest and king in this life.

What does all of this mean for the issue of abortion? It implies that we should use that expression "the image of God" with care. We can say too little about human life, as is the overwhelming case today in our society, but we can also say too much. Man is unique, of that there is no doubt. Whether he or she will reflect God's image remains to be seen and depends on their reconciliation with God.

*c. Human life finds its purpose in God*

Why did God create man? In part, we have answered that question already. God made him originally to be His image, and God still wants man to be that image through the power of Christ. He wants man to serve Him, to have fellowship with Him, to glorify Him in all His words and works. Seen in this light, abortion is that awful deed that robs God of His due.

**The protection of life**

Due to all of these factors God demands of man and society that His creative power be respected. He issues His Sixth Commandment and outlaws murder. He attacks the root cause of murder by calling upon man to love his

neighbour as himself. He makes murder a capital offense punishable by death. "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:6 — note: the use of the past tense here "God made man in His own image", not "makes"). He gives the governing authorities the power of the sword to protect human life (Rom. 13:4).

Naturally there are some who argue that there is an inherent contradiction here. "How can you oppose abortion and at the same time leave the door open for capital punishment?" We can do so because the intent of the law, as Scripture defines it, should be to protect and to promote human life. That is something that most humanists and secularists do not understand. They argue that a woman has a right to abort her fetus and that no criminal should ever be executed. What this means is that in the end they have effectively placed themselves in a position where all life is threatened. They are willing to forego the right of the fetus to live and the rights of citizens for protection. They side not with the wronged but with the wrongdoers. They protect not the innocent, but the guilty. It is a travesty of justice that they promote.

**Unborn human life and God's protection**

Having seen now that human life is to be protected, the question may be asked, "Does the same apply to unborn human life?" The testimony of Scripture

is unequivocal. Psalm 139:13 states, "Thou didst form my inward parts, Thou didst knit me together in my mother's womb." Job 10:8,11 declares "Thy hands fashioned and made me. Thou didst clothe me with skin and flesh, and knit me together with bones and sinews. Thou hast granted me life. . . ." Jer. 1:5 says "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you."

Surely these passages indicate clearly that God's involvement with human life begins very early, before birth, in the womb, from conception on, even before conception. Hence to set an artificial date and to say that after so many weeks no more abortions can be performed is to set an exceedingly arbitrary standard. Human life is to be protected and promoted before birth and after birth. That is a Biblical absolute.

It is also an absolute that society undermines at great risk to itself. If the unborn can have their lives extinguished for what are mostly selfish or economic reasons, there is little doubt that those same kinds of flimsy criteria can be applied to the severely retarded, to the aged, to the infirm.

Be on your guard, readers. Although we may be preoccupied these days with a celebration of life, we live in a world of death. We may *look back* through the centuries and marvel at God's faithfulness and love as demonstrated in the sending of His Son, but we should also *look up* and comfort ourselves in the knowledge that the Child has become a Man, the God-Man who reigns at this very moment on God's right hand.

Finally, we may draw strength from the fact that when we *look forward* we see that a day will dawn soon when Christ will return to right all wrongs, to restore all things, to renew all of life. We are moving forward to that day when all of God's children shall experience a celebration of life in a world of LIFE.

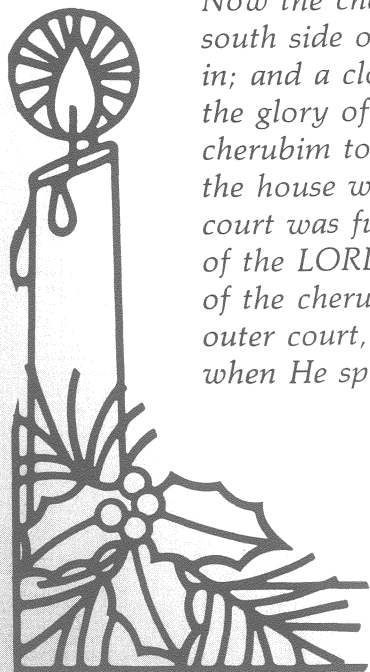
**The road ahead**

In the meantime, the call goes forth to fight the good fight of faith. God's people do not wait for the coming of God's great Son with their arms folded, their feet raised and their eyes closed to the tragedies and injustices of this life. No, they let their light shine. They speak for the truth. They use all of the avenues at their disposal to right the wrongs that are being done. They pray for strength and boldness, for wisdom and for faithfulness. They pray for the coming of the great Judge who will condemn every deed of violence and every assault upon God's majesty and power.

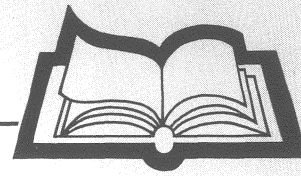
J. VISSCHER

*Now the cherubim were standing on the south side of the house, when the man went in; and a cloud filled the inner court. And the glory of the LORD went up from the cherubim to the threshold of the house; and the house was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the glory of the LORD. And the sound of the wings of the cherubim was heard as far as the outer court, like the voice of God Almighty when He speaks.*

Ezekiel 10:3-5







“Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” Isaiah 43:19a

## Wonder of Wonders

In his dramatic appeal to the forlorn exiles of Israel and Judah, the Prophet Isaiah is also called to announce the new thing that the LORD will do for His people. So great is this new and coming wonder of the LORD that all His former wonders pale in contrast with it. The *chedeshah*, or new thing, far surpasses anything the LORD has done before. And although there are hints of a parallel between the old and new things, Isaiah actually accentuates the contrast. In the light of the new thing, the former things may well be forgotten, v. 18.

Of course, the former things are not to be entirely forgotten. However, they are regrouped and placed in a new perspective: they are now to be qualified by the new thing which the LORD will do. The exodus from Egypt, the wonders in the wilderness, the mighty acts of strength at the Red Sea and the Jordan, the great battles in the promised land — all these wonders are pushed by their Author into a corner to make room for the most startling and most upsetting of all wonders — the *chedeshah*, or new thing.

What is the new thing? And how is it new — different than anything that happened before? For we cannot help but recognize that when the prophet proceeds to describe the new thing, words fail him. He speaks of something which miraculously springs forth, a perceived thing “made out of things which do not appear,” Heb. 11:3. But the pattern appears to parallel the miracles and wonders of old: a way in the wilderness, a river in the desert, honey from the rock. But what is really *new* in all this? Indeed, did not the fathers sing of these mighty works of old, in similar language, with similar terms, Psalm 74:13ff., 77:19ff., 78:12ff., and so on? These wonders were great! God performed the impossible, removed the obstacles that defied all human strength. Still His people forgot Him, and attributed His works to other gods.

Here is where the difference arises between past wonders and the new, coming wonder. The new wonder is the *final* wonder — the wonder that will make all the other wonders recede to the background. The other wonders may be forgotten, this wonder by its very nature will be unforgettable, an eternal memorial. As a wonder it will order, collect, and far surpass all former wonders; at the same time, it will, as it were, overturn all the former things, introducing a *reversal* in the pattern, a new and definitive way which will declare and prove the things of old as obsolete and fading.

The first rays of this new wonder were already visible in Isaiah’s day, especially in the *universal* scope of the coming redemption. The anointing of Cyrus, the defeat of Babylon, the return of the exiles — these were events affecting the whole known world. But they do not complete the image of the *chedeshah* that Isaiah is speaking about. That picture fades fast, and

the camera reaches ahead to the dawn of the great redemption in the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ. His coming, His birth is the new thing springing forth, the miraculous and wondrous thing which forms the *raison d’être* of all the former things.

Here, too, we see the break in the pattern. Here the LORD does not choose the way of strength and power, the way of force and might. In this final, all encompassing wonder He only does one thing — the new thing; the thing that is also hidden and unseen, cf. 48:6. In His incomprehensible way, He touches the womb of the virgin Mary. This is the final sign that triumphs over all other signs. For what can be more hidden than this? How could the LORD be less conspicuous? Indeed, while all the other signs laud His majestic power and presence in the world, with this sign, the new thing, His entrance in the world is matched with His exit, His coming with His going. For from this point on, the dramatic wonders taper off rapidly.

All this is no surprise, when we consider the import of the virgin birth. This is the final sign — it is also more than a sign. It’s the sign that qualifies and determines all other signs. For the whole history of God’s mighty deeds was no more than a history of signs and tokens which were meant to confirm the *promise*. All God’s mighty acts were visible proofs accompanying the Word, showing that the promise was *trustworthy* and true. But with this sign, the reversing sign, the new thing, all other signs now find their fulfilment. Now the promise is fulfilled! Here we have more than a sign; “for the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” Now God may be with us in a new way, which puts the pattern of His old way of presence aside. Now God holds His might and power behind the clouds. His greatest sign culminates with His lightest touch — He “visits” the virgin’s womb.

It’s precisely His choice of this new way which proves to us that Zion is not delivered by a show of force and strength, but by *right* and truth. Indeed, looking back through this sign, we can see all His mighty acts as a revelation of God’s justice, truth, and right. And this is all the more confirmed when the Lord Jesus takes our sins upon Himself, and sacrifices His life at Golgotha.

Therefore we who share the first fruits of this new thing can only wait with eager longing for the final stage of it to be revealed, the last great *chedeshah* of victory and triumph. For the arrival of the final stage represents another great *reversal*: what began in hiding, will then be fully revealed, and the new life of glory, sealed and confirmed in the wonder of Bethlehem and Golgotha will be freely given to all who believe, “and all flesh shall see it together,” Isaiah 40:5.

J. DEJONG

# Drugs<sub>3</sub>

## 5. A general problem

When we discuss the problem of drug abuse and drug addiction, we have to realize that this is not just a problem of the young people or of only the "lower class" for that matter. On the contrary. It is a general problem, closely related to our modern society and its affluence. It is a result of luxury, wealth and a lack of moral values.

Especially when we realize that alcohol, tobacco, tranquilizers and sleeping pills belong to these drugs as well, we feel how common the problem is. It would be hypocritical to eliminate alcohol and tobacco from this list. A great number of people — also highly respected persons — are addicted to cigarettes and unable to quit smoking, although the health hazard is undeniable. In all kinds of families and during all kinds of parties too much alcohol is used. Not only the recognized alcoholic is addicted to drugs but in many cases the so-called "social drink" has become a "habitual use," even to such an extent that people lose control of their faculties for a while. Things are done, said, and tolerated, which under "normal" circumstances would be considered improper and unacceptable. In all these cases we are dealing with excessive use and, in many cases, it is a form of addiction to drugs. It is a lost battle to fight the abuse and addiction to drugs among the young people, as long as we do not recognize this problem and reconsider our attitude regarding these matters.

In the past the use of alcohol was found especially among poor people, in the "lower class." They tried to forget their problems and to find comfort in their habitual drinking. Nowadays excessive drinking has become a general accepted phenomenon and even a "status-symbol." Also an excessive use of tranquilizers and sleeping pills has become part of modern life.

Affluence has not brought happiness for all people. It rather has made life meaningless and empty. The older generation seems to indulge in luxury, apathy and normlessness. Still they do not feel happy. Many are living a double life. They keep up appearance but in the meantime,

behind the scenes, it is like an apple rotten at its core. Broken marriages can be found everywhere and corruption and indecency pops up also among prominent people, up into the highest ranks. Many young people are noticing this development with amazement and it turns them

## 6. Peer pressure

Although many young people (and also adults) pretend that they do not care about what others are saying or thinking of them, the opposite is true. Peer pressure and the desire to be part of the group is a very strong factor in the general pat-

***"It is a general problem, closely related to our modern society and its affluence. It is a result of luxury, wealth and a lack of moral values."***

tern of behaviour. No one likes to be singled out. Especially young people are very eager to be popular, respected, and esteemed by their friends. The aspect of social acceptance is much stronger than we oftentimes realize. That counts also for the use of drugs. The environment is

off. They consider such a society hypocritical and they try to find their own solution. Life does not make any sense to them, and they try to escape reality. They try to find comfort and happiness in a world which they know is not real, but to them is more attractive than the reality.





extremely important. Most children do not like the drug and its effects the first time they use it. It makes them sick, but peer pressure prevails. A marijuana cigarette (a stick) is passed on from the one to the other (a joint stick). Those who refuse to join this group event are teased and the others ask them "when do you finally get mature?" They do not like to be a spoilsport and give in. Not because they like the drug or desire its effect but simply because they cannot stand the peer pressure.

Parents should be aware of this effect. They have to show their concern at least in two ways. In the first place they have to watch the environment their children are living in. In the school they attend as well as the friends they have, the place they go for entertainment and the job site they have to go to. In the second place parents have to speak very openly and frankly with their children about these things. They should try to help them to overcome the peer pressure or even better, to reverse the effect. In sticking together with the proper friends, and supported by their parents, the young people can try to use peer pressure to go in the other direction, namely, to stop the spreading of drug abuse and to discourage others to take part in it. However, in order to be able to do so, parents have to be aware of what is going on. Closing the eyes to reality does not serve any purpose, but makes things worse.

## 7. Slavery

Drugs are oftentimes presented as something that makes one feel free, relaxed, happy and joyful. It is supposed to let people forget for a while the dullness of everyday life and to give them a "kick". Some even believe that such a "trip" makes them better able to function in normal life. That might be true to a certain extent for sleeping-pills, used under medical supervision. To have a good night's rest can be helpful and necessary to function properly in daily life. However, this should never be done without medical supervision, to avoid addiction and undesired side-effects.

This can never be said with respect to illegal drugs. The drug may induce a dreamlike feeling, but it can never replace or change reality. It only causes the user to feel even more miserable afterwards. When someone uses drugs to escape reality and to forget the misery of his actual situation, he will only fall back in a

greater distress. Instead of feeling relaxed and being set free, he is enslaved by the drug. He has to take a new and even higher dose. The reality becomes more and more frightening and finally there is a point of no return.

The drug seems to give relieve and entertainment but it is actually only a matter of loosing control over someone's own faculties. The user has become a slave instead of a human being. Someone com-

***“Real comfort and peace of mind, for those who are desperate, can only be given by Jesus Christ.”***

pared the effect of using drugs like cannabis and LSD with driving a car with a broken steering-shaft. With this car you can drive in every direction, but you have no control over it. It is very unlikely that the car will bring you at a place you want to be. That is a dangerous and life-threatening situation.

## 8. Professional help

Someone who is addicted to drugs needs help. That counts for every stage of addiction. For the habitual user as well as for those who are physically dependent. What the most appropriate type of help is, depends on the circumstances.

Sometimes the question is asked: does a drug-user need the help of a professional counsellor or the help of the office-bearers in the church? Is it a matter of sickness which has to be cured by the doctor, or is it a matter of sin, which can only be "cured" by admonition, prayer and repentance?

I think that these questions are wrong. This dilemma should not be made. It is not a matter of "either-or". It is not "the one or the other." Of course, someone who is addicted to drugs is sick. There might be some withdrawal symptoms which need medical treatment. The person also needs professional assistance to cope with all his problems. But at the same time we have to realize that sin and sickness in these cases are so closely related and interwoven, that no doctor can really cure the problem. Real comfort and peace of mind, for those who are desperate, can only be given by Jesus Christ. The misery of human life can be taken away only by a true faith in

Him. Let us not separate the physical and the spiritual help. To say to one who is addicted to drugs: "pray and stop using drugs" is just not enough. To say to an alcoholic: "quit drinking" does not really solve his problem. Real help requires cooperation of all available helpers. Parents and office-bearers have to comfort, support, and admonish the addict. The environment has to be changed, as much as possible, in order to make it

easier for the addict to stay away from the temptation. At the same time the help of a physician or other professional counselors might be advisable, depending on the stage of addiction, and the side effects caused by the drug, or the withdrawal symptoms, caused by the absence of the drug.

Let us try to work together in an effort to help, to save and to bring back to the flock those who are in danger of going astray.

— *To be continued*  
W. POUWELSE

## Proverbs 14:26

*In the fear of the LORD  
one has strong confidence,  
and his children will  
have a refuge.*



# Year Review



## 1984: Freedom

The year 1984 began with everyone asking attention for the book *1984* written by George Orwell and published in 1948, in which he describes life in the totalitarian state of Big Brother. In both the religious and the secular press, comparisons were made between today's reality and the situation depicted in the book. Our magazine did the same. While an increasing number of nations suffer under such totalitarian regimes, Canada and the United States may still count themselves among the nations of the "free" West.

I placed the word "free" between quotation marks, indicating that this freedom of the Western world is not an absolute freedom. One could call it a political freedom. We do not have to watch every word that we speak for fear of being arrested by a secret police, because we said something wrong regarding the government. There is in the West still the freedom to state one's opinion. We are still free to worship our God unhindered. We can still have our own Reformed Christian schools. We are still allowed to educate our youth at home, in the church and at school in the truth and according to the truth of God's Word as we confess it in the Three Forms of Unity. And our neighbour has the same, or similar, freedom. We (must, should) appreciate this the more when we see that others in the world do not have it.

## 1984: Bondage

However, how free is our Western world? Let us apply this word in a Biblical way with its Biblical meaning. Scripture teaches that freedom is the freedom that God gives in Christ, a being freed from the totalitarian slavery and oppression of Satan and sin by the blood and power of Christ, a being freed by the Spirit of Christ Jesus to serve God the Creator according to His holy and revealed will. Then we see how, also in our "free" Western countries, the lawlessness made itself stronger again during the past year. There was more revolutionary activity, more disobedience, more murders (e.g. of policemen),

more robberies and theft, more lying and deceiving, more abortions, more divorces, more official ecclesiastical acceptance of alternative ways of sexual expression besides the legal marriage between a man and his wife (The "highest court" of the United Church in Canada condoned homosexuality). When the church, which is called to be pillar and bulwark of the truth, does not stand for the truth of the Creator and Redeemer, but becomes a false prophet, speaking lies, speaking according to the taste of those who refuse to love the truth, what can we then expect but an intensifying of the totalitarian oppression of the regime of sin and Satan?

This regimen of sin showed itself also an arrogant power of lawlessness in much of the media playing their greedy game with the evil passions of sinful men. The same can be said about the entertainment industry through which a number of more or less queer looking and acting stars on the film and rock firmament shine their poisonous light of lust and violence or scream their hoarse and shrill cries of an evil licentiousness that is devoid of all grace and holiness and peace which God grants in Jesus Christ, and yet forces itself upon the minds and lives of so many with its attractive glamour and penetrating beat filling and camouflaging their spiritual emptiness.

## 1984: Economy

At the same time the international and national economies continued their downward trend with inflation going awfully high in a number of countries, and the deficits growing out of proportion so that the interest on borrowed moneys can hardly be paid anymore. Unemployment and poverty were the result for many. Also during the past year poverty and starvation intensified especially in countries in central Africa, partly as a result of communist revolutions and terrorism, that while grasping for power, lacks the ability of a competent, constructive, wise, concerned government.

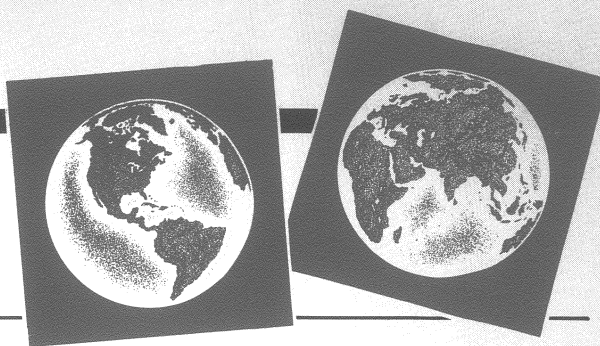
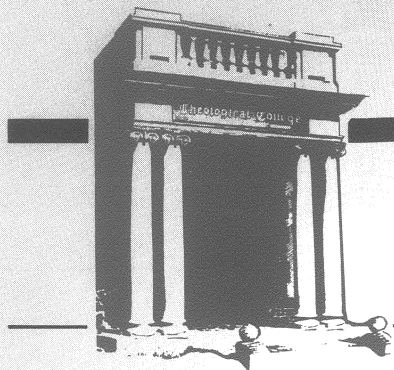
In such a world of revolution, violent terrorism, and immense personal suffer-

ing, in such a world of humanistic licentiousness and man-centered spiritual apostasy, also the Canadian Reformed Churches had their place and calling. That calling was to be and show the light of Jesus Christ who saves from the depressing quilt of sin and from its enslaving power through His gospel, through His blood and Spirit.

## 1984: Canadian Reformed Church life

That gospel was preached from Sunday to Sunday. It was taught in the Catechism class. Elders worked with it when visiting families and single members, on the regular and on special visits. With this regular, constant preaching and teaching of the Word of the Lord *in* the churches, as well as *by* the churches, in mission work abroad and at home, the regime of sin, of lawlessness and unholiness, of rebellion and licentiousness was attacked. And although the Word of the Lord met with rejection and hardening in sin, being a savour unto death, it was also a power unto life, bearing the fruits of faith and obedience and holiness and love and hope. With great thankfulness to the LORD, we can look back and see His upholding grace at work preserving and building His churches also during the past year. Over against a sliding away, there was also faithful dedication and commitment to the Lord of the church, even though the economic situation was more difficult than before.

Not one, but several congregations were faced with reports from treasurers and committees showing that the budget was not met on a monthly basis. In the past, at the end of the year, there was often a positive closing balance, and, hopefully, that will be the same this year. But some churches had to borrow money in order to be able to make their contributions to Mission, Theological College, and other "works" of the churches. It shows that the economic problems of our society do not pass our churches by either. Yet, when under such circumstances budgets are met and assessed contributions given so that the life and



work of the churches can continue, we are grateful for the encouragement we receive thereby.

That gratefulness is there also when the reading of church bulletins makes us aware of a maintained study activity in the congregations. Certainly, all involved, wish that there was more intense participation. But the study of the Word of the LORD, of the confession of the church, and of all sorts of matters and aspects of a Christian life continued to have an important place in the life of the churches. Here we may include study and practical activity in the political area. It appears that there is still a growing awareness of the political responsibility among our church members.

#### 1984: College

The year 1984 was also an important year in the history of the Theological College at Hamilton. Five students concluded their studies in an official graduation ceremony in the twelfth Convocation and fifteenth College Evening on September 7. At the same occasion the College, and thereby the churches, received the fourth full-time professor in the person of Dr. K. Deddens. He began his work as professor of Diaconology with an inaugural address about "The function of the reader and the reading of Scripture in public worship." So far I have not heard or read of any congregation that made steps to reinstall such a reader. But it might be too early for such a positive reaction.

A third event of great importance for the College was the decision of the Board of Governors, based on considerations of the Synods of Coaldale 1977, Smithville, 1980 and Cloverdale, 1983, to purchase a new building. It became the educational building of the Chedoke Presbyterian Church in Hamilton, "upon the mountain." The old building was quickly sold. The moving will probably take place in the middle of the coming year. It will be a move to considerably more space.

#### 1984: Calls

Going from the College to the matter of calls, we can begin with stating that

the "delivery" of five candidates meant the filling of five vacancies, with the result that not many churches are left vacant. In our review we follow the list of the churches as they appear in the Yearbook. The Church at Brampton received in Rev. G. Nederveen its own minister after a five year vacancy. It was in February. In the beginning of the preceding month Rev. J. Mulder began his work as pastor and teacher in the Rehoboth Church of Burlington West. The Church at Toronto called Rev. R. Gleason of Rijswijk, The Netherlands. He accepted this call and hopes to arrive in the beginning of 1985. Then all the churches in Classis Ontario-North will have their own minister.

The Church at Hamilton first called Candidate A.J.T. van der Scheer of Beetsterzwaag, The Netherlands, who declined, and later on Candidate D.G.J. Agema, who accepted this call to the mission work in northeastern Brazil. The Church at Lincoln called Rev. R. Aasman (twice), candidate J. Moesker and Candidate W. den Hollander, but was disappointed each time. Candidate Moesker accepted the call to the Church at London. The Church at Smithville decided to remain one congregation but to split into two wards with each its own minister. This created a new vacancy. First Candidate den Hollander was called and later on, candidate C. Bosch. The latter accepted the call. The Church at Watford called and received Candidate M. VanLuik as its minister. With the exception of the Church at Lincoln, also all the churches in Classis Ontario South have again their own pastor and teacher.

In this respect, the only change in Classis Alberta-Manitoba took place in the Church at Winnipeg. Rev. B.J. Berends left and Candidate W. den Hollander took his place. Rev. Berends went to the Church at Smithers. This leaves Classis Alberta-Manitoba with one vacant church, the Church at Calgary, while in Classis Pacific the house congregation in the Okanagan Valley, being under the supervision and discipline of the consistory of the Church at Chilliwack, would not mind either to receive an own minister in the future. It must also be mentioned here

that in September of this year the Church at Abbotsford started with organizing worship services in the Lynden area, Washington State, USA "Lynden" is on its way to institution and, thereby, to becoming the second American Reformed Church. This is a gladdening development.

#### 1984: Contact

Actual contact with other churches was in the first place the representation of our churches at the General Synod of Heemse by our delegate, Rev. J. Vischer. Classis Pacific of May dealt with an invitation of the Presbytery of the northwest of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to send a delegate to their meeting. This invitation was received too late. Classis Alberta-Manitoba of October dealt with a similar invitation of the Fraternal Relations Committee of the Presbytery of the Dakotas. The reactions to these invitations for contact on a classical-presbytery level were positive.

The contact of classical meetings in Ontario South was of a different character. Here was the request for help and support of two local congregations that had separated from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. That was in the first place the Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, MD, and, in the second place, the Reformation Church in Blue Bell, PA. Both congregations separated from the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in connection with objections regarding the open Lord's Supper table. More was involved, but this appears to be the main issue. No definitive decisions have been made as yet.

Classical meetings in Ontario South also continued to deal with the proposal of the Church at Grand Rapids that a "minister at large" be called for contact with Reformed Christians and churches in the USA. A task description for such a minister was not finalized yet. And so far, also on this point no definitive decisions have been made. The Ontario South June Classis had on its table also the request that a "vacation church" be organized in Palmetto, Florida, for those church members who spend many



months in that area when Ontario is hit by the cold winter weather. The Classis placed this on the shoulders of the Church at Grand Rapids, where it was put before.

### 1984: Mission

It is already mentioned that Candidate D.G.J. Agema accepted the call of the Church at Hamilton for the mission work in Brazil. "Finally", they must have said. Many candidates and ministers were called since Hamilton became sending church about five years ago. It will mean more manpower in the Brazilian field, under the blessing of the Lord.

First it looked as if the sending Church in Surrey had to seek a missionary to take the place of Rev. R.F. Boersema. When he and Rev. P.K. Meijer visited the sending church in October, the situation changed. Rev. Boersema was given periods for further missiological studies and he continued his agreement with the Church at Surrey. Another topic of discussion with the missionaries was the expansion of the mission work. Certain aspects of the so-called Nevius method of doing mission were adopted, which means that efforts will be made to get more active involvement of converts in the work on the mission field.

In the beginning of the year the congregation at São José, the mission post of Rev. Boersema, a Christian school was set up with kindergarten and the grades one to four. The question was discussed what could be done to strengthen this Christian school education. Is there the possibility to send out a guiding Reformed teacher? Or is a third missionary who has also teaching capabilities a better way? And is this possible? There are no answers yet.

There was thankful joy in Maragogi — and in São José as well as in the sending church and the supporting churches in Canada when the first public profession of faith took place in this mission post of Rev. Meijer. It appears that more will follow.

The mission work on Irian Jaya by Rev. H. Versteeg and br. A. Vegter also continued under the blessing of the LORD. There was again uncertainty regarding future regulations and restrictions coming from the Indonesian government. But so far the work went on.

Mission work at home was done as well. Besides the work of Home Mission Committees in Sunday and Vacation Bible school activities and radio broad-

casting, the work in Smithers and surrounding intensified.

A feat was that the mission churches decided to combine their Mission News Bulletins in one *Mission News* magazine. Now the membership can read in one magazine what is happening on all the mission fields. Hopefully this combination will be a lasting one. *Clarion* gave reports from the Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund, with its work of charity in Korea, India and on the African continent, and its support for the helping hand given to people in Bangladesh by Peter and Geraldine Ysselstein.

The care of those who have to cope with certain difficulties, certain handicaps, was there also for those within our churches. It is becoming a tradition in Ontario to organize a summer camp for the mentally and physically handicapped. In the Fraser Valley a milestone was reached with the building of "Manoah Manor," the Rest Home for the older brothers and sisters. The official opening took place on October 27.

### Conclusion

These were some of the things that happened or were done in the life of our churches in the midst of a darkening and threatening world. By far not all has been mentioned. With one aspect I like to conclude this year review. This is that invisible life of the church with her Lord, that hidden life of the children of God with their Father in heaven, in prayer. In thanksgiving and in prayer there was the struggle of faith with the LORD that He keep us and our children faithful to Him and His service; there was the cry to Him for help, for strength, for wisdom and guidance, in the problems, the hardships, the sufferings, the questions, the physical and spiritual needs. It was a prayer for the own personal needs, for the needs in our families, and for the needs in the churches, and the church universal as gathered all over the world. May that thankful, humble prayer for continued faithfulness carry us also into and through the new year 1985.

J. GEERTSEMA



### A voice cries:

*"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."*

*Isaiah 40:3-5*

# From Eve to Esther<sub>1</sub>

## Some remarks on woman and her place in church and society

*This is an abridged version of a speech held for the Young Peoples' Societies of Ontario League Day, held on Saturday, October 20, 1984, in Hamilton, ON.*

One of the most significant trends in both church and society today is the rapidly changing role of women, both in their occupations and their position in the home. It is a trend that has been accompanied with a good deal of discussion and literature. In the recent federal election "women's issues" became a separate matter of debate and many churches now grapple with the role of women in public worship. Discussions concerning voting rights for women in our churches have led to two markedly different reports, both of which deal extensively with the place and position of the woman in church and society. In our sister-churches in The Netherlands, the matter has also been discussed for several years. As it stands we are one of the few churches that do not allow women voting, let alone women in office. General opinion is directed against this stand more and more, particularly because of the influence of the feminist movement.

Now this speech is not meant to be a thorough discussion of all aspects or issues involved in the position and place of women today. Let me simply use this opportunity to make some remarks on the subject. We do so under the theme "Eve to Esther" — not to stay in the realm of the Old Testament, but to consider and typify what has become a growing contrast today: the contrast between the woman as *mother* (Eve) and as the *woman in the world* (Esther). Some would even speak here of a conflict, the inevitable choice that every woman must make between a family and a career. What is our approach to this kind of dilemma?

After touching on some aspects of today's situation regarding the place of woman in society and church, we will look at the Scriptures, and then draw some conclusions for ourselves for today particularly as they relate to young people and the choices they face.

### The situation today

There's no doubt that the place of women in society and church has changed dramatically in the last century, and the momentum of change has not been slowing down. All aspects of society are affected, and changes have been particularly noticeable in the business world, where women increasingly occupy positions of management and authority. Families have become fewer and smaller, so that the large family is an exception to the rule. More and more women work part-time, or work in later years of marriage.

Much of the impetus for change in the role of women comes from the feminist movement which seeks to give women greater influence in society and break down what it calls the patriarchal structure of our society. The image of father as leader and head belongs to the mythology of the past; new images must be created reflecting more versatile roles of men and women, and complete equality between the sexes. For the most part, women can do the same jobs as men, and therefore should receive equal pay for equal work.

The feminist movement has also deeply penetrated the world of religion,

as the best example of male-dominated religion, because of its exclusion of women from the priesthood. From a theological point of view, however, this charge is inaccurate, since, under the growing influence of mariology, Romanist theology has more feminist leanings than many other groups.

However, Protestant circles have far surpassed the church of Rome in putting women in office. Most of the "mainstream" churches have both women elders and ministers, not to mention women deacons. The Christian Reformed Church decided in its most recent synod to open the office of deacon to women, although in a somewhat altered form. There is considerable pressure to give women greater roles in liturgy and public worship, and our churches cannot remain unaffected under this pressure.

### Woman in creation

Therefore, we ought to be aware of what the Word of God teaches concerning the place and position of the woman. One can find considerable literature on this topic even in our circles, so we will try to be brief. First of all, woman is obviously created in God's image alongside the man, and given to him to be a help

***"The feminist movement has also deeply penetrated the world of religion, where we find — alongside every other kind of 'theology' — a radical feminist theology which has a whole new approach to the Bible."***

where we find — alongside every other kind of "theology" — a radical feminist theology which has a whole new approach to the Bible. It sees the Bible as a collection of myths invented to defend the arbitrary rule of men over women, and the whole Christian religion as the main culprit in both the organization and perpetuation of the patriarchal society. Many point in particular to the Roman Church

meet for him, Gen. 2:18ff. The woman stood in subjection to the man, but it was "a very liberal and gentle subjection," as Calvin called it, particularly in the light of what followed. The marriage relationship was not one of master and slave, but of head and body, of one who leads and one who follows, one who directs — and one who shows submission — all in the framework of mutual love and respect. This all

is captured in the beautiful "wedding song" of Adam who, on receiving his wife, sings of his joy and thankfulness, and gives expression to the attraction and respect he feels for his newfound companion, Gen 2:18ff.

### The fall and its effects

The Scriptural account of the fall shows how this beautiful relationship of harmony was shattered with the rebellion against the LORD as Creator. Rather than hold to her place of submission, the woman took a leading role, and in subsequent league with Adam caused disorder to manifest itself in all creation. The man sacrificed his position as head, and rather than acting as lord of creation, followed — along with his wife — the lowest of creatures, the serpent.

When the LORD then comes to make His inquiries and administer His punishments according to the covenant, He seeks to maintain some order in the chaos of the fall. His words of punishment uphold and complement the norms of the beginning, and seek to maintain the bond of marriage in the context of the altered situation.<sup>1</sup> The woman had reached "higher"; now she is, in effect, put lower, and placed in a position of stronger

dependence upon the man. Her subjection is now more servile, accompanied with hardship and toil. Her childbearing is subject to pain and sorrow; birth and life is directly tied to suffering and death. Her husband experiences a similar demotion with respect to all creation. He may still rule, but the real lustre is gone. The creation exhibits new and threatening powers over him, and he no longer reflects the image of his Maker.

These effects of sin are seen throughout the Old Testament. Several elements point to the "lower" position of women after the fall. First, one finds more emphasis placed on having children than on marriage itself. The messianic promise has a twofold effect, accentuating motherhood and raising hopes and expectations. Rachel loved her husband, but demanded children, Gen. 30:1; Hannah, too, greatly desired a son, I Sam. 1:8. Second, polygamy was generally practiced in Old Testament times, particularly among the kings and royal houses. Divorce was tolerated because of sin, and in marriage the woman was regarded as the possession of the man, an extension of his property. Levirate marriage could be rejected by the man, but not by the woman, Deut. 25:5ff. Hard punishments were set for infidelity on the part of a woman, with fewer references to the man. And here we can also think of the sad episodes we read of in Scripture, the envy between Leah and Rachel, Tamar seeking her covenantal rights, Genesis 38, the rape of Tamar by Amnon, II Sam. 13, and so on.

In all this, however, one ought not to lose sight of the first rays of marriage restoration already present *in nuce* in the Old Testament covenant line. Believing women enjoyed happy marriages in the Old Testament, and their position was much higher *vis à vis*, their heathen counterparts.<sup>2</sup> And throughout the history of revelation we see the continual triumph of the promise over sin, the triumph of grace and reconciliation.

The covenantal line is perhaps best illustrated by a brief look at Esther, the Jewish queen in the reign of Ahasuerus. She appears as a person who got what she wanted, and may be the envy of many young girls today. Indeed, some hail her as a kind of saviour, or "mediatrix" of the Jewish people — she exhibited courage and conviction despite all the wealth and temptation that surrounded her. And she was the instrument of the LORD. Yet with all her splendor and prominence, something seems to be missing. She is used to *preserve* the promise — not to *fulfil* it. She is all "career," but lacks what Eve had, and what we keep waiting for even after the book of Esther — the birth of a son — the Son!

Indeed, the line from Eve to Esther only makes it clear who is missing, and who we are waiting for . . . Mary, the "favoured one", who was chosen by the LORD to be the mother of our Lord. Esther had much, yet a veil of darkness lies over her and her time. Mary had more; with the birth of her Son, the light comes up again!

— *To be continued*  
J. DEJONG

<sup>1</sup>Here I must differ from the interpretation of Genesis 3:16 given in the most recent Report on Women's Voting Rights, cf. *Acts* (1983), p. 388. The Report states, "We are convinced that man's rule over the woman as meant in Genesis 3:16 is not an ordinance of God, but part of the curse of sin." This is a false dilemma, since the punishment only accentuates the ordinance and restates it under new conditions. Further, the reading followed by the Report represents an exegetical twist that clearly alters both the sense and reading of the verse. Even if one wishes to argue on the basis of the supposed parallels such as Gen. 4:7 and Canticles 7:10 that the object of the verb "desire" belongs to the second clause, the object of "desire" in both the first and second part of the sentence is still "her husband" — and in no way does the sense admit of the addition "to rule." Besides, there are dogmatical considerations against this reading. Does the LORD add fuel to her sin, only to give the man that much more reason to beat and subjugate her into submission? Any thoughtful consideration of the passage rules out this conclusion. The LORD *curbs* (rather than *fuels*) the power of sin.

The statement of Synod that there is "uncertainty as to the explanation of this text" does not do anything to help matters, *Acts* p.107. If there is so much uncertainty, then at least it ought to be spelled out.

<sup>2</sup>Let me again add some critical remarks on the most recent Report on Women's Voting Rights, *Acts of Synod* (1983), p. 391. In commenting on the passage I Pet. 3:1-8, Abraham is presented as one who — wrongfully, we may assume — treated his wife as part of his property, later selfishly abandoned her to Pharaoh's harem, making her both a liar and a defiled woman, a mistreated slave in Abraham's hand. All this is considered "normal" for Abraham, so that Sarah's marriage is a life of "terrifying suffering" and "injustice." Abraham's ignorance in this regard is attributed to the fact that he knew the Word of God "only in an initial stage."

The image presented of Abraham, our forefather in faith, markedly deviates here, not only from the actual Scriptural accounts, but also from all the New Testament references to Abraham that in all it is a mystery to me how such notions can be put forward as plausible explanations of Scripture. As a matter of fact, women were generally regarded as an extension of the domain of the husband in the Old Testament, (cf. the tenth commandment), and nothing would indicate that Abraham is either different or wrong here. Furthermore, Gen. 20:18 indicates that Abraham did not really lie, or force his wife to do so. There is no proof that Sarah was mistreated or molested in any way by either Pharaoh or Abimelech — the text, in fact, points to the opposite conclusion. The LORD prevented this from happening! Also, the text of I Pet. 3:1-8 is not meant to make a laughingstock of Abraham, or put him in the category of the "unbelieving husbands." Here *Sarah* is held up to be both example and mother to believing woman, just as Abraham is so often held up to be the example of faith and loyalty to believing men, cf. Romans 4, Galatians 3, Hebrews 11, James 2.

I can only conclude that the Report represents a serious misreading of Scripture which distorts the sense of the passage, and can only lead readers astray.

## CHURCH NEWS



### Address change:

Canadian Reformed  
Church of Watford  
c/o J. Janssens  
Corr. Clerk  
RR 7, Watford, ON N0M 2S0







# A Christmas Hymn

(A free rendition of "Daar is uit  
's Wereld's duistre Wolken. . . .")

A light from heav'n now has ascended  
Out of the world's beclouded night.  
The reign of death and doom has ended . . .  
O nations, hail that Star so bright.  
Rejoice, my soul, for it shall banish  
The shadows of our guilt and sin.  
Despair and anguish now will vanish,  
The dawn of grace it ushers in.

Rejoice! A child is born to save us.  
The promised Saviour, Prince of peace  
Will break the bonds that did enslave us . . .  
From death and sin He'll win release.  
The Sun of righteousness now risen  
Has come with healing in it's wings.  
The captives are released from prison,  
The Lamb of God salvation brings.

Redeemer, King, to us revealing,  
Thy Father's love and peace on earth.  
May sinners, in repentance kneeling,  
Extol with us Messiah's birth.  
The God of love and grace unbounded,  
He has prepared for Thee a throne  
That is on right and justice founded.  
To Him eternal praise we own.

by W. vanderKamp

# The handicapped and the congregation<sub>2</sub>

In our first instalment on this topic, we looked at some of the current trends in the approach of the handicapped, and noted some of the dangers apparent in these trends. We also made some remarks about what the Word of God says concerning the sick and the handicapped. Our conclusion was that the works of God will be made manifest also in the healing of the afflicted (John 9). Before I come to some practical remarks, I wish for a moment yet to concentrate on that reality of *healing* as it becomes apparent in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is abundantly clear from the Gospels that our Lord devoted much time to this ministry of healing. The work of healing characterized Christ's ministry throughout, but was especially evident at the beginning of His work, in Galilee. Christ did not pass by the possessed, the lame, the lepers, the blind and the deaf, but stopped everywhere to touch and heal them. The powerful breakthrough of the Kingdom of heaven (which is so much the theme of Christ's early ministry, cf. Matthew 4:23 ff), is accompanied by mighty signs of the *full restoration* of life. All ill-

nesses, every defect, yes even death itself, are placed under the power of Christ! Where He takes away the *cause*, He also removes the *effects* of "our eternal hunger and misery". Christ picked up those who were scorned and left behind by the self-righteous society of His days. His ministry opens up an unimagined perspective of perfection and glorification.

This ministry of loving care for the afflicted is not to be restricted to Christ alone. For He gave to His church a great mandate, "Truly I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these (namely, the poor, the sick, the strangers, the prisoners), you did it not to Me" (Matthew 25:45). On the day of days, we will all be asked what we have done for the weak, the sick, the needy and the afflicted. Justified by faith, we discover that faith works through *love*.

Our conclusion must be then that the handicapped in the congregation share with us in the rich promises of Christ Jesus. Particularly for them is also the promise of the restoration of body and mind. They must be fully accepted and treated as brothers and sisters in Christ,


coheirs of the promise of life. This means that we must all be convinced that the lives of such handicapped members are not meaningless, but *full of meaning*. Sometimes we might wonder what significance and purpose members can have in the congregation when they can hardly function in what we call "a normal way", but every member of the church does function in God's sight, according to the measure of gifts which He has provided. A psalm sung haltingly by a handicapped child is as pleasing to Him as the symphonic voice of a mass choir. We must learn to measure more with the standards of Christ's love, accept God's sovereign design for every life, and not distance the handicapped from the congregation.

## The handicapped in the congregation

We all, I am sure, will agree with the above stated. What are, however, some of the *practical* implications of our Scriptural understanding of the position of the handicapped in the church?

In his published speech to which I referred earlier, Prof. Dr. J. Douma has worked with the concept of *integration*. Instead of following a policy of isolation or "apartheid," we should seek to integrate the handicapped in the congregation. Douma does not make it abundantly clear, however, what this integration exactly involves. He mentions more use of available technical means in the worship services, such as hearing aid devices for the deaf, overhead projectors, special catechetical instruction or study societies for the handicapped. Douma refers especially to more *cooperation* between the churches, a matter of pooling the resources and talents for this work.

At the beginning of this year, the Church at Smithville, via its deaconry, wrote all the sister-churches in Ontario regarding more cooperation in this respect, inquiring whether there is need and whether there are possibilities for such cooperation. Reference was made especially to the setting up of regional



May the glory of the LORD endure for ever,  
may the LORD rejoice in His works,  
who looks on the earth and it trembles,  
who touches the mountains and they smoke!  
I will sing to the LORD as long as I live;  
I will sing praise to my God while I have being.  
May my meditation be pleasing to Him,  
for I rejoice in the LORD.

Psalm 104:31-34



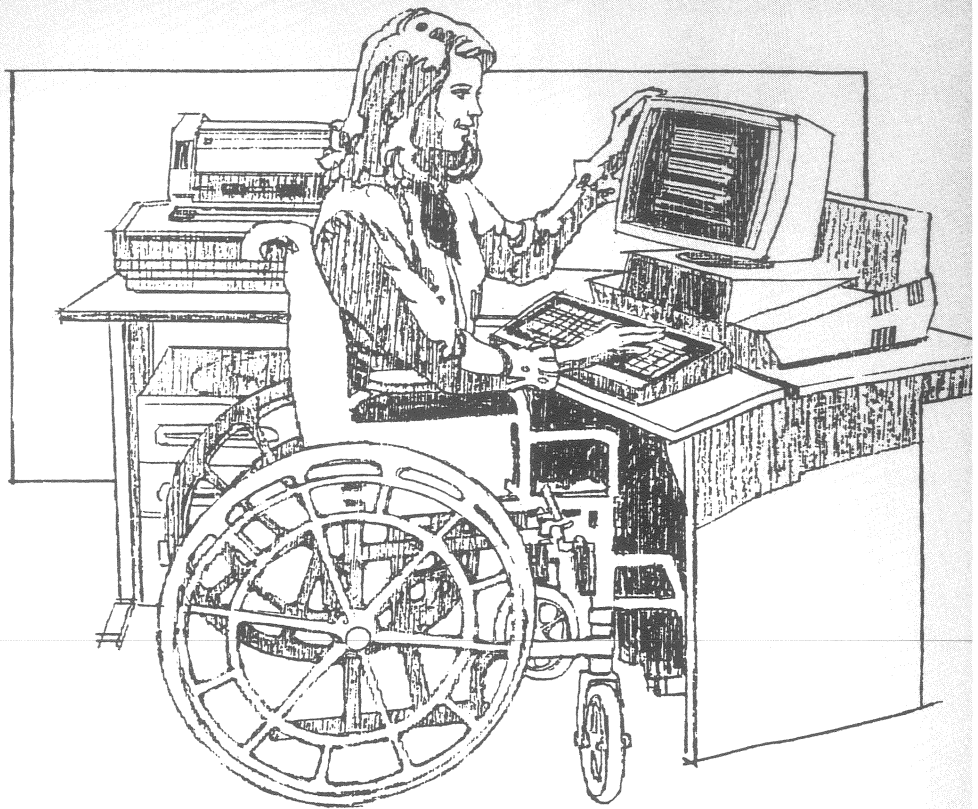
catechism classes for the handicapped, making use of people trained for this purpose. The response was mostly negative. The consensus was that the churches would have to do this work on their own, for the number of handicapped eligible for such classes and the distances involved would render such a project impractical. And I presume that in The Netherlands, with less distance and more people, there are indeed greater possibilities in this respect. Nevertheless, despite all understanding of the practical difficulties in our province, I found it deplorable that a project on a larger scale could not be achieved.

If the handicapped, as we saw, fully belong to the church, they have the right to be accepted *in* the church. Their handicap — especially in severe cases — will always leave them in a certain isolation, and communication with them will therefore remain limited, but the congregation should be *open* to such members, and they should be made to feel *at home* in the church. One of the prime means to show this, is to invite these brothers and sisters into your home, e.g. on a Sunday between services, for this not only gives some relief to the parents or relatives of such members, it also helps to widen the horizon of the handicapped persons.

It is remarkable how warmly and enthusiastically most handicapped react to those who have shown them some interest and affection. They *feel* that such people care for them, and they generally react to this in a visible and audible fashion. They repay kindness with kindness! This acceptance means that many will have to overcome their *fear* of the handicapped members, or in some instances their distaste of the handicap itself. Sometimes parents and relatives of handicapped members complain that other families in the congregation give such little attention to the handicapped, but often it is a matter of fear, especially of having to cope with the unknown and the unexpected. This fear can only be overcome by taking the first step, and then in practice one is often pleasantly surprised.

### Special services?

Another question is whether we should organize special, "adapted" worship services for the handicapped. This is being done in some places where many handicapped live, e.g. there where a home for the handicapped has been established. Although I can understand this striving to offer the handicapped a service adapted to their abilities, I do feel that by organizing such separate services — especially when done on a regular basis —



we again segregate and isolate these members from the others. Besides, we then destroy something essential and beautiful: the *unity* of believers as it is seen in communal worship. I would rather see this development that all our worship services are, as much as is possible, made *accessible* to the handicapped. And then we should be aware that these handicapped often take more home than we sometimes think. Their simplicity becomes advantageous in this surrounding. They sing the psalms which they have learned with greater enthusiasm than some other members. It is remarkable how mentally handicapped react joyfully to music and singing and generally are quite able to learn psalms. They are often less forgetful of other sick in the congregation, and are quite aware of it when others are remembered in congregational prayer. They may not understand as much of the sermon as the others, but here, too, one often stands amazed. And finally, the *blessing* received in worship is not dependant on our gifts but on God's grace, and the handicapped receive this blessing no less than the other members. So instead of organizing adapted services, I would rather see these members integrated in the regular services, where they belong.

Another question arises: whether the mentally handicapped should be permitted (required) to attend the Lord's Supper. I agree with those (e.g. Prof. Dr. J. Douma) who have said that we cannot here make a general rule; the matter must be decided in every individual case. To attend the table of the Lord, we need a

certain *knowledge* of what the Lord's Supper means and we are to be able to meet the requirements of self-examination, as prescribed in the Form for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. But this knowledge is not a matter of quantity but of *quality*. Then you will find: the one handicapped person can and does come to profession of faith, while another realistically cannot. To determine this, adapted catechetical instruction is useful and important, for it is only through regular catechetical instruction that a person can learn and that the consistory can judge whether profession is possible. Not everyone is able to do this work, not every minister either, and here we have perhaps been lacking. I would plead for a simple course, at regular intervals, with instruction units of 20-30 minutes, with emphasis on Psalms, Bible knowledge and some elementary doctrines, a course in which much use is made of study aids. Often it will have to be — at least in part — on a one to one basis. I hope that someday a qualified person will set up such a course which could find broader application.

Whenever a home for the handicapped is established, this project of regular instruction will receive more attention, I'm sure, by the staff or such a home and by the church in whose area this home is established. Then more concentrated effort is required and will also result. Such was the experience in The Netherlands, and such will also be the case here, I believe.

We must in these questions remember that there is a difference between



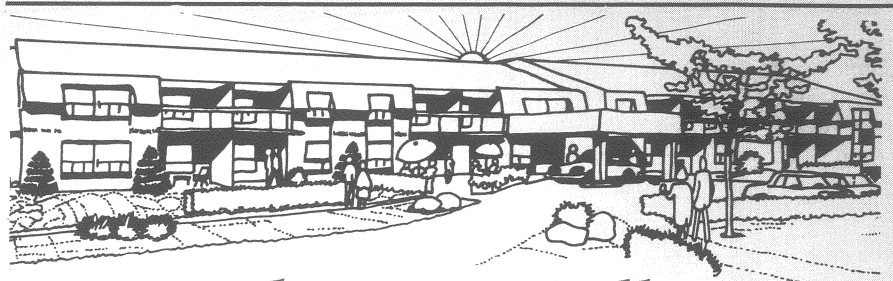
*Holy Baptism* and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is for *all* members a sign of their ingrafting into the church of Christ. The Lord's Supper is for those who have arrived at the *maturity* of faith. Also, communicant members are subject to special discipline, and we must realize that this also goes for communicant handicapped members. It would be wrong to say, on the one hand, they have the right to the Lord's Supper despite their handicap, but that they can never be disciplined, on the other hand, because of their handicap. They must be able to understand and heed the instruction and discipline of the church.

The fact that the handicapped belong to the congregation, entitles them to regular and suitable *pastoral care*, on homevisits and other necessary visits. They should not be left out, and we are all aware that this can easily happen. There have been home visits where a participating handicapped member was not even addressed, and understandably, the parents were quite upset. Officebearers must realize that the handicapped, too, need to be instructed, comforted and admonished, just as the other members.

All the above remarks are only exploratory and provisional. I am grateful that our Canadian Reformed Society for the Handicapped has made and is making progress. The "summer camps" (Camp Boo) are a growing success. The plans to establish a home are taking form, and an attempt is being made to purchase suitable property. Foster parents are being sought for such a home. This is important so that whenever their own parents and relatives can no longer care for them, our handicapped brothers and sisters have a Christian home in which to serve the Lord.

But we must be careful that we do not segregate these members in camps or homes. They belong *in* the church, and all the churches must know, "What you have done to the least of these, you have done to Me." To be handicapped is a trial. To have handicapped children is a trial. But our trials, when received and experienced as from the loving hand of the Father, become *blessings*. What a blessing that our handicapped brothers and sisters belong to the covenant of grace and in the church of Christ! What a blessing that the Lord gives us *in* these brothers and sisters such simple faith and childlike enthusiasm. So the handicapped in the congregation can be — when properly received in Christian love and care — a source of joy. Especially since we may go with them, all of us together, to the full restoration and perfection of our eternal home, the New Jerusalem.

CL. STAM



## Ebenezer Villa

Hamilton, Ontario

In this special Christmas and New Years issue of our Canadian Reformed Magazine *Clarion* we wish to report on the progress made this year. Firstly we congratulate the brotherhood in Langley, BC on the completion of their Rest Home. We wish you God's blessing on all your efforts. May the Rest Home soon be filled.

As our readers will know the Villa, located next to the Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church of Hamilton on Stone Church Road East, is owned and operated by the Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged Inc., which is a non profit organization and recognized as a charitable institution. The Villa contains 30 completely self-contained apartment units. Each unit is equipped with an emergency nurse call system, which is 24 hours monitored. All the church services of the Cornerstone Church can be listened to in the apartments via a builtin sound system. Every Sunday evening there is a Dutch service held. A special "thank you" to the Professors Deddens, Faber and Selles who are our regular guest ministers in the Dutch services.

All units are occupied and we have a growing waiting list for accommodation. The building is situated on a beautifully landscaped 2 acre property. We recommend to our senior brothers and sisters to apply for accommodation now and to register on the waiting list. It does not obligate you, but you do get an opportunity to consider to move in when a unit becomes vacant. Please write us for an application.

The lounge or coffee room, library and craftsroom are extensively used by the residents. This spring and summer many made use of the garden plots which will be enlarged for use in 1985 to grow vegetables and flowers.

The Board which is responsible for the overall operation of the Villa, receives much dedicated assistance from the Care Committee. This group of sisters organize help and care when needed by any of the residents in the Villa. As well they organize entertainment events and educational trips. We are very thankful for these volunteer services. Recently they applied for

a grant from New Horizons (a Federal Assistance Agency) for woodworking and crafts supplies and kitchen utensils. Earlier this year the Board was successful in receiving property tax exempt status from the Assessment Office. Indeed an extremely important decision as this saving benefits all residents through the rent structure. A good number of them receive rent subsidy which our administrator arranges and prepares on a personal basis.

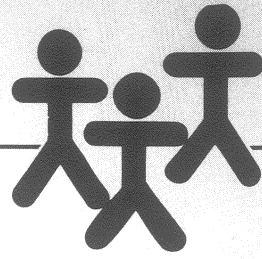
The Board together with a delegation of the Care Committee has begun a discussion on planning for extended care with the ultimate goal of a Nursing Home. We fully realize that this is a complicated matter, with very strict regulations and costly. We may have to finance it ourselves initially. Further meetings are now planned on a provincial and federal level. Above all we pray that the Lord may bless also these endeavours and that He grants us wisdom in dealing with this project to the glory of His Name. Anyone who is in a position to serve us with input and advice on this project is kindly urged to contact us.

Above we touched on the finances. Our society receives support from some 100 members. Our treasurer at the last held meeting reported that quite a few had not yet paid their membership this year. We are most anxious that our society membership be maintained at as high a level as possible. The annual fee is \$100.00. We express our earnest desire to retain all members in good standing and solicit inquiries for new members. Rest assured we appreciate your interest and support of our efforts for the well being of our elderly brothers and sisters. Our mailing address is: PO Box 6032, Station 'F', Hamilton, ON L9C 5S2.

Finally the residents of Ebenezer Villa, together with the Board and Care Committee, wish you a very happy Christmas and the Lord's blessing for the year of our Lord 1985.

Prettige Kerstdagen en veel heil en zegen voor het Nieuwe Jaar.

A.L. (TONY) VANDERHOUT, Chairman



## Excellence in education — 1985

Schools form the battleground for social forces. The definition of excellence usually coincides with a certain crisis period. When the Soviet Union launched its first satellite in 1957, North America was caught off-guard. Something had gone wrong; the educational system seemed to be out of touch with reality. The pursuit of excellence was immediately translated into tougher standards as far

as Mathematics and Science were concerned. The academic world had gone soft — a new and tough edge was needed. During the 1970's, this emphasis had worn off. Teachers were considered facilitators. Education was to be "appreciated" without many rigid demands.

There is a certain parallelism between the 1950's and the 1980's. The emphasis has returned to rigidity and stand-

ards. Technology (especially Japanese) is again held in high esteem. A recent survey concerning public priorities in education, pointed out the following.

a. Discipline has become the number one priority. Principals are told to run a tighter ship and teachers are urged not to coddle their students.

b. "Back to the Basics" is again a popular slogan. (Too many high school graduates can't spell and read properly, while test and examination results were at best, mediocre)

c. Better teachers are demanded. Teachers are asked to take charge and rely less on student initiative and a vague curriculum.

d. Schools must take technological advances more seriously.

As a result, an edge of *toughness* has been equated with excellence. A general sloppiness in speech and thought, an aimlessness of middle class views and a reaction against many contemporary issues, have created a new educational militancy.

Actually, the term "excellence" by itself, is an empty phrase. It tends to disguise issues in the midst of social concerns. A neutral educational system cannot define it on the basis of a fixed world and life view. This does not mean that our schools may boast about their educational standards. Updating, improving and redefining, remain important considerations for Canadian Reformed education. Some things we do in school, definitely need restructuring! Thankfully however, the pendulum-swinging of the public school system, has not taken place among us. The basic meaning of excellence is solidly entrenched. May this be accompanied by growth and nurture, in 1985. A new year is at hand. The Lord has richly blessed us. With His guidance, may we continue to:

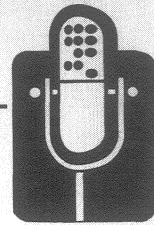
- educate for Christian living
- complement the instruction at home
- meet the challenge of our time

A blessed new year to everyone!

NICK VANDOOREN  
John Calvin School  
607 Dynes Rd.  
Burlington, ON

**With His guidance, may we continue to:**  
— educate for Christian living  
— complement the instruction at home  
— meet the challenge of our time





Did it ever happen to you that you came to the conclusion that writing to your parents or children every week was not any harder than writing to them every month? When you write every week, you will be able to fill a letter with all sorts of small and seemingly insignificant things which, nevertheless, keep the other part of the family informed about the weal and woe of every day life. You have a letter completed in no time flat. But if you wait till a month has passed by and then think that you will have sufficient material for a long, long letter, you soon discover that you were gloriously mistaken: it becomes harder and harder to compose a decent-size epistle. When, during the first nine years of our being here in Canada, we wrote to our parents every week, this caused no difficulties. When, after that, we mutually agreed upon an exchange of letters every other week, we sometimes had to ask ourselves, "What shall I write about now?"

You realize already what I am going to say now: it is not any easier to write a news medley now than it would have been if I had not skipped a few times. I could think up all sorts of real or imagined reasons for not writing one, but this does not help you at all. What helps you is only this, that you see one right before your eyes. I can visualize already the smiles of my faithful readers: "Ah, he is back, good!" Rest your soul, I am not becoming proud in my old age, only grateful for the many inquiries that I get, some expressing even the fear that I had been fired from this job. Nothing is farther from the truth.

Let us get on with the news.

The nation's capital is in the news nowadays, especially because of a seemingly changed attitude towards the taxpayers as taxpayers. Since people seem to make it a sport to evade taxes and to try to cheat on their obligations towards the nation also in financial respect, the government will have to get tough. Many voices are raised calling it a shame and a deviation from election promises that people will be hired to seek out cheaters that defraud the unemployment insurance fund (read: the Canadian people that are working). It is apparently allowable to try cheating as much as one is able to, but clamour is heard when serious efforts are made to catch the cheaters. I hope that the ones who are in authority over us will fulfil the duties of their office and calling faithfully and without letting themselves be swayed by those with the loudest mouths.

However, we were not going to talk about what's going on in the nation's capital city in political respect, but our attention is drawn to the church there. I am happy that I see every time in the Ottawa bulletin that some new members could be welcomed, either because they were born or because they moved in from elsewhere. For several years the number of baptisms in Ottawa was minimal; now there are several younger families and thus it happens more often that a baby is born and baptism is administered.

It was also very encouraging to read, "The consistory discussed at length the possibility of purchasing a property. It is felt that at some point the congregation should be heard about this." Of course, I did not expect that the consistory would make a decision without hearing the congregation, but it is a good thing that the thoughts are going into that direction. I do not know how the prices of properties and houses are in Ottawa, but generally they are not going up fast, so that there is sufficient time for a well-considered decision.

It is quite a jump from Ottawa to Burlington, but we have landed without mishap.

The Burlington-East bulletin tells us that the consistory received "a letter from the Church at A., The Netherlands," with "notifications that a brother and sister of our congregation had participated in the Lord's Supper. This letter was sent 'For the sake of good order in the churches,' a fact that this consistory could appreciate." It is the first time I have read of such a gesture, and I, too, can appreciate it. Yet I wonder whether such is necessary when a brother and sister take an attestation along and when it is mentioned on that attestation every time when they celebrate the Lord's Supper with a sister church. Upon their return they can show to their own consistory that they did so. In the meantime, it was very accurate of that consistory to send this letter, but then, as you know, I am always out to save the churches' money wherever possible. If a letter can be taken along, why send one by mail?

As for Burlington West, the Mulder family has taken possession of the new parsonage and they also had Open House where the congregation had the opportunity to wander through the manse to admire the handiwork of paid and unpaid workers. Much — I was told — was done by free labour. The Mulders are happy in their new dwelling.

On Sunday, November 25 the Rev. Mulder had to leave the pulpit during the service because he was not feeling well. He has had high blood pressure for several years, as we know, and this seems to have affected him on that day. He has been told to take it very easy for a couple of weeks, something which is not too easy for him. We wish our brother strength to take it easy and a restoration of his health.

Going down a little, to Hamilton, we take note of it that the consistory received a letter "from the Board of Mission, proposing to send Rev. and Mrs. Agema and Dr. K. Deddens to a Mission Conference to be held in Brazil in April 1985, the Lord willing. The proposal is approved by the consistory and a request is made to the Board of Mission to approve (approach? VO) the Board of Governors of the Theological College to include extended training for Mission at the College."

It appears to be a wise proposal and a wise decision. Dr. Deddens has experience as a missionary and he also has to teach mission studies at our College. It will be a good thing when his experience and his knowledge in this field are put to use at this Conference. And it also seems like a good thing that the missionary of Hamilton and his wife are going there: this will get them somewhat acquainted with the country they are going to and the difficulties and joys they may expect there.

Another encouraging and exciting news item from Hamilton: "Two letters are received from members of our congregation regarding the planned institution of a new congregation. After a lengthy discussion on the request for institution the consistory decided to approve the request of the members concerned. The necessary steps to be taken are to be decided at a latter meeting."

With this good news we have to leave Ontario and move to Carman. The consistory of that church discussed various questions which the elders brought with them from family visits. We all know that the most different questions can be asked and that we oftentimes are surprised at the nature of the questions. Here, however, we have something completely new. The ques-



tion was whether the consistory should not "have their photograph taken for historical purposes? Consistory decided: If someone would like a picture for historical reasons to feel free to come to the consistory meeting once a year in the possession of a camera." Smart decision, I should say.

I cannot deny that the question itself is also smart. Never thought of it. Whenever there are special occasions, such as a 25th anniversary of the institution, a picture may be made; but this happens only once every 25 years, doesn't it! Some smartie may remark that it happens only once; but you know what I mean: multiples of 25 count too!

Smithers comes next.

"A proposal was made to expand the home mission activity in our area by setting up a three-member-committee for home mission among the non-native people, and to pursue this evangelistic activity in close cooperation with the present Home Mission Board. Although this proposal was generally well received by all, it was pointed out that the proposed committee should do the actual work involved and that the role of the present Home Mission Board and Missionary could only be of a consulting nature."

From the Smithers bulletin we also learned that the Rev. Berends was in the hospital in Terrace because of kidney stones which had to be removed. We do not know what his state of health is at the moment, but experience has taught that, once the kidney stones have been removed, recovery is fast. We wish our brother such a recovery, also for the sake of the congregation.

Going down to the Fraser Valley, the Lower Fraser Valley, that is, we pass on that eight of the fifteen suites in the Rest Home are occupied and that the 9th one has been spoke for. The name of the building is Manoah Manor. I like the alliteration.

"There are plans to organize a choir for older people. We feel that also in older age we should go on with singing to use our lungs as long as possible. How nice and beautiful it is: singing together to praise the Lord in our songs!"

Perhaps it is because I am approaching the age of "older people" myself that I don't know what to think of this. On the one hand, the initiative is to be lauded and applauded: there may be older people who no longer feel themselves at ease when singing in a choir with younger members. Perhaps the initiative was occasioned by the fact that several older members no longer attended choir. I do not know whether this was such a good thing if that is the case. The older members should not isolate themselves from the younger ones. We are all together one body, we confess, and we are to show this in every respect. As for socializing, yes, then I can understand it that people of the same age draw closer together; but as for the activities in the church, should we not do all things together? Older members are no longer able to show that much fire and stamina which they displayed when much younger and there comes a time when we have to say, "Let the younger generation take over now." Yet we should watch out that no separation be made between the one part of the congregation and the other part.

Let no one misunderstand me: What I wrote above does not reflect on the efforts that are made to organize such a choir. The words which I wrote are more directed towards the older members themselves, for I am sure that the thought to organize a separate choir for older members would not have come up if it had not been noticed that several older members who love to sing no longer attend one of the choirs of which the churches in the Fraser Valley can boast.

What older members should avoid is giving occasion for a special treatment. Sometimes I get pamphlets and brochures which describe in detail what is being planned for the "senior citizens," what activities, what entertainment, what projects to fill their lives. This may be useful for those who have no

church activity to take part in and who have no hobbies or other activities which make their lives fruitful for the kingdom of God, yet I cannot help but getting a sick feeling at times, as if our "senior citizens" are to be babied and entertained and as if they themselves are not capable of filling their lives with worthwhile activities. Much, much younger persons conclude what is good for the old fogies, and the seniors have to comply with what others think is good for them. Instead of living themselves, they are being lived and in spite of all good intentions on the part of those who consider it their duty to keep the old folks busy and entertained, great injustice is done to our seniors.

Let me repeat it: this should not be understood as applying to what I quoted from the *Church News* of the Valley! It only gave me a good opportunity to vent feelings which I have had for quite some time.

From the individual churches we have to mention only something from the Church at Chilliwack.

In the first place: "It is discussed whether it would be beneficial to organize an office-bearers' Conference. The other churches in the Valley will be asked for their opinion." Much success, for it is a splendid thought.

And the second item from Chilliwack concerns the organ. What else did you expect?

"The Committee of Administration presents some more particulars about an organ and financing possibilities. After a lengthy discussion, Council decided to present the congregation with the one plan it has deemed the best after all information was received. This meeting with the congregation is scheduled for October 26. A leaflet with information will be distributed."

I already have the *Church News* in which further particulars are mentioned, but will let you in the twilight for the time being.

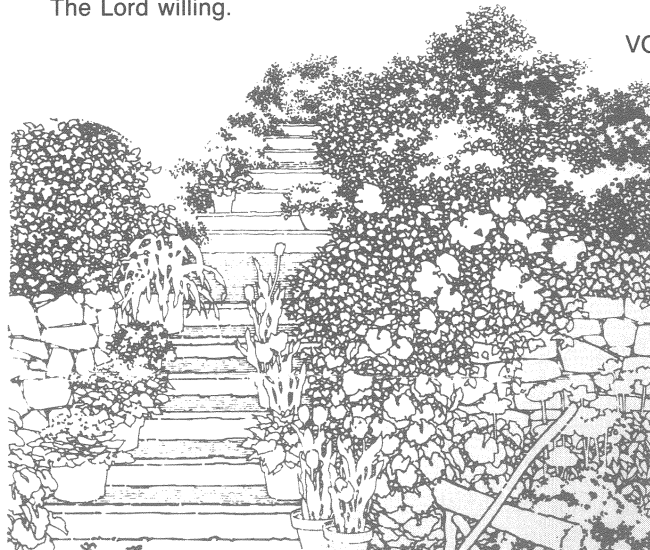
This is all the news I could gather from the bulletins I received. If you are wondering why your church is mentioned either never or very seldom, you might also ask whether the bulletins are sent regularly. From some churches I haven't received one for at least half a year. I realize that no one is obligated to send the bulletin and that it is only courtesy on the part of the church when it is sent to me. There are, however churches in whose bulletin I read that the weekly or bi-weekly bulletins would be sent to me but which, apparently, failed to request some one in particular to take care of this, with the result that it is not done at all.

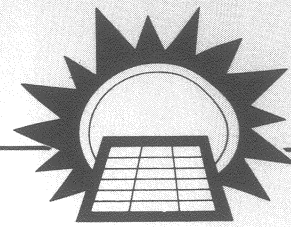
Those that do send their communications keep me in business and in contact with you, our patient readers.

Till next time.

The Lord willing.

VO





Though the fig tree do not blossom,  
nor fruit be on the vines,  
the produce of the olive fail  
and the fields yield no food,  
the flock be cut off from the fold  
and there be no herd in the stalls,  
yet I will rejoice in the LORD,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.  
God, the Lord, is my strength;  
He makes my feet like hinds' feet,  
He makes me tread upon my high places.

Habakkuk 3

From our mailbox: **Mary Van de Burgt** wrote:  
"Hello! I like to thank all the brothers and sisters  
for sending me birthday cards from all over  
Canada. I got 48 cards. Thanks a lot; I really ap-  
preciated that!! P.S. I am not 26 but 28 years old."  
(Not bad, Mary, considering your birthday was  
published too late! H.R.)

**The Hofsinks of Smithers, BC** "would again  
like to thank everyone who was so kind to send  
Nelena a card for her 24th birthday. For six years  
she has been in the Bethesda home and she leads  
a busy and satisfying life. She helps a mother of  
a young family a few mornings every week and  
also goes to a workshop. She keeps busy with other  
things such as: swimming, bowling, learning to read  
and write, jogging, and biking. Sisters and brothers  
from Cloverdale often pick her up and give her a  
good time over the weekends. Her relatives also  
entertain her and give her some diversion. Nelena  
is very musical and has a record and tape collec-  
tion of classical music to be proud of. We enclose  
a piece of Bethesda news, and thank you once  
again brothers and sisters." (Thank you, Mr. and  
Mrs. Hofsink for keeping us updated. It is very  
much appreciated by everyone, I am sure. H.R.)



## A vacation to northern BC

Early in the morning of July 11, eleven people  
quietly left the Bethesda Home for Smithers on a week-  
long holiday. Jean and Nena were going to visit their  
families while the rest of us were going to rough it and  
camp the whole week. We arrived at the Hofsinks,  
Nena's family, in the evening and started to set up camp

right away. It took a while to figure out the tents but they were standing just in time for a quick cup of tea. Then, after the long day, it was time to try out our sleeping bags.

Throughout the week we went on day trips, exploring the area around Smithers. We even saw a bear! — fortunately he didn't join us for lunch. We also discovered that it gets pretty cold on top of Hudson Bay Mountain but the hike was worth the view.

Jean Buursma's family took us for a picnic to Tyler Lake where the highlight of the day was the ride in Andy's boat. Naturally the fishing rods had to be tried but no fish were to be caught that day. Our chance came when Mr. Hofsink took us to his "guaranteed" fishing spot and it turned out to be just that!

Wednesday morning came all too soon. It was time to break camp and get ready to go home. We had a good holiday and we would like to thank everyone in Smithers for the hospitality shown to us. We really appreciated it.

Alice Reems  
Bethesda Home Counselor

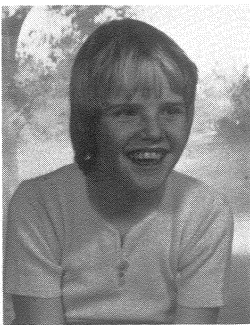
**Brothers and sisters, may the Lord be with you in the coming year!**

The Lord willing, the following brothers and sisters will celebrate their birthdays in January:

**LIZ KONING**

c/o Michener Centre  
Box 5002, Nightingale NB Deerhome  
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 5Y5

Liz will celebrate her 24th birthday on January 2. She spends one weekend a month at home, but needs much extra care. Liz is very happy with "little pleasure." She saves all her cards in an album.



**CHRISTINE  
BREUKELMAN**

Box 666  
Coaldale, Alberta  
T0K 0L0

Christine hopes to celebrate her birthday on January 7. She will turn thirteen years old. She attends church every Sunday morning, although sometimes she gets restless. She is doing fine! The picture was taken in Fall 1983.

**GRACE HOMAN**

RR 2

St. Ann's, Ontario LOR 1Y0

Grace will be 29 years old on January 17. "She is still working at A.R.C. Industry, packing labels, pamphlets, and sometimes earplugs. So once in awhile she has to sort out bolts and nuts, or works in the greenhouse. At home she likes to listen to her tape recorder or record player. She also enjoys to sing, and play the organ for a little while. On Friday and Saturday nights she enjoys shuffleboard (sjoelen) and other games."

**JANINE SMID**

RR 1

Arkona, Ontario NOM 1B0

Janine hopes to celebrate her big day on January 19. She will turn 15 years old. Janine loves pictures and cards and would appreciate it to receive many for her album, which she reviews regularly.

**HENK ORSEL**

950 Warwick Court, Apt. 801  
Burlington, Ontario L7T 3Z5

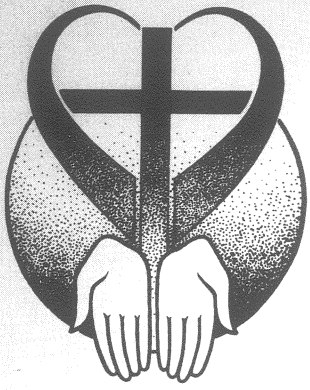
Henk will be celebrating his 54th birthday on January 27. Henk had a bit of trouble during the past year. He fell several times and hurt his head. He also has ulcer trouble and cannot work anymore. He wrote me about all the cards and gifts he received for last year's birthday, which he celebrated at his Dad's place. Henk enjoys letter writing, mostly by airmail. (Expensive hobby, Henk. H.R.) He has nice neighbours and sees it as a blessing from the Lord, because they help him whenever it is needed. He also appreciates the freedom we may enjoy in Canada. And, of course he really appreciates receiving mail for his birthday. (No, Henk, you do not have to pay for this — it is done through love, by the brothers and sisters. Enjoy all the mail you are about to receive, absolutely free.)

Brothers and sisters, may I again remind you to keep me updated on our calendar brothers and sisters. Every reader is interested, I am sure.

Send your requests to:

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





# CRWRF

## Annual report for 1984

As fall colours fade to winter whiteness, we look to the Source of the seasons whose providence and reliability extends to *all* areas of our lives. In His goodness, He has again provided us with all that we need for our daily sustenance plus extras — that we may in thankfulness use to promote His Kingdom. With the “extras” that you have returned to the Lord by means of Church offerings, special gifts, school collections, etc., we have again been able to continue the work of CRWRF. As old commitments are being met and new doors opening, we are excited to see our small effort slowly growing and reaching those living in spiritual and bodily need.

### Acheho children's home, Kenya

As we recently reported via church bulletins, the construction at Acheho has, happily, been completed. To the existing structure, workers have added a dining hall, a storage room, and a large dormi-

tory. Staff at Acheho are now in the process of admitting twenty new children, bringing the total to sixty — a sizeable number to care for and to instruct in the ways of the Lord.

The manager, Mr. Paulo, has expressed his heartfelt appreciation for the aid we have supplied, and gives thanks to God for keeping them all well over the past months. In spite of drought in much of Kenya, cutting the country's food production by up to 40%, the area around Acheho has had rain and our children have not wanted. Mr. Paulo does, however, wish to have the home provided with additional means of water supply (besides the rainwater tanks presently serving the home) and is seeking expert advice on the best and most economical means — probably involving the digging of a well. Not all funds earmarked for the extension have been used up, so the cost of providing needed water supplies should be covered by remaining monies.

Our monthly support costs will, how-

ever, rise by a substantial 50% with the addition of 20 children and we count on you, as we have in the past, to provide the means to care for these precious little ones.

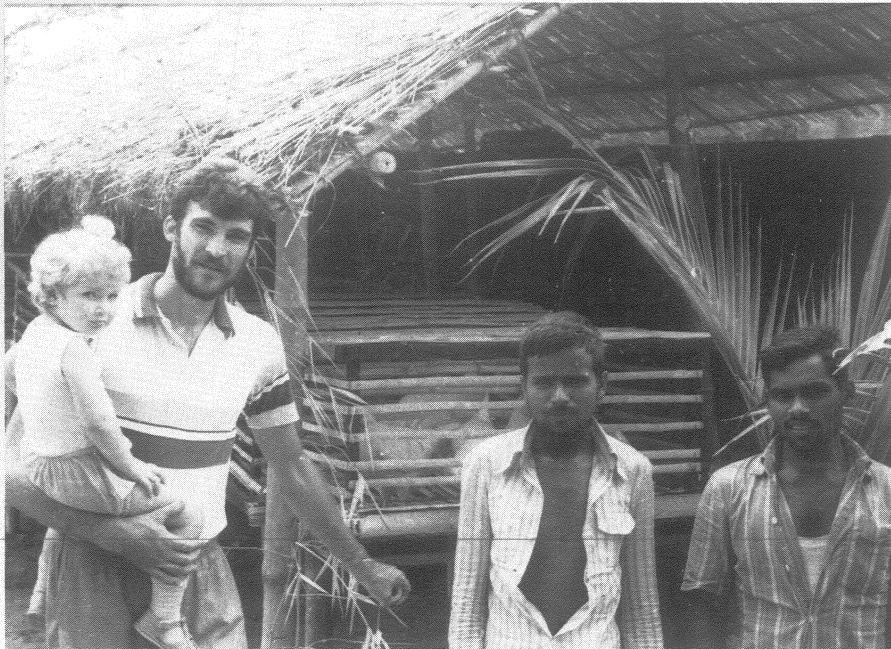
### Health care unit, Busan, Korea

In the huge city of Busan, our nurses quietly and faithfully continue to operate the clinic and make their rounds, dispensing medical aid, health care information, and Biblical truths to many in the slum districts.

We had hoped to receive partial government funding for the project through CIDA (Canadian International Development Agency) which matches dollars spent on approved development projects and does so with “no strings attached.” This would have enabled us, we hoped, to support the opening of another similar clinic in a different part of the city. However, after putting much time and effort into the inevitable stack of forms, we



*The Acheho children's home choir practising. The group, conducted by a young Pastor, sometimes sings at church events*



Peter and little Geraldine with two of Peter's assistants

learned that our application had been rejected. CIDA's priorities lie with development projects that will eventually become self-sufficient and medical aid does not usually qualify. Well, it didn't hurt to try. . . .

## Bangladesh

One of the world's most crowded nations, Bangladesh, has a population density of 1600 per square mile, an especially remarkable fact when one considers that 90% of its people are rural.

Peter and Geraldine Ysselstein from the Guelph congregation, work among the very poor in Bangladesh seeking to improve the lot of the landless and near landless farmer and his family. They live in Bogra where the emphasis of Peter's work is on assisting farmers by helping them procure hand pumps to irrigate their small plots of land and showing them better methods of growing crops. Geraldine works with a group of women, helping them to produce good quality crafts in order to contribute to their meagre family incomes.

Peter has also initiated a new project to the northwest, working among Shantal tribal people who are gradually losing their most important resource — their land. Unlike most Bengali's, who are Moslems, many of the Shantals are believers, having been reached with the gospel by one of the older missions of Bangladesh — the Churches of God. (No new missions are permitted nor is proselytizing allowed.) Those Shantals who are not Christians are largely animists, so

outreach is permitted to them. Peter writes that "the purpose of the program is to build up poor, non self-sufficient families, primarily those that are Christians, but also non-Christians whom we hope to draw into Christianity by our witness in word and deed." The program,

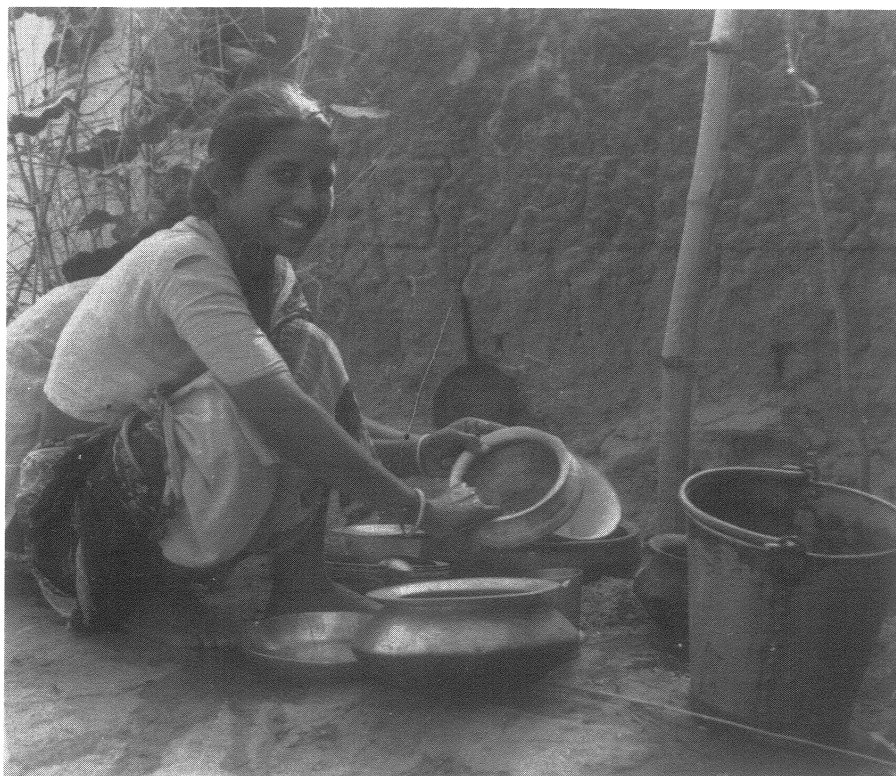
now in its initial stages, aims to provide Shantals with basic literacy skills, teach cooperative development, provide health and nutrition information, and teach Bible knowledge. We pray that all those involved in this ambitious program may be strengthened and blessed by our heavenly Father, that the truth and love of the gospel may penetrate many lives.

We hope to keep you informed on this interesting work in upcoming issues of the *Clarion*.

## Refugee aid

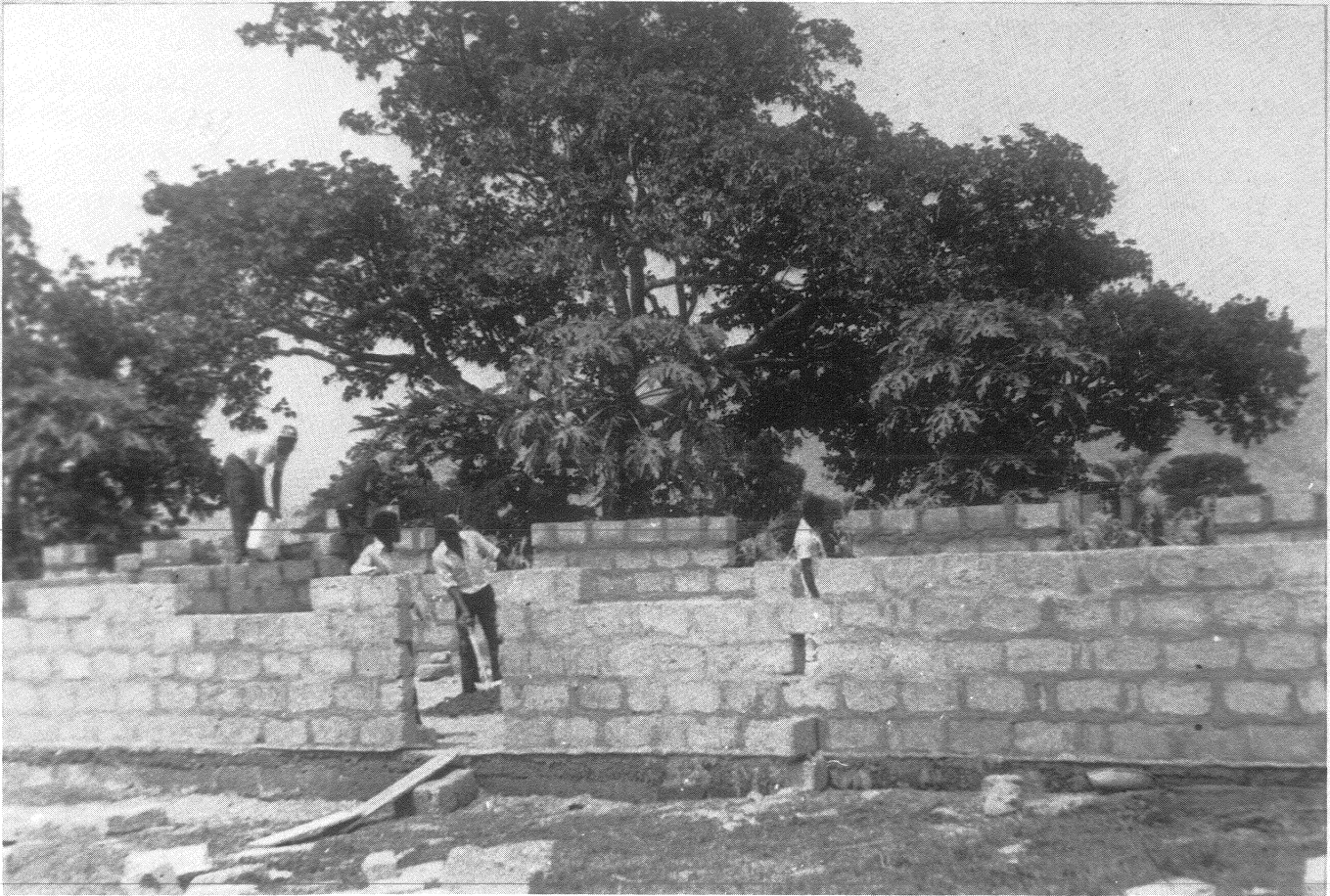
Recently we sent a gift of \$2,000 to assist in the Refugee Relief work of ZOA — the Committee for Aid to Southeast Asia. Founded in The Netherlands in 1973 as an initiative of the youth of the Gereformeerde Vrijgemaakte Kerk, ZOA extends aid to Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees, hundreds of thousands of whom are still living in camps in Thailand, Hong Kong, Singapore, etc., most with no hope of getting out. In addition to other efforts, ZOA now has complete responsibility for health care in Ban Vinai Camp in Thailand, a community housing 42,000 Hmong Refugees. The plight of these people, long ignored by the media (since their story is no longer new) is sad indeed.

We hope to provide you with more extensive information on this work also in a future issue of *Clarion*.



A Bengali woman doing her dishes

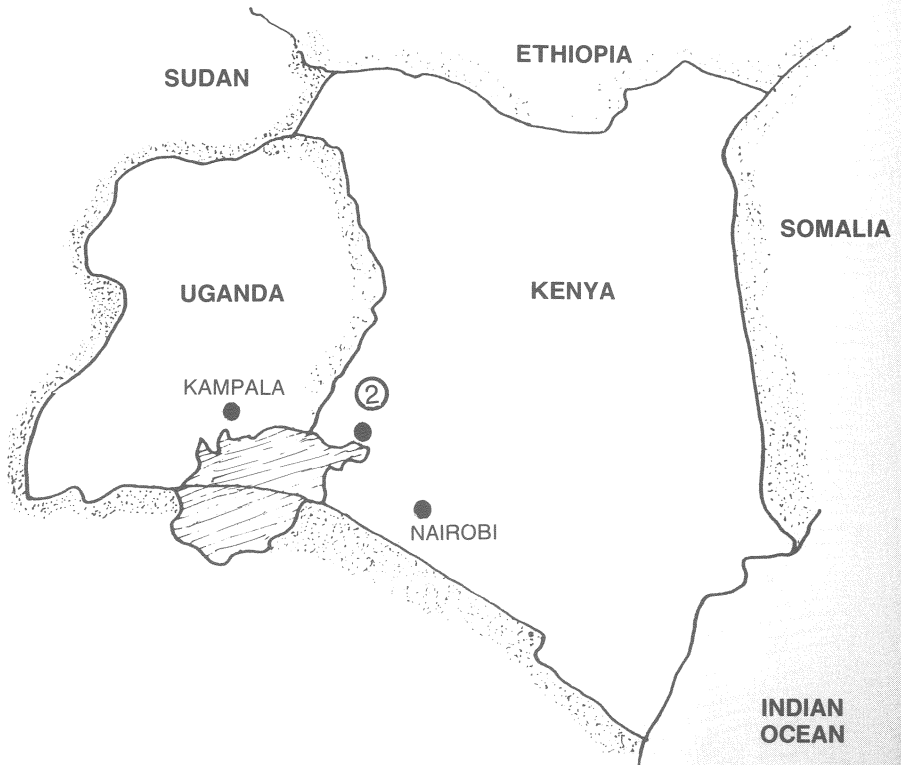




Achege — the walls for the addition going up

### Ethiopia relief aid

The terrible drought plaguing much of Africa and in particular, Ethiopia, has finally made the news and a massive relief effort is now underway. For many starving children and adults, the aid is sadly, too late. How sad too, that certain needs in our world remain unmet, certain disasters unaverted, while others receive attention simply due to the media bandwagon. Ethiopia, for instance, knew drought and hunger long before October of this year. In fact, we sent \$2,000 last year and again this spring through World Vision to help distribute food and provide much needed medical aid. Now the need has reached crisis proportions, but even all the millions in aid promised by Western governments, including our own, will not avert disaster. Relief efforts are hindered too by Ethiopia's Marxist government which has shown a horrific lack of concern for its own starving citizens, has inadequate services to unload and transport the huge quantities of food being shipped in, and has callously sought to prevent aid from reaching in-



② ACHEGO  
CHILDREN'S HOME IN KENYA



surgents in the hardest-hit areas in the north.

Our hearts are stirred by accounts of this terrible situation. However, we have not sent additional monies yet, feeling that all of us are already giving through our taxes, and perhaps CRWRF's funds should go to projects ignored by other relief efforts. We also feel that our aid may be more meaningful if given next year when the world will have largely forgotten the need in Africa. One local church (at least) has, however, held collections for Ethiopia's hungry, and we will be happy to forward such monies and any personal gifts earmarked for this purpose.

### Conclusion

Rejoice with us that our commitments are being met and that we may explore new avenues of service. Our budget is still so small that we do not foresee the day when we will actually be able to send out and fully support our own teams of workers to needy areas, yet it is large enough for us to selectively work through others (including our own church members in the case of Bangladesh) to make a difference, however small, in our hurting world. Statistics on hunger, homelessness, etc. are often mind boggling. It helps to remember, however, that figures represent individuals — who hunger, or are fed one by one — who are left in darkness or are brought to the light of Christ one by one.

May the Lord bless our efforts and teach us also here in our daily lives to do all that we can to help and reach others for Christ — one by one.

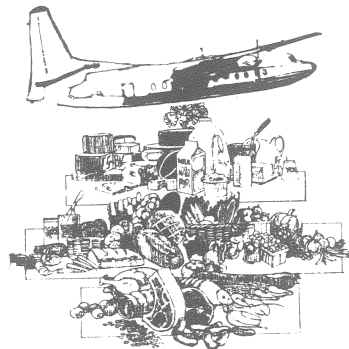
Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF  
PO Box 793  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y3

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



*Tranquility  
— as evening  
falls in Bogra*



N.B.: We have just learned of a reliable way to get aid to those starving in Eritrea, an area where people are dying because the inaccessibility of the area and especially their opposition to the Marxist regime deny them government supervised aid. The food is sent through neighbouring Sudan rather than Ethiopia itself.

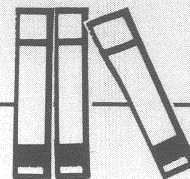
If you would like to contribute to this specific relief effort we would be happy to receive your donation.

### PROPOSED EXPENSES FOR THE YEAR 1985

1. Busan Gospel Hospital (health care unit), Korea .....	\$13,200.00
2. Achego children's home, Kenya .....	27,000.00
3. Khanjanper community development, Bangladesh .....	6,000.00
4. Emergency aid .....	4,000.00
5. New brochure .....	800.00
6. Postage — stencils — paper — etc. ....	400.00
7. Slide/film presentations .....	300.00
8. Miscellaneous .....	300.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$52,000.00</b>

### Notes:

1. Support unchanged, 1,100.00 per month.
2. With enlarged facilities, our support should be increased by 50% which amounts to 2,250.00 per month, supporting 60 children plus staff.
3. To support br. and sr. Ysselstein, members of the Church at Guelph working in Bangladesh.
4. Funds available if quick aid on a short term is necessary.
5. Since all our brochures with information of our work are handed out, new up to date brochures about our work are desirable.
6. For travel expenses and cost of slides made by third parties.



Van 't Spijker, W.(ed.), *Rondom de doopvont*, Kampen: Uitgeverij de Groot Goudriaan, 1984. 619 pp. Hfl. 95.90.

For the Reformed theologian this book is a must! The greatest advantage is that several Reformed theologians in The Netherlands have corroborated to present the doctrine of baptism from a truly Reformed perspective. For the young pastor who is not quite certain of why he should baptize infants, this book will provide him with the exegetical, historical, and dogmatical information he needs to shore up his position. This does not mean that the book is polemical in nature. Quite the contrary. This book is *thetic* in nature.

Because this book provides a wide gambit of accents and contributions by various authors, it will be impossible to devote attention to each article. I have, therefore, made a selection of the articles presented. Nonetheless, a few words must be spoken about the structure of the book. It is divided into two sections: exegetical and historical/dogmatic. Prof. Dr. J.P. Versteeg, professor of NT at the Seminary of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, provides us with an excellent and complete exegetical analysis of the question of baptism in the NT. His article is 133 pages long which almost qualifies it as a separate book. The length, however, does not detract in any way from the content of the article. Even though his article is entitled, "Baptism according to the NT" (De doop volgens het nt), Versteeg rightly devotes the necessary attention to the OT background. Following relatively short sections dealing with proselyte baptism, the baptism of John and circumcision, Versteeg leads the reader through the relevant texts in Matthew and Mark and there are rather extensive expositions of the texts in the book of Acts (2:38, 8:12,13,16; 10:47,48; 19:5). Thereafter follows an analysis of the pertinent letters of Paul, followed by an exposition of IPeter 3:21. Three pages are given to the concept of the baptism of someone's "house." He closes with the "holiness" of the children in the parents (pp. 130-133).

With this excellent exegetical section as the basis for what shall follow, the historical/dogmatical section begins. Dr.

W. Balke has made a contribution entitled, "The doctrine of baptism and the practice of baptism in the Middle Ages." In this article Balke provides the reader with invaluable information concerning the "when" and "how" of baptism in that period of time. It is particularly enlightening to read that most baptisms were performed at Easter and Pentecost (p. 175). Of further interest is ritual series of questions that were put by the priest to the godparents and midwife (!) and their answers. With Luther's 500th birthday just behind us we are brought into contact with this great Reformer by K. Exalto with his article, "Baptism by Luther." After an explication of Luther's early development, Exalto discusses Luther's thoughts as they manifest themselves in some of his most salient works. The great advantage of this procedure is that those who do not have access to the WA of Luther's works can follow him in their "Studienausgaben." Exalto begins with a baptism sermon of Luther from 1519. It is clearly evident from this phase of Luther's development that the *responsibility* placed upon the recipient was greater than the *gift* (p. 199). Two of the most important emphases in this sermon are that of the *covenant* and the *union* of God and the believer (p. 200). In the second section Exalto treats the work, *The Babylonian captivity of the church*, which dates from 1520. Once again we find that the covenant is emphasized by means of the *promissio* (p. 203). Baptism gains its value and significance from God's promise (p. 205). In the case of the baptism of children the sacrament refers to the promise of God and a *fides aliena* that helps the child (p. 207). The third section of Exalto's article deals with the Greater Catechism of 1529.

Prof. dr. W. van 't Spijker traces the development of baptism in the theologies of Zwingli, Bullinger, and Bucer. It is refreshing to find someone who is not simply willing to repeat all the worn-out clichés concerning Zwingli with which we are all acquainted. Van't Spijker picks up the thread of the covenant again in regard to Zwingli's thought (221). Earlier on Zwingli broke with the notion of the sacrament as a *mystery* or *secret* and spoke of it as a *guarantee* and *oath*. An interesting emphasis in Zwingli's doctrine was the responsibility placed upon the

baptized infant. It is bound to the Law of God that it lives by that Law. The parents, of course, are duly responsible for rearing that child to fear the Lord to the best of their ability (225). When we arrive at the figure of Bullinger we find an intensification of the notion of the covenant in his thought. Bullinger takes Zwingli's notion of the responsibility seriously, but goes a step further. He wants to know what the *external responsibility in concreto* means (p. 241). He seeks the solution in what *God* does in baptism. This is revolutionary for it extricates the baptismal questions — in regard to infants — from the false dilemma: faith-baptism. That is to say, baptism says nothing about how the infant will be either immediately or in the future. The emphasis is on how *God* is for the child, namely true to His covenant promises (p. 242). In conjunction with the *Consensus Tigurinus*, one finds a Christocentric element in Bullinger's doctrine. Bucer's doctrine of baptism is typified not only by the element of responsibility, in general, but what could be called "covenant responsibility" (p. 255). In terms of emphasis it cannot be denied that one of the main emphases is ecclesiology (p. 256). Further, baptism is the sacrament of hope because the incorporation into the covenant community in Christ looks to the life of the future (p. 258).

Before this review turns into an article we shall only mention one more article in this book. Prof. dr. J. van Genderen has contributed an article entitled, "Baptism by Calvin." van Genderen mentions the all-important element of the *sursum corda* in Calvin's sacramentology which causes the recipient of the sacrament to elevate his heart above attention to the *material* of the sacraments and causes him to rise up to the *Author* of them (p. 265). Of primary importance is the question, "Of what is baptism a sign and a seal?" van Genderen cites *Institutes* 4, 15, 10 where Calvin speaks of the promise wherein forgiveness of sins transpires (p. 269). Thereafter, van Genderen devotes some time to Calvin's view of regeneration and the accompanying idea of the *unio mystica* which places us squarely within Pneumatology.

*Baptism* does not make members of the church, but *God* witnesses that we are members through the sacrament that He

has instituted. It is well known that Calvin was a paedo-baptist. van Genderen describes Calvin's arguments for infant baptism as a combination of many factors. We have just mentioned the pneumatology and, without a doubt, Calvin's view of the covenant plays an exceedingly important rôle in his thoughts. Calvin connects baptism with the spiritual promises that were given in circumcision (p. 278).

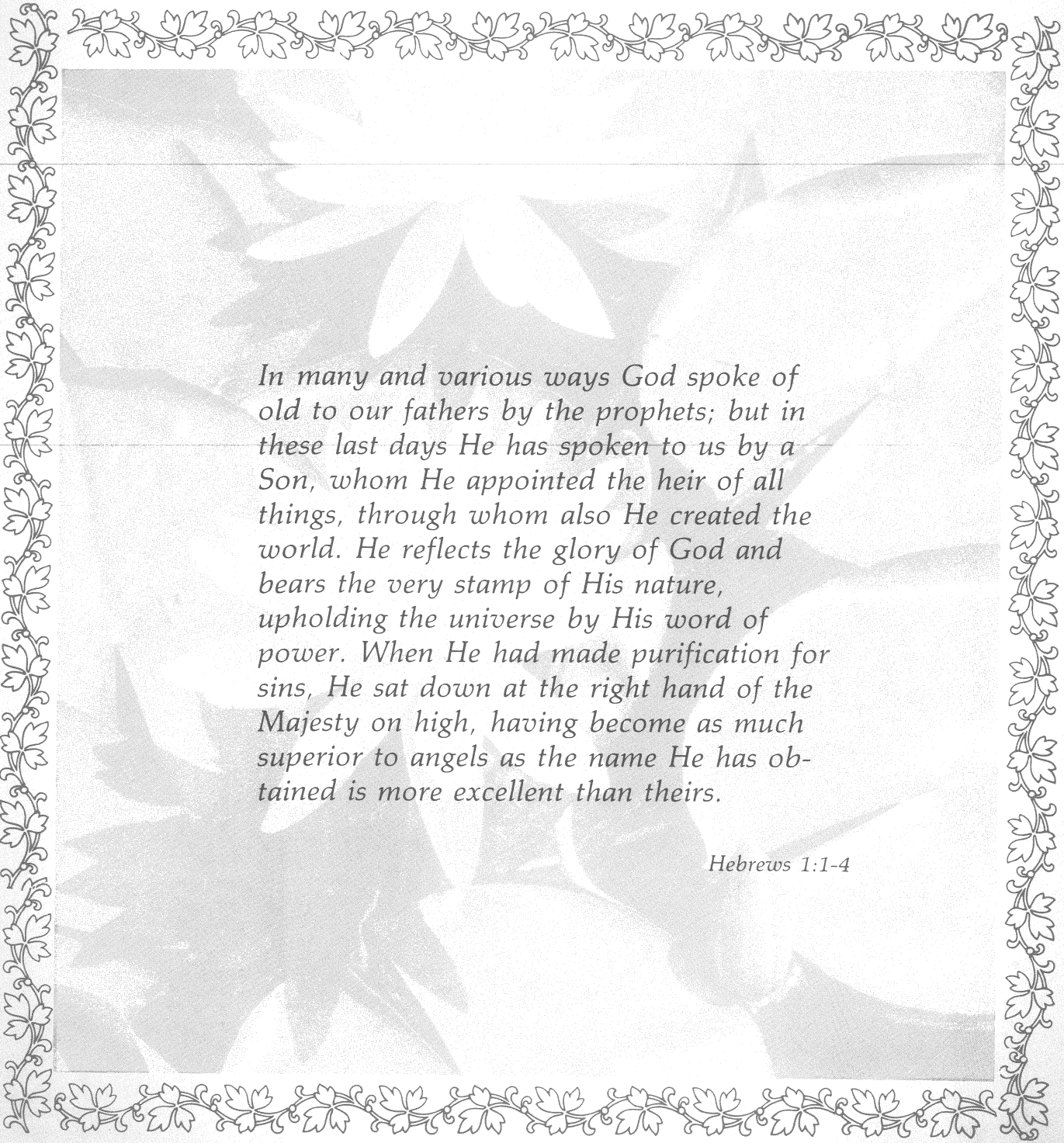
Secondly, van Genderen explicitly mentions the covenant, itself. Calvin's exegesis of 1 Cor.7:14, for example, *must* be viewed in light of Calvin's doctrine of the covenant (pp. 280, 287). Here, again, all the emphasis falls upon the promise of the covenant which envelopes everything (p. 286).

This book ought to be read by Reformed pastors who desire to explain bap-

tism in light of the continuity of God's covenant for I am convinced that it is only within that perspective that one can clearly see God's purposes in the history of redemption.

Rijswijk,  
The Netherlands

DRS. R. GLEASON



*In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature, upholding the universe by His word of power. When He had made purification for sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name He has obtained is more excellent than theirs.*

*Hebrews 1:1-4*



# Report: League Day 1984

Our twenty-third League Day was held this year on Oct. 10 in Strathroy. Here the sisters of the hosting Societies of Watford and London welcomed us with coffee and goodies, which we really enjoyed after the (long) ride.

The mild, misty weather of late had caused some concern about traveling on League Day, but thankfully the weather this morning was cooperative and everyone was on time for the 10 o'clock start of our programme. This was opened with singing and Scripture reading from Psalm 89. Mrs. Lynn Van Delden, President of the League, led in prayer and then welcomed everyone to League Day.

Mrs. Van Delden had chosen as theme for the day "God's faithfulness and steadfast love" of which we had just sung in Psalm 89. "In our daily work," she said, "we often don't see farther than the things at hand, but on this day of fellowship and study we may be encouraged and built up with the joyful knowledge that "God is faithful." "Our topics today," she said, "will lead us right through the Bible and show God's faithfulness in bringing His people to the great Day of His return." In conclusion she remarked that in the meantime it is our task and privilege as covenant children to "proclaim Thy faithfulness to all generations."

Mrs. Reinink of Burlington who had been elected League Vice-President at the delegates' meeting the previous evening, was now introduced to the audience. A letter of congratulations and best wishes for a good day together, had been received from the "Bond in Holland." The President also read a letter of thanks from the Mission Aviation Fellowship for our collection held League Day the previous year. Roll call, always an interesting part of our programme, showed that today 300 sisters, plus a few brothers, were present.

After the singing of our League Song we read from Genesis 3, I Timothy 2 and Revelation 12 in preparation for Mrs. Thea Heyink's essay on "The Role of Women in the Church — Past and Present." Mrs. Heyink pointed out that the woman's role is very much in discussion in our modern world. Nevertheless we as women of the church, God's covenant people, must look to Scripture for norms and guidance also on this subject. The Bible, starting in Genesis, clearly teaches that women have a twofold task as helpmeet and mother. The essayist continued by showing how various women in the Bi-

ble from Eve to Priscilla and Philip's four daughters — fulfilled this double role each in her own circumstance. Attention was also given to what Paul said and taught about women. Contrary to what may seem to be the case, Paul does not hold women in low esteem. His concern for, and greetings to sisters active in the church show his acknowledgment of their God-given talents as they work where the Lord placed them. However, Paul does teach that they must fulfil this role in submission and seek their adornment not in pride, but in faithfulness in the task God gives, whether married, unmarried, or widowed.

After the singing of Hymn 40 we discussed the topic Mrs. Heyink had introduced. This discussion gave evidence of the fact that we live in the world of today, yet we are not of the world, and for this reason want to bring Scriptural teaching to bear on our role of nurturing our children, and also others in the communion of saints. We sang several stanzas of Psalm 145, and a collection was held for "Anchor," the Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped.

A short ride through town brought us to the local community center where we enjoyed a delicious, traditional League Day lunch, and of course, lots of chatter.

Soon enough however, the afternoon session was opened with the singing of our national anthem. The sisters of the hosting Society of Watford then presented a most original and amusing "fashion show" complete with props!

In preparation for Rev. VanRietschoten's speech on "God's Covenant — Will Today" we joined in singing from Psalm 105 and reading from Scripture from the letter to the Hebrews. The speaker pictured our world as one very much changed from Biblical times when God created the world and established His covenant with man. But he questioned whether the new developments were in harmony with God's created order. And yet it is in this changed and changing world where we must stand Scripturally teaching today's youth that God's covenant norms still apply today, and how today's new developments must be used to the greater glory not of man, but of God. In doing this we have no "tailor-made" answers, Rev. VanRietschoten said. Yet we have the Lord's promise that He upholds the possibilities for life and even gives us the outlook on

the New Jerusalem where indeed everything will be made new. Following the framework of the Ten Words of the Covenant, the speaker pointed out some practical ways in which we can show in our everyday lives our loving obedience to the demands of God's covenant law, not patting ourselves first. "Living this way we can rely on our heavenly Father," the speaker concluded, "for He will continue to grant wisdom." We sang from Psalm 25 and then a discussion was held on the afternoon's topic.

Coming to the end of our programme, Mrs. Van Delden expressed sincere thanks to the hosting Societies for the wonderful job done organizing this League Day, and to the essayist, also the speaker/organist, and all who contributed to the success of the day. Mrs. Ludwig, the retiring League Vice-President and ILPB representative, was heartily thanked too, for her work for the League over the last five years. We sang from Psalm 124 and Rev. VanRietschoten led in thanksgiving and prayer. It had been a stimulating and joyful day with opportunities for study and fellowship for which we may be very thankful. After some coffee and refreshments, chatter and good-byes, we left for home through the sunny, colourful countryside.

Recording Secretary  
E. HOF SINK

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## OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

DIEKE, Martinus Petrus, geboren op 10 november 1919, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Goudsbloemlaan 12 te 's Gravenhage, naar Canada vertrokken op 7 augustus 1951.

HARTMAN, Jan, geboren op 3 oktober 1935 te Vlaardingen.

VAN DEN HEUVEL, Michiel, geboren op 2 december 1919 te Bergen op Zoom, naar Canada vertrokken op 21 juli 1960 met waarschijnlijk bestemming Montreal.

The Consul-Generaal,  
voor deze:-  
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER  
Fdg. KANSELIER

A decorative border of repeating floral and leaf motifs surrounds the text on all four sides.

## To Our Readers

*It is only two years ago that I thought I had addressed you as readers of Clarion for the last time. As you may recall, I had sold my business to Mr. G. van Dijken of The Netherlands, and as such my position as owner/publisher changed to that of a loosely employed salesman. However, the change did not last long. Early in the New Year (1984) Mr. van Dijken indicated his desire and decision to return with his family to the old country. Not wishing that the business would fall into the hands of strangers, a few family members decided to buy Premier back. For your information, the new owners are: Gerry Kuik, president; John Toet, vice-president; Bill Gortemaker, secretary-treasurer; Jake Kuik, Ben Kuik, and Lawrence Toet, directors.*

*Although Premier's livelihood is derived from its fairly extensive commercial printing department, i.e. from the simplest black and white job to the most elaborate, sophisticated multicolour reproduction, we nevertheless have committed ourselves to continue, wherever and whenever possible, to be instrumental in the promotion of Reformed literature. We hope, therefore, as the opportunity arises, to publish some books and other literature to help preserve our Reformed heritage, which is constantly and severely under attack.*

*We therefore wish to thank those who tirelessly work to fill the columns of Clarion, especially the Reverends Geertsema, Pouwelse, DeJong, Stam, and VanOene, as well as others, like Mrs. Riemersma, Aunt Betty, and Mr. N. Vandooren. We have received much from them. May the Lord grant them health and courage so that they may continue their task for the edification of the readers of our magazine.*

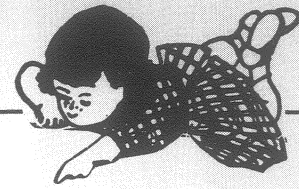
*Although Reformed Perspective is not the property of Premier, we nevertheless urge our readers to support that magazine in whatever way possible, be it financially or by propagating it and winning new subscribers, or by writing articles. Some of our staff members have volunteered to spend some free time on Reformed Perspective — a saving of well over \$5000 per year for Reformed Perspective.*

*We also wish to express our sincere appreciation for your continuous support by subscribing to Clarion, and by placing your family announcements in our (your) magazine. It is certainly enriching to see, for instance, from issue to issue, the great number of birth announcements, in sharp contrast with the terrible, ungodly abortion of thousands of unborn children.*

*May the Lord grant us all wisdom and insight into His revealed Word, that we walk faithfully in His ways as confessed in our Reformed Confessions.*

*All of us at Premier wish you a Christian festive season and a blessed New Year.*

G. KUIK



Dear Busy Beavers,

## IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME!

Christmas morning we'll all go to church and read the story of the birth of the Lord Jesus in Bethlehem.

Likely even before you go to church you'll read at home the same Christmas story!

We think of the Baby King born long, long ago in a country far away.

We do that every year at Christmas.

Every year we sing "... glory to the newborn King."

But we all know the Lord Jesus didn't stay a baby.

Don't you love the story of the Boy Jesus in the temple?

We know from the Bible how Jesus the Saviour told His people about His Father in Heaven.

And how He healed the sick and raised the dead.

No, He didn't stay that Baby in the manger.

He died to pay for His people's sins.

He rose in glory from the dead!

His disciples watched in fear and wonder as their Lord arose to heaven.

And what happened then?

Angels came who told the disciples:

"Jesus will come again! Just like that — on the clouds of heaven."

It all happened long ago — and still we are waiting.

Even while we sing of "the new-born King" we know that He is coming on the clouds of heaven with His angels.

What a happy day that will be for all God's people!

I still had a Christmas story from Busy Beaver *Margo Hof-sink*. I think you will like it.

One day Zechariah was in the temple and an angel came to Zechariah in a bright light. The angel's name was Gabriel. The angel said to Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth was going to get a baby. His name would be John.

One day Gabriel came to Mary and said she would get a baby too. He would be God's Son and His name would be Jesus.

One day Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem. They went on camels. One day Mary's baby was born in the stable.

Some wisemen saw the star of Bethlehem. So they went to Bethlehem to see the new-born King.

Busy Beaver *Peter John Sikkema* wants you to see how well you know the Bible Christmas story. Can you fill in the blanks without using your Bible?

"Now when Jesus was born in \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ in the days of \_\_\_\_\_ the king, behold, wise men from the \_\_\_\_\_ came to \_\_\_\_\_, saying, "Where is He who has been born king of the \_\_\_\_\_? For we have seen His \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_, and have come to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. When \_\_\_\_\_ the king heard this he was troubled, and all \_\_\_\_\_ with him."

Matthew 2:1-3



## FROM THE MAILBOX

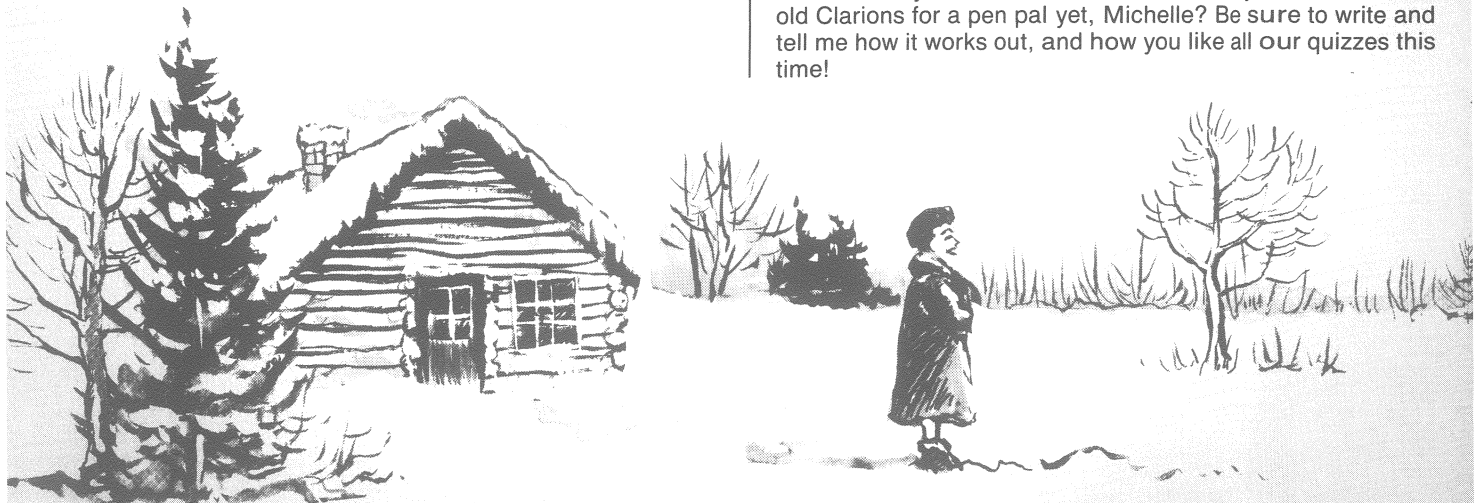
Welcome to the Busy Beaver *Joyce Wieggers*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities, Joyce! How did you do on your walkathon? And how is your skating, Joyce?

Hello, *Mary Vandeburgt*. I'm glad you had such a good birthday, and such a nice trip to Carman. How did you like the organ concert in Abbotsford, Mary? And now it's time for Christmas concerts again! Thanks for your nice long letter, Mary. Bye for now.

It was nice to hear from you again, *Nora Boersema*. I'm happy to hear your little brother is learning to read. That's very important right? How old is he, Nora? Thank you very much for the funny riddles!

Sounds to me as if you had lots of fun on your teacher's birthday, *Rita Wubs*. What films did you watch? And I see you've been keeping busy! Thank you very much for the word search.

Hello, *Michelle Oostdyk*. Thanks for your riddles, too. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will like them! Have you looked in the old Clarions for a pen pal yet, Michelle? Be sure to write and tell me how it works out, and how you like all our quizzes this time!





## WHERE AM I?

by Busy Beaver Linda De Boer

- Here in the city of David,  
Joseph and Mary came;  
Our Saviour was born in a stable,  
The angel gave Jesus His name  
What city am I? \_\_\_\_\_
- When the number of days were accomplished  
According to God's holy Word;  
Baby Jesus was brought by His parents  
To present Him before the Lord.  
In what city? \_\_\_\_\_
- It was here in this city  
The boy Jesus was raised,  
At His spiritual wisdom  
His parents were amazed.  
What city am I? \_\_\_\_\_

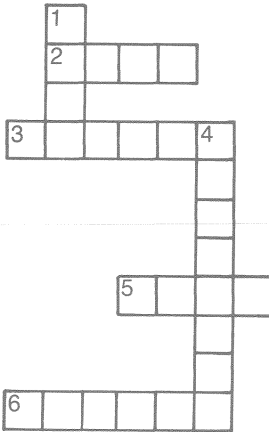
## A CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD PUZZLE

### DOWN

- wise men
- Jesus' hometown

### ACROSS

- a widow in the temple
- an old man
- the Saviour's mother
- the Saviour's earthly father



## ABOUT THE LORD JESUS

- Where was the Lord Jesus born? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did His parents take Him till the death of Herod? \_\_\_\_\_
- In what town was the Lord Jesus brought up? \_\_\_\_\_
- How old was the Lord Jesus when He first went to Jerusalem to the feast? \_\_\_\_\_

- Where was He when His parents "sought Him sorrowing" and what was He doing? \_\_\_\_\_
- Can you complete the following quotation which is verse 52 of the second chapter of Luke: "And Jesus increased in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_, and in favour with \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_"?
- What was the name of the demon-possessed man whom Jesus healed "in the country of the Gadarenes"?
- In what city did the Lord Jesus call Zacchaeus?
- Who went up with the Lord Jesus on the mount where He was transfigured, and who appeared in glory and talked with Him there? \_\_\_\_\_
- Where did the Lord Jesus still a tempest and what did the disciples say as they marvelled? \_\_\_\_\_
- With whom did the Lord Jesus hold a conversation at Jacob's well at Sychar? \_\_\_\_\_
- Whom did the Lord raise from the dead at Bethany?
- Which three parables concerning something lost are told by the Lord one after the other in Luke, Chapter 15?
- How were the disciples to find the Upper Room where the Lord was to eat the Passover with them?
- Where did the Lord Jesus pray long and earnestly just before His betrayal? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who betrayed the Lord and what sign did he give to those who had come to capture Jesus?
- What happened to Malchus at the time of the betrayal and what did the Lord Jesus do for him? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who was the Roman governor before whom the Lord was put on trial? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is the meaning of Golgotha, the place on Mount Calvary where Jesus was crucified? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who were the three women who, on the first Easter morning, found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre and were told by an angel. "Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified; he is risen"?

Send in your answers to this quiz to me, Busy Beavers. Then I'll send you a reward. After all, such a big quiz!



## A WINTER PUZZLE

by Busy Beaver Angela Brouwer

T R S E S C A R F C B D  
 E Q N T N O N Y S X S N  
 C T O B O G G A N I N G  
 I R W U W I J K O L M D  
 M O S P M E S Y W R I P  
 R F U S O N K W P P T S  
 V U I T B W I N L T T E  
 F Y T O I Z S N O W E T  
 L R C O L D M Q W X N A  
 O W O B E T H P R Z S K  
 D E L S L L A B W O N S  
 T R O F T A T B C D X Q

snow  
skis  
skates  
cold

hat  
mittens  
snowmobile  
scarf  
boots

snowsuit  
sled  
frost  
ice  
storm

snowplow  
fort  
snowballs  
tobogganing

## CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver Krista Ellens

J R H R R Y M P G O D  
 U U A N Z O K E B W O  
 D O P T C G P R T L R  
 E O H U S I B O R N E  
 A Z E W K F Q D O S H  
 C H R I S T E M P L E  
 S O O S F S T A B L E  
 G S H E P H E R D T M

Look for:

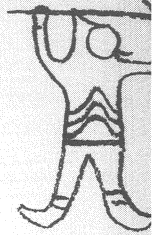
Judea star Christ temple born stable  
 wise myrrh Herod God gifts shepherd

## SCRAMBLE

by Busy Beaver Tim Hofsink

Tim's picture is a clue!

- |                  |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|
| 1. kosemi _____  | 8. urf _____      |
| 2. kakya _____   | 9. eslas _____    |
| 3. poarhn _____  | 10. orubcai _____ |
| 4. akpra _____   | 11. heartel _____ |
| 5. tentims _____ | 12. reasp _____   |
| 6. ehlaws _____  | 13. skiesuh _____ |
| 7. otsbo _____   | 14. sseld _____   |



Before we say good-bye to 1984, we want to wish all the Busy Beavers celebrating a January birthday a very happy day! Here's hoping you all have a really good day with your family and friends. And we add our very best wishes for the Lord's blessing and guidance in the New Year. That goes for all of you, Busy Beavers!

# January

Heather Van Middelkoop	1	Shelleen Bos	18
Susan Helder	3	Linda De Boer	18
Vicki Roodzant	6	Cornelius Leffers	18
Jennifer Clark	8	Marie Huttema	20
Alan Van Raalte	8	Sylvia Sikkema	23
Teena Buzeman	11	Mary-Lynn De Boer	24
Michael John Mans	11	Bernard Breukelman	26
Marjorie Barendregt	14	Helena Onderwater	26
Rita Wubs	14	Krista Ellens	28
Carl De Boer	15	Carol Witteveen	31
Richard Lof	16		

Answers

10. caribou 11. leather 12. spear 13. huskies 14. sleds  
 5. mittens 6. whales 7. boots 8. fur 9. seals  
 SCRAMBLE 1. Eskimo 2. kayak 3. harpoon 4. parka

WHERE AM I? 1. Bethlehem 2. Jerusalem 3. Nazareth

Time to say good-bye, Busy Beavers.

I wish you all a joyous Christmas and very happy holidays from school!

Be sure to send in your answers to the quiz very soon. Hope to "see" you all next year!

You know my address!  
 Aunt Betty, Box 54  
 Fergus, ON N1M 2W7

With love from your  
 Aunt Betty

