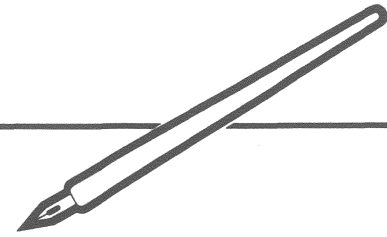


Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Volume 34, No. 12 June 14, 1985



Attention for man in the preaching?

The happy Christian?

Listening to evangelical radio messages and reading Christian books from an evangelical corner, we notice that much attention is given to the Christian and his faith, the Christian and his happiness. Many programs focus on the question how one can become a good and happy Christian. The message is often that in order to become a happy person, one must believe in Jesus. Accept Jesus in your life, and you will be blessed, you will be healed, you will be happy. And in charismatic circles it is said that this happiness is especially there where the Holy Spirit grants the gift of speaking in tongues.

I give an example, heard on a Sunday morning: Praise the Lord, for my wife is slimming down. She lost thirty-one pounds. Let's give the Lord a big hand. I know this is an extreme example, and extremely wrong, unscriptural, a false teaching. But it clearly proves the point that man and his happiness is in the centre.

The consequence of placing so much emphasis on the Christian and his spiritual growth and happiness is that in these evangelical circles much attention is focused on the calling to make others happy. You meet friendliness and love. People show that they care. Guests are heartily welcomed.

This is what makes these evangelical churches so attractive. Such an attitude is very pleasant. And let us realize that we can learn from it. The Scriptures teach us that God pays attention to His children in His loving care. It is that love and care that made Him send His Son to the cross to die for sinners. It is that intense loving care of which David speaks in Psalm 139. God's children are called to show that loving care of God in Christ to others by caring for them. Paul admonishes the believers in Philippi always to rejoice in the Lord and thereby to show friendliness and forbearance to all people.

However, is this evangelical emphasis on being a good Christian, on the individual Christian and his spiritual experiences and happiness, the direction in which the Reformed Churches also have to go in order to have a future? To answer this question I like to go back to the distinction "objective-subjective," especially as it was used with regard to preaching and to which the Liberation said "no." I do this because there is a link between subjectivism as rejected by those who followed the Liberation about forty years ago and much of today's evangelicalism. That link is that in both the religious man is in the centre.

Objective

Perhaps a somewhat broader explanation of these terms is in order. I will give this because I see it as important that also our younger generation knows what went on before and in the Liberation. In order to keep our heritage, it is necessary to know it. If we do not know anymore why we are Canadian Reformed and what the heritage is which God gave us in the Liberation,

we actually have lost that heritage already. And when we lose this God-given heritage, the Liberation will have been for nothing as far as we are concerned. If we do not know anymore why we are Canadian Reformed or "Liberated," if we do not know anymore what our heritage is and do not care about it, we become just another denomination among the many other churches, or (in accordance with the general view concerning the church) one of the many branches of the "universal church-tree." If we would see ourselves according to this general view, we would also have lost the Reformed confessional concept of the church and what the church has to be.

Objective preaching is a preaching in which a mere objective explanation of the text is given to the congregation or in which only a particular truth of God's Word is exposed, without applying it to the lives of the hearers. God's Word and its truth is here just an object of study. Man is busy with that Word, thinks about it, takes certain truths from it, and gives the result of this study to others. Such objective preaching can result in dead orthodoxy, that does not touch the heart of the hearers, but leaves them cold. Objective preaching can be said to be mere explanation. God's Word is here just an object of study and source of information.

This is why it was said that objective preaching alone is not enough and not good. The personal aspect or the subjective element has to be there as well. Therefore, to the objective explanation of a text or truth must be added the personal application. The remark has been made that in former days a congregation did not pay much attention during the explanation part of a sermon, and easily dosed off. The explanation was not so important. But when the application came, they woke up, because then the real message would be brought to them.

Now it is true that we can see God's Word as an object for study and meditation. God's Word must be studied. It contains God's self-revelation in Christ in which God gave us the truth. This is not denied at all. But also when God's Word is studied this must be done in humble submission. Then we accept the Word of God as "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16). The confession of the church is, among other things, the result of the study of God's Word. But the church came to this result of its study through its attitude of humble, submissive listening to the Scriptures.

We also do not deny that a sermon needs to have the elements of both explanation and application. This distinction can be made. The preacher has to explain God's Word to the congregation, unfolding its meaning. A sermon that does not explain the text is not preaching the Word of the Lord. There should also be a place for the application of that Word for the congregation today. In His Word God speaks to His people of all centuries. This element must come out in the sermon as well, even though we do not forget that the congregation also has the task herself to work with God's Word in her life and do the application herself.



Subjective

Now it has been said that a sermon could be too objective, but also too subjective. Subjective preaching focuses all the attention on the human subject. In such preaching man's different states of grace are discussed. How far is he on the way of grace? How much grace has he experienced? Descriptions are given of the unregenerate at his worst, or in a less bad state, or at his best. Subjective preaching also pictures the regenerate at his worst, or at his best, or in the different states between the two extremes. All these descriptions are given in order that the hearers may be able to distinguish these different states of the soul for themselves and recognize themselves in one of these descriptions, so that they know in what state of grace they are.

Professor C. Trimp gives this description of the evil of subjectivism (*De Reformatie*, February 2, 1985). It is "the concentration of the attention on man's inner life, in order to meet God *there*, to hear God's voice *there*, and to learn to know God's way *there*. Here we see man seeking in vain for the certainty of faith; desperately he seeks in himself the marks of grace and of election. For when he can bring those marks up out of his experience and can press them into appearance, then his heart will be allowed to enjoy the peace with God."

The gain of the Liberation

It is clear that in this subjective preaching all the attention is focused on man and his being saved or not (yet), and on the different states of knowing about his being saved. The big question is here, "How am I, or how can I know that I am, a saved Christian?" It can also easily be understood that there were grave objections against such subjective preaching. However, many thought that a good sermon should contain a little bit of the subjective element together with the objective explanation of the truth. It had to be both objective *and* subjective.

In a magazine, *Cursus tot Ontwikkeling van het Gereformeerd Kerkelijk Denken* (Course for the Development of Reformed Ecclesiastical Thinking), which was published in The Netherlands during World War II, under the direction of Dr. R. Schippers and Rev. H.J. Spier, one of the anonymous "teachers" writes about "Objectivity and Subjectivity in the Preaching?" He points at the fact that many seek the solution of the problem (must the preaching be objective or subjective or both) "in the synthesis, the harmony between subjectivity and objectivity." He continues: "It is not easy to see how the synthesis of two dangerous extremes, the harmony between two errors, can provide the truth. . . . The Bible is neither objective nor subjective. [Approaching the Word of God with this scheme] means the negation of that what characterizes the Scriptures as Word of God. The Word of God is, as revelation

of God, constantly . . . above our whole life, including our faith and wants to dominate our life through faith, submitting it to the grace and truth of Christ."

The author continues to point at two texts and writes, "Hereby the gospel of God is a power unto salvation (I Corinthians 1:18). 'For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).' Thus the Word is the dominating *norm* of God for our life. And because the preaching of God's Word derives its character from the Word, on which it depends totally, the preaching must be *normative*. Therefore, the proclamation of God's Word must not be objective, nor subjective, but *normative*."

Let me quote Professor C. Trimp once again. He writes in *De Reformatie* of March 2, 1985 that "about forty years ago an end was made to this scheme of objective-subjective preaching in the Reformed Churches [Liberated, J.G.]. Holwerda and others did no longer want to choose between the two possibilities and, at the same time, they rejected that so much praised balance: partly this and partly that — a little bit here and a little bit there."

How could it come so far, after the centuries long domination of this dilemma? What was the founding basis for its rejection? It is abundantly clear that this basis was found in a sharper view regarding the character of God's covenant. In the Scriptures as well as in the preaching (respectively inscripturation and administration of the Word of God), the living God speaks to His people. That is why the whole sermon must be set in the tonal key of the *address*. The point is not the subjective voice in the heart or the objective pronouncement of the doctrine, but the normative address of the covenant God who speaks with authority. (Since I cannot translate Professor Trimp's catching manner of writing in adequate English, I give here also the original Dutch wording: "Het gaat niet om de subjectieve *inspraak* in het hart of the objectieve *uitspraak* van de leer, maar om de normatieve *aanspraak* van de sprekende God in het verbond." [Italics are added]. Dr. Trimp continues: "This means, among other things, that also in the explanation element, that belongs to every sermon, this tone must be heard. With the explanation of the text it is not so that an expert is standing in front of an onlookers congregation demonstrating his knowledge of an old text. Also in the explanation part from the pulpit — explanation in the framework of the administration of the Word — the congregation is addressed with the words of the covenant. It is the right view on the character of God's covenant, which raises us above the level of the subjective sermon."

God speaks His Word to His covenant people

Professor Trimp wrote that the basis for doing away with that whole dilemma objective-subjective was a better understanding from the Scriptures of what the covenant is. Those who followed the Liberation also rejected the distinction of an inner real covenant over against an only formal, outward covenant, the former with the elect or regenerate only, the latter including also those members of the church who are not elect, and will not be regenerated, and either remain in the church as hypocrites or leave the church.

It was clearly seen again that God establishes His covenant with His people, and that believers receive a place in that covenant with all the children that God gives them. To all of them God says "I am the Lord your God, and you are My people; you are My children, My sons and daughters."

That this is true for the people of Israel during the Old Testament period, is clear from the preamble above the Ten Words of the covenant. That the same is true for the New Testament church is clear from, for instance, II Corinthians 6:14-7:1,

where the apostle Paul takes the Old Testament promise "I will be their God, and they shall be My people I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters," and applies this truth to the New Testament church, adding the covenant obligation of faith with these words, "since we have these *promises*, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, and make holiness perfect in the fear of God."

In these words the whole congregation in Corinth is addressed, not only the regenerate part. The covenant promise "I am your God, you are My people, My sons and daughters," is true for all of them. And the obligation to believe this promise and live holy for the Lord in that faith comes to all with the same force.

All the children of the believers are covenant children of the Lord. Only in this light can we understand how Paul can say in I Corinthians 7:14 that the children of one believing parent, while the other remains an unbeliever, are holy. Holy means that they belong to the Lord and His covenant. Paul does not state that this holiness is true only for the elect children. Paul does also not state that this covenant holiness automatically means eternal salvation. It is and remains so that in the way of a true faith which accepts the promise this eternal salvation will be received. Hereby we do not deny or forget that this faith, fruit of regeneration, is a gift of God to those whom He has chosen. Neither do we forget that the Scripture teaches that not all who belong to Israel according to the flesh are true, that is, believing Israelites. Nevertheless, this does not take away the fact that the promise and the obligation of the covenant comes to all.

What are now the Scriptures? They are God's covenant Words which He *speaks* (note here the present tense) to His people. A beautiful and clear example is here besides the passage from II Corinthians 6 that was quoted above Hebrews 3:7, where the author of this letter writes to the Hebrew believers, "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says [note again the present tense], 'Today, when you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion'" These words are a quotation from Psalm 95 in the Old Testament. This teaches us that throughout all generations, God *speaks* His Word, which we have in the Scripture, also today, to His people.

In that Word God does two things. He reveals Himself in it to His people as their God, so that they can know Him, His promises, and His will for their life. And in it He comes to His people and gives Himself to them as He revealed Himself. God reveals and gives Himself to His people in Jesus Christ.

What God does in His Word, that must be done in the preaching of that Word. True preaching of God's Word must and will bring the self-revelation of God in Christ to the congregation, and therewith God Himself will come to His people, giving Himself to all of them as their God and Father in Jesus Christ; giving Himself to them in all His grace and mercy, and calling them all to accept Him, and what He says, with a true faith.

Such preaching will not remain without effect. Preaching Christ as Saviour and Lord will have an effect that can and will be experienced, because the Word of God is the sword of the Holy Spirit. But this experience flows forth from Christ. We hope to elaborate on this point the next time.

J. GEERTSEMA

Media and manipulation₁

1. Our daily dose

Everyday we are confronted with the world-news in one way or another. We listen to the radio, watch the newscast on T.V., or read our daily newspaper. We all know that there are bad T.V. programs, so we must be careful what we are watching, if we watch at all. However, most people feel that the daily newscast is the only program, or almost the only program, you can watch without being afraid of a bad influence. After all, the news gives only the facts, the reality. Although it is not always nice to see, it shows what life is all about. With other programs we have to be careful that we do not get indoctrinated, but with the news we only receive very factual information. At least, that is what most people think. Still we are not so sure that this reasoning is correct. We agree that many, if not all "entertainment" programs have a bad influence on the viewers. Too much time is spent watching this medium and little, if anything, is gained from it. Few people are aware of the danger of the T.V. and the way it is infiltrating our homes and

dominating the life of many. The sad consequences become manifest and it seems to be almost impossible to stop this process. The T.V. has received its place, also in our homes. In this article we will not deal, in the first place, with the bad influence of the modern entertainment programs in general. Others might be better qualified to do so if they wish. What we would like to achieve, is to show that also the so-called "objective" newscasts are not as innocent as they may seem to be, but that they are giving us a daily dose of indoctrination.

It is very important how the news is presented. The public is manipulated, not only by the commentators who are supposed to give background information and who are asked for their opinion, but also by the reporters who seem to give plain "news." Did you ever notice that already the presence of the media in itself has an impact upon the course of events? Recent demonstrations and walk outs in the public schools in the Vancouver area are a clear example. As soon as the students learned that the media were present, they really started their demon-

stration and became excited. The fact that there is news coverage makes the public more aggressive. We do not suggest that the newsmakers purposely incite people to violent demonstrations. That might happen the odd time, but it would be wrong to blame all the news media in general for the mistakes of some. However, it is an undeniable fact that the presence of a T.V. camera works as an incitement for lots of people. And there is more we have to consider. The presentation by the news media is not always as objective as it is presumed to be. Also the newscast caters to the wishes of the viewers. The length of a time slot allocated to the coverage of an event is in accordance with the importance of the event in the eyes of the newsmakers, or rather in accordance with what they think the public likes to hear about it.

What determines how important an event is? Not the number of people involved. The importance of a demonstration is not measured by the number of participants. Sometimes extensive coverage is given to a very small demonstra-

tion. Some newsmakers are purposely manipulating their audience. But even when they do not have the intention to manipulate public opinion, they at least are catering to what they see as the average customer. The time slot allocated to a certain issue in the news is often measured in seconds, but when a hockey game is covered all other regularly scheduled programs are cancelled and hours are spent on coverage of the game. Apparently the program directors are of the opinion that the majority of people want to see this rather than the regular programs. Even the regularly scheduled newscasts are cancelled in such a case.

All this makes clear that what we see on T.V., especially in the "news," is not an objective representation of reality but a selection, according to a certain "standard" set by the program directors. While we are assuming that we are being presented reality actually we are being manipulated and, after a while, we will have adapted ourselves to the "standard" opinion. We receive our daily dose of brainwashing and manipulating, often without being aware of it. That is what we should realize more while we are watching the news, listening to the radio, or reading a newspaper. With a newspaper it is different in that we often realize that the editors of the newspaper are supposed to present the news in a slanted way. The choice of the newspaper gives us an opportunity to be selective which we do not have in our system of news presentation via radio and T.V.

2. Opinion polls

Opinion polls are considered to be very important. Politicians as well as business people are making extensive use of it. The production and marketing of a new product is always supported by marketing research, including extensive opinion polls. Advertising is often a matter of manipulating public opinion in the way the opinion polls have shown to be necessary in order to make money with the new product.


Opinion polls are also used by politicians. The way they organize their election campaign and the "promises" they make are based upon the results of such polls. The whole presentation of their political issues is supported by such research. Sometimes unpopular decisions are not made or postponed because of an upcoming election. To know public opinion is very important. However, there is another effect. The result of such polls can be a self-fulfilling prophecy. If the public is presented every day with the results of opinion polls telling them, rightly or wrongly, that a certain party will achieve a landslide victory, it will undoubtedly have an enormous ef-

fect upon the outcome of the election. The predicted landslide victory will come and the percentage of the votes will be increased by the continuous prediction of this victory. Lots of people like to belong to the "majority" party. If they support the expected winner they can consider it their personal victory. "Their" man has won.

To a certain extent the same happens with public opinion when we hear about all kinds of "polls." A poll seems to be an accurate presentation of public opinion with respect to a certain issue. It is just a matter of statistics. Do statistics lie? To say the least, we have to be careful that we interpret statistics in the proper way. To interpret statistics is a profession or a skill in its own right. It is important to consider the circumstances, the way the questions have been asked and the selection of the people who are questioned. There is always a certain percentage of people who do not answer. Is this group of "no opinion" equally spread over the whole group? That is certainly not always the case. The very nature of the issue can cause a particular group of people not to reflect on the questions and, in this way, the outcome gives a lopsided picture of reality. Apart from this effect, there is something else we have to be aware of. The way the question is formulated can include a certain suggestion which leads the public in a certain direction. Take, for instance, the abortion issue. If a poll would be held asking the people, whether they are in favour of giving a pregnant girl the right to kill her baby before it is born if she does not want the baby, a majority might be "against."

However, if the question is phrased whether a woman should have the right to decide what is going to happen with her own body, the majority might be "in favour." It depends, to a certain extent, on the way the question is formulated. We can see the same with the peace movements. The majority of people are "against" nuclear war. Of course! Who would be in favour! However, in many polls on actions and peace movements the impression is given that the question is whether you are in favour of, or against, "peace," while the real question is whether such a peace can be achieved by a unilateral disarmament. To support or not support an action against the testing of cruise missiles is not a question of being in favour of, or against, disarmament, but a question whether or not such disarmament can be promoted by actions against, or even by doing away with the whole development of these missiles. It is quite well possible that many "peace movements" do not serve the cause of peace and disarmament at all, but only encourage the Soviet Union to take a harder stand in the peace negotiations because the Western Alliance is hampered anyway by these public demonstrations. In this way the only result is an increase of the arms race. Let us be aware of the manipulation of public opinion. It takes place on a larger scale than most people believe. We do not escape this process, at least not as long as we do not fully realize what is going on.

— To be continued
W. POWELSE



Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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

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

	SUBSCRIPTION RATES	
	Regular	Air
Canada	\$23.50	\$41.50
U.S.A. U.S. Funds	\$25.75	\$40.00
International	\$34.50	\$57.00

FOR 1985

Advertisements: \$5.00 per column inch
Second class mail registration number 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

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Distortion?

In an Editorial (August 1984) we paid attention to the backgrounds of the Liberation in The Netherlands. In that context we mentioned also some developments in our part of the world. In the *Standard Bearer* the Protestant Reformed Prof. H.C. Hoeksema reacted angrily and called our remarks nonsense and distortion. He requested correction by taking over his Editorial.

Since we do not want to give a wrong presentation of anyone else's opinion, we took over his entire article. Because the main point at stake was the doctrine concerning the covenant, we dealt extensively with this issue and reminded the readers of what Prof. Dr. K. Schilder wrote in this respect about 35 years ago, in response to the developments in the Protestant Reformed Churches at that time. We concluded our answer as follows: "We hope that, by our response to Prof. Hoek-

sema's critique, we have satisfied him. We have honoured his request and taken over his entire Editorial. We trust that he in the same way will inform his readers about our response, so that every real or alleged distortion may be taken away."

However, Prof. Hoeksema is still not satisfied. He ignores most of what we have written, especially with respect to the doctrine of the covenant. From our series of three articles he quotes only one sentence and tells his readers that we still do not understand what he means.

In his previous Editorial he stated to have little hope that his request to take over his Editorial would be heeded, because in the past the Dutch magazine *De Reformatie* as well as the Canadian Reformed magazine *Clarion* had misrepresented the position of the Protestant Reformed Churches. Since in the past I have been secretary of the editorial

staff of *De Reformatie* and at the present time I am one of the Editors of *Clarion*, I could not understand why either of these magazines would have been so unkind to reject a request for correction. Now I understand what Prof. Hoeksema means. He wants his critique to be published in full in another magazine but is unwilling to publish the response. That might have brought previous editors of *De Reformatie* as well as of *Clarion* to the conclusion that in this way a discussion is virtually impossible. However, someone who requests and receives all the opportunity he wants to voice his criticism but who is not prepared to publish the response, should not accuse others of misrepresentation or distortion. Communication is a two-way street.

W. POUWELSE

PRESS REVIEW



The coming General Assembly of the OPC

In the May 17 issue, the readers received a report from Rev. J. Mulder as member of the Committee for Contact with the OPC. The report dealt with certain matters that were discussed at the 1984 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). *New Horizons in the Orthodox Presbyterian Church*, of May 1985, (Vol. 6, No. 5) we read about issues that will be dealt with at the 1985 General Assembly. On the front page we read:

Attempt has been made by the editor in this issue of *New Horizons* to summarize these matters by drawing upon reports to GA and speaking with key persons involved.

Information on one question will have to wait until GA convenes. That is the report of the Committee on Ecumenicity regarding the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in America to the OPC for the latter to join the PCA. That Committee had another meeting on April 17 at which time it worked on a written evaluation of the PCA.

A set of Biblical principles concerning church unity has been adopted by this Committee along with several statements

describing the PCA. Furthermore, proposed boundaries for presbyteries in the enlarged church have been agreed upon and will be put before the General Assemblies of both churches for approval. Since the PCA general assembly would have to vote on this first at its meeting in June, the OPC could not vote until its General Assembly in 1986.

The Committee on Ecumenicity will present a full report at GA and will also mail it to all sessions as soon as possible.

Another question before the church is whether or not the Bible allows for women in the church to hold ordained office. Recognizing that this matter is answered in various ways by Christians who hold to the authority of Scripture, the General Assembly last year erected a Committee on the Hermeneutics of Women in Ordained Office. In other words, the question is one of the interpretation of the Bible and not of its authority.

Relying heavily on a report presented to the 1978 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church, the Committee not only clearly presents the hermeneutical tensions but also summarizes the principles of interpreting the Bible that generally are agreed upon by the Reformed community. Nevertheless, the question was too large to be answered in one year, and the Committee

recommends that more time be spent on it.

The status of children is also being looked at more closely. Some would argue that since children of believers are members of the church and are promised the outward privileges of it, they should be included in the observance of the Lord's Supper even before they make public profession of faith.

Women in office in the OPC?

On page 3 the editor, Rev. Roger W. Schmurr, gives a summary of things written in the report on "Women in Ordained Office?" The matter is introduced to the readers as follows:

"It has become clear that the question of women in ordained office cannot simply be reduced to a choice between believing and rejecting the message of the Scriptures . . . Just because the meaning of a passage seems perfectly clear to us does not guarantee the reliability of our interpretation."

So begins the report of a special committee erected by the General Assembly "to consider the hermeneutical aspects of the debate over the role of women in ordained office." It is not only a debate going on in the larger evangelical world, but also one that faces the Orthodox Presbyterian

Church. Bethel OPC in Wheaton, Illinois in recent years has asked both the Midwest Presbytery and General Assembly to address this issue.

Then it is said: "Committed Christians who sincerely submit to the authority of Scripture often arrive at antithetical interpretations when they read the Bible." The cause is partly that today's historical and cultural situation differs so much from the historical and cultural situation in the days of the apostles. We, then, read under the heading "Principles of Interpretation":

The very leaders of the Reformation, who stressed the clarity of the Bible, wrote lengthy commentaries to explain that which they held to be perspicuous. This suggests that the process of understanding the Bible is not as simple as it sometimes appears. It is true that there are quite a number of passages and texts in the Scriptures, that are not understood immediately. An explanation in a commentary can sometimes greatly improve our understanding. Nevertheless, the perspicuity or clarity of the Scriptures must be maintained.

However, is it here a matter of understanding something that is written in clear language? Or must we reinterpret what is written by placing the words in a cultural and historical context? As far as I can see, what the apostle Paul writes about women in the church in connection with the offices is above history or culture, since it is based on creation order.

Quite naturally, then, rules of interpretation have been developed even by those who know that the Bible must be taken at face value. Presupposed is the fact that God has communicated His thoughts to man in a written form in the Bible. Being inspired by God's Spirit, the Bible is infallible. But the Bible's message must be rightly understood for its authority to function properly. So the reader of Scripture should recognize that the books of the Bible were written to concrete historical situations, which when understood, can clarify the text. I have no problems with this, as such. When the message of the Scriptures is not understood rightly, man can come to strange things, like fooling around with poisonous snakes, on the assumption that there is the promise that they will not harm the true believer. Good understanding knows that fooling around with poisonous snakes on the basis of a promise that is taken completely out of context is putting God to the test. Christ refused to do this, when the devil used a promise and told Him to show His faith by jumping down from the temple roof.

But I would rather not speak of God who "has communicated His thoughts to man." This sounds too neutral to me. When we say: "God has revealed His truth and His will to man," there is much more the obligation included that we are

called to accept it and obey it.

Then we read the sentence:

The unity of the Bible is seen in its redemptive focus.

A lot of harm has been done in the course of the last decades with statements like this. It has been said e.g. in the Synodical Reformed Churches in The Netherlands as well as in a report about Scripture for Synods of the Christian Reformed Church that the basic message of the Scriptures is redemption. And again we cannot say that it is wrong. However, sometimes you hear people say that the Bible is infallible in its message of redemption, but it is not inerrant in its historical and geographical statements. It is clear from what is written in the report for the General Assembly of the OPC that this is not the intention of the committee. We just read: "... the Bible is infallible." But should we not rather say: "the unity of the Bible is Christ Jesus?" Hereby we do not forget that Christ is Saviour and Judge, who first of all came to save, but then also will come to execute God's judgment and punishment on the ungodly.

Let us continue:

Yet the reader must be aware of the progressive character of the kingdom of God described in the Bible. Promise gives way to fulfilment, shadow to reality. Circumcision is replaced by baptism; the Sabbath observance moves to Sunday; women no longer cover their heads while worshipping.

The latter change can be explained by an element of accommodation on God's part to the cultural patterns prevalent at the writing of Scripture. There was a basic principle to be observed; how it is still to be observed is a matter of Biblical exegesis. To discover the abiding principle, one must carefully ascertain the historical, cultural and social situation of the text. Only after discovering the underlying principle can one seek to apply it in a different situation today.

True, again: there is progression in the Scriptures. There is replacement of circumcision by baptism. And Sabbath observance moved from the Saturday to the Sunday. But must we place on one line with it the *custom*, not the commandment, that women no longer cover their head while worshipping? In my opinion that is not correct, because the latter is a matter of a different nature.

There are customs in Scripture from

which certain rules are taken, which are historically and/or culturally determined. Not everywhere Christians greet each other with a holy kiss. And, indeed, not everywhere women are wearing a head covering during worship. But when God's creation order is given as basis for a certain command, the matter goes beyond a custom or rule that is historically or culturally determined. Our own time, our own cultural and historical situation must not become the norm, because it is so very much determined by modern philosophies of a revolutionary thinking, as it comes to the fore in the concept of equality.

The article says further:

In some instances it is revealed that not only does the New Testament transcend the Old, but that the eschatologically new order transcends even the created order. Jesus said that marriage will be inoperative after the resurrection. The church must ponder how the eschaton affects Christian life in the present (I Corinthians 7:29 ff.).

Again the data are correct. Scripture teaches that there is not only progress and change when we come from the Old to the New Testament, but that there will be a greater change yet between the situation in this world and that of the next. However, this does not warrant the conclusion that the fact that on the new earth marriage will not function anymore like here in this life from creation to the consummation can be taken as ground for admitting women in the church into the ordained offices.

The last argument is the following:

Furthermore, room must be left for principles enunciated in the Bible which are still in the process of growth. For instance, the church has been called upon to explicate in greater detail the basic pattern of church organization found in the New Testament. The question may be considered whether a given word in Scripture, which appears to be the last word the canon speaks on the subject, is possibly open in the future for further development in connection with the coming of God's kingdom.

In my opinion, the consequence of this reasoning is that anything can be introduced into the church. It has been said so often already, these years, that the Holy Spirit leads us in new ways, which then practically means: modernistic ways that adapt to the philosophies and views of our times.

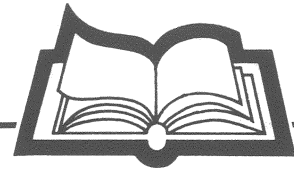
The committee concludes that more study is needed, after it has asked "whether limiting ordination to men is really a necessary inference from the data. 'Could it be that we are simply too accustomed to the idea of exclusively male leadership and to the notion that such a position alone is compatible with a high view of Scripture?' "

— Continued on page 261

OUR COVER

Lake O'Hara
Yoho National Park, BC

Photo courtesy of
Tourism British Columbia



“ . . . having loved his own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” John 13:1b

Perfect Love

The closing words of this first verse form an introduction to the passionate nature in John, and describe how the Lord Jesus faithfully discharged His office with respect to His disciples right up to the very end of His life on earth. But what is sometimes overlooked is the special focus that these words have on one of the disciples, Judas, the betrayer. He remains a central figure in the whole passion episode, and stands in marked contrast to Peter, even in this chapter. In fact, the way the Lord Jesus deals with both of them throughout the passion period shows the truth of the words, “He loved them to the end.”

Of Judas, the Lord Jesus knew that he would betray Him, John 6:64, and that his heart steadily turned away from the gospel. He knew Judas’ hesitation and misgivings. He knew what was in man, John 2:25, and sensed how Judas more and more became an *enemy*, one who chose for the Kingdom, but looked at it strictly in material, present-day terms. And how did the Lord Jesus know that Judas would betray Him? The Scriptures pointed out to Him that this was the way the LORD had determined the end to take place. He knew from the experiences of David — whose office He came to fulfil — that this was also to be His lot, but in even greater measure, Psalm 41; 55. He had to endure the presence of a traitor, a friend who became a secret enemy.

The point is how the Lord Jesus reacts to this knowledge of a betrayer in the midst of His closest circle of friends. Nothing can be more distressing to human nature than this. It almost automatically builds its own defenses, withdraws, and closes itself under attack. The presence of the betrayer can only create a climate of mistrust, a climate in which every man hides in his own corner. Communication breaks down, the silence of division and separation sets in. So, too, the Lord Jesus was tempted by Satan to respond according to the weakness of human nature. He could have done a number of things — expose the enemy, act indifferently towards him, ignore him, and so on. But the Lord Jesus does not follow any of these alternatives. He overcomes all Satan’s temptations. He shows *perfect* love, loving *all* His disciples to the end.

The Lord Jesus was not permitted to take any other road. For although He knew that Judas would betray Him, and that the heart of Judas had turned in malice against Him, He knew *no more*. He could see the heart of Judas, but could not see or know the hidden counsel of God. Could

He be sure that Judas would never repent? Could He know that Judas would eternally and definitely reject the Son? He could not, for He more than anyone knew that the secret things belong to the LORD, Deuteronomy 29:29. Therefore, knowing all He did, He still could only deal with Judas in love and kindness. He could not pull back in self-defense, He could not force his hand. He could not stop the plot — with all this He would only have compromised His office and position. He could only do one thing: preach the gospel, uphold the truth, appeal to the conscience, proclaim the right. And that He does, to the twelve, and Judas above all. He does not go beyond the limits of His office. He does not presume to know God’s counsel, passing judgment before the time. He rests quietly in His office as *Saviour* — proclaiming the truth of God, and leaving the hearts of His own to decide.

Peter — that remarkable representative of the disciples — was, in his denial, not that different from Judas. Betrayal and denial as actions they amount to much the same thing. But what a difference between Judas and Peter — indeed, the difference between heaven and hell! For Judas betrays — but later does *not* repent. He kills himself in self-pity and mental anguish. Peter denies — but later *does* repent. He returns to the fold in sorrow and bitter weeping. Two disciples — both chosen by the Lord; but — and this is what the Saviour could only know in the end — one was given Him by the Father, one was not. So He says, “While I was with them, I kept them in Thy Name, which Thou hast given Me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled,” John 17:12.

Through every trial, the Lord Jesus showed perfect love, not simply to the eleven who believed, but to the *twelve* whom He had chosen. In suffering the bitter betrayal, He showed perfect obedience to God. Perfect love, perfect suffering. Therefore He also is rewarded with perfect glory and perfect honour — the fullness of exaltation. And we may rejoice in His perfect work! For now we know with certainty the truth of those words, “My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me; and I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish, and no one shall snatch them out of My hand,” John 10:27, 28.

J. DEJONG

Press Review, *continued*

The early Reformed Churches around the days of the Convent of Wesel, 1568, had female deacons, but they were not ordained, and although their function or work remained for a time, the name disappeared. I sure hope that the General Assembly of the OPC will not go further in the direction which is opened wider through the many questions in the report.

If the reader likes to study this matter, I can recommend a little booklet written by Professor, Doctor George W. Knight III, entitled *The New Testament Teaching on the Role Relationship of Men and Women*. There is also the broader study of James B. Hurley, *Man and Woman in Biblical Perspective*.

Children at the Lord's Supper table?

This is the next issue. The OPC distinguishes, as we do, between communicant and noncommunicant members of the church. However,

... the Eastern Church has a different tradition; communion is served to infants newly baptized. So OPC pastor Hailu Mekonnen faced a challenge in his ministry at Kidane-Hiwot Church, a ministry to Ethiopians in Washington, D.C. The congregation is committed to following Scripture rather than tradition. Yet they did not see that the Bible required them to refuse communion to their children.

A Presbytery's decision. Seeing Hailu's ministry as similar to an indigenous work in a foreign country, the missions committee of the Presbytery of the Mid-Atlantic recommended that he be allowed to serve communion to children of believers. A decision was delayed so that a special committee could study this matter. It, too, recommended that Mr. Mekonnen be authorized to serve the Lord's Supper to covenant children. Presbytery concurred

The Presbytery adopted four points as

procedures regarding the responsibility of the parents, the instruction of the congregation, the age requirements for the children and so on. And:

The Presbytery also is overturing the General Assembly "to study the issue of paedocommunion and provide voluntary guidelines for determining the age children might be allowed to come to the Lord's Supper."

Hereafter follows:

The rationale. Presbytery's special committee reasoned that since covenant children are united with Christ and His church (1 Corinthians 12:12-13), it is only natural that they should participate in the sacrament of communion. In the words of its report, "It is a clear inconsistency to insist on public profession of faith before a covenant child is welcomed to this meal of fellowship to which the child is entitled by virtue of covenant membership."

It is urged that children should learn not only as observers — as though they were outside God's redemptive love — but also by an active eating and drinking of the elements of the sacrament. Through participation in the covenant meal, the church corporately declares the Lord's death until He comes. The committee could see no reason why children should be excluded from this corporate act.

Basic to this position is the observation that there was no requirement beyond circumcision for the Passover in the Old Testament. Likewise, there is no other requisite beyond baptism for participation in the Lord's Supper. Paul parallels baptism and eating the Lord's Supper with Israel's crossing of the sea (their baptism) and their eating of the meal and drinking of the water (1 Corinthians 10:1-17).

The report recognizes problems with the traditional understanding of 1 Corinthians 11:28-29, where participants are told to examine themselves and to discern/recognize the Lord's body. But the instructions there are in the context of Paul's addressing the sin of schism, clearly an adult

offense. Therefore, the admonition is not directed toward children as potentially unworthy participants, but to adults. (In a similar way, 11 Thessalonians 3:10 has an assumed exemption for children when it states the universal principle, "If a man will not work, he shall not eat.")

Basic is here the comparison between the Passover in the Old Testament and the Lord's Supper in the New. Children took part in the Passover meal. Therefore they should also be permitted to take part in the Lord's Supper.

But the problem is, indeed, 1 Corinthians 11:28 ff. This word of Paul about self-examination is placed in the context of sin in the congregation of Corinth. But must it be confined to such a situation? Or is it so that the self-examination of a true faith must always be required? Has the consistory or the elders, and has the congregation not the right and the duty to make sure that the table of the Lord be not defiled and that only those take part at the Lord's table who believe and have publicly confessed their faith?

Besides a majority report that favours "paedocommunion," there is a minority report that advises against it. I hope that the latter will be followed. We live in a time of change. Nothing seems firm anymore. Old traditions are examined. This examination is in itself not wrong. But the question arises: were all those old customs then wrong so that we have to discard them? Did our fathers have so little insight in the Scriptures? Or is it more modern individualistic thinking, in which man, is more in the centre than God, that pushes for the changes? Traditionalism is wrong. Abiding by the Scriptures according to the Reformed Creeds is the way to go, also in our modern times. May that be given to the 1985 General Assembly of the OPC.

J. GEERTSEMA

OUR COLLEGE

It's a funny feeling to sit in a study stripped to the bare necessities of a desk and some other furniture. Books and bookcases are gone, and so is everything else which made the college a second home. For that is what it became over the sixteen years we spent our working days in the college. A second home indeed and a beautiful one. Do not get me wrong. I, just as my colleagues, are happy with the new college to which we will move presently. For the first time in the college history the library books are not spread all over the place, even down to the base-

ment where a couple of dehumidifiers had to keep the mold at bay, but they are all together in the spacious new library, formerly used as a multipurpose auditorium. Even at this early date one does not even have to look for the books anymore, for on the same day that they were put into boxes and moved by the students to the new college, they were stacked in the reassembled bookcases under the competent direction of Mrs. Janet Marren, our associate librarian. Books, when taken from their place, seem always, one way or another, to get

misplaced, mixed up, or lost. Nothing of that in the operation of moving the library. The books just changed address from one building to another, nothing lost, nothing misplaced! It shows what careful planning can do. Finally a real library! That already makes the switch from Queen St. to West 28th a pleasure. There is, of course, a lot more: the spacious lecture rooms, the lounge, the board room, the meeting room, the solution of the parking trouble and many other things, among which I should certainly not forget the administration office. They make

every penny which you contributed to the purchase well spent and it makes us grateful for the new facilities the churches provide for us. However, on this last day in our old college, May 24, 1985, it would be ungrateful not to mention that it was a privilege to work here these past years. Our studies were super, the halls and stairways impressive, the reading and tea room a nice place to get together during breaks, the class room too small but attractive as well. Taking all that into consideration you will understand that our happiness on account of our moving to a more functional building is mixed with a feeling of loss because of what we had and enjoyed. But whatever we leave behind, we take along a treasure of precious memories.

Before passing on to the college year which has come to a close, I'd like to mention once more the open house of the new college on Friday September 27, from 4:00 p.m. till 6:00 p.m. We hope to see many of you and if you cannot make it at that time, drop in at another time suitable to you. The college is open on weekdays, during the academic year from September till June.

Reviewing the past academic year the outstanding event was, of course, the inauguration of Dr. K. Deddens, as successor of the Rev. G. VanDooren. Having arrived in May 1984, Professor Deddens received ample opportunity to get acquainted with his new environment and his new task before the new course started in September. By that time there was not left all that much with which our brother was still unfamiliar. It helped him to enjoy his first academic year as professor in Hamilton.

This satisfaction was shared by the rest of staff and students. In terms of study and the balance of the work load it was a good year after some adjustments had been made. Classes were held according to schedule and could for the greater part be attended by all students. That did not mean, however, that all was well. Two full time students and one part-time student were struck by serious sickness, which called for operations and for treatment in as far as treatment was available. Needless to say that all of that had a strong impact on our small college community. The positive result was that it strengthened the mutual fellowship and the communion with the fount of life and grace. More than ever we became aware of our complete dependence on Him, who up till now spared the sick students and gave grace to receive, without protest, from His hand what He was pleased to send. This grace also enabled our part-time student, Ann De Gelder and full-time students, Garnet Peet and George Van Popta, to continue

Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Earlier this year we informed the church membership via our Canadian Reformed magazine about the purchase of the new college building at 110 West 27th Street, Hamilton, Ontario and the fact that a construction and renovation contract has been signed. As well the building fund drive was well underway and showed good progress. Since that time we have been sending the consistory of each and every church regular updates and details on the fund drive with a chart. We expect that these results were regularly published in the local bulletins. You will remember that our goal was set for \$100,000 total. With much happiness and gratitude we may now report to you that to date we have received \$78,203.56. Even though this sum represents 78% of our goal, we express much appreciation for the overall results. To give you some idea how these funds were paid, we submit the following schedule: four churches exceeded the suggested and projected share, two churches paid the full amount, two churches reached the goal within 10%, seven churches reached between 70% and 90%, four churches reached between 50% and 70%, eleven churches stayed below 50%, and one church paid none.

From the churches in Australia we received \$6,335.45. Thank you very much.

Because of the present overall short fall of some \$20,000 and in-

creased building cost, the Finance and Property Committee approached the Women's Savings Action again and we are pleased to inform you that we were allowed an additional \$15,000, raising their pledge to \$125,000.

At a recent meeting it was decided to inform you of all these events via *Clarion*, although as stated above the churches have received regular reports. Construction and renovations are progressing nicely. The last week of May the library and furniture will be moved. However, final completion of the addition won't be until about the third week of June.

It was suggested to inform the church membership about some special projects which may be undertaken by individuals, our elementary high schools, young people or others. We mention a flagpole, planterboxes and plants, outside trees and shrubs, sod and other general landscaping, such as interlocking paving stones etc. Please call the college.

An open house will be held in the afternoon of September 27, 1985 from 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. before the college evening starts.

We are thankful to our covenant God, who guided us thus far and in whom we place our trust for the future. To Him be all glory now and forever.

A.L. (Tony) VANDERHOUT
Secretary of the Finance and Property
Committee of the Board of Governors

their studies and to complete their course work for the year. You will join us, I am sure, in our prayers that the Lord may continue to give help in this time of need.

I mentioned Ann De Gelder. She is the first girl to study part-time philosophy and the history and contents of the ecumenical Creeds and the Belgic Confession. What led her to follow these courses is her wish to increase her knowledge of Reformed doctrine and of trends in modern philosophy. I am pretty sure her example will be followed by others, both men and women, who have the opportunity to combine their regular study or work with class attendance in the symbolics course of Professor J. Faber.

Maurice Luimes, a member of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church at

Woodbridge, was another part-time student. In this instance it was Hebrew and Greek which was studied. Though it is not completely sure yet, he very well may continue his studies with us. In this preparatory year we counted as a full-time student John Kroeze, who came with his wife Alice from Launceston, in Tasmania and who studies under the sponsorship of the Australian churches. These churches have shown a lively interest in the college and not left that to words but shown it as well with the deed of regular support. We are glad therefore that, in the training of John, we may do something in return. Alice, meanwhile, does her share by volunteering in the college library.

Hank Bergsma and Laurens Roth, members of the Free Reformed Church

at Vineland and at Ancaster, completed the number of full-time first year students or freshmen, as they are called, even though for the rest they may be quite mature. Although it was a hard year for them on account of the intensive language study and all the other subjects which came on top of them, they did not regret for a moment that they asked admission to the college, and both hope to continue their study with us. If you wonder what the college got out of this admission the answer is the sincere gratitude of these students and in addition to that the respect for and the appreciation of our training for the ministry from the side of the deputies of the Free Reformed Churches who keep in touch with these students.

The second or sophomore year consisted of the students, Paul Aasman, Kelly Marren, Rob Schouten and George Van Popta. Third year students or juniors were Peter Feenstra, Garnet Peet and Dick Wynia, member of the Mountain Christian Reformed Church at Hamilton. Finally Arthur van Delden and Charles Wieske were the fourth or senior year students. They are in the process of applying the finishing touches to their college work and are preparing themselves for the classical exams. It was a real pleasure to have them with us these past four years.

The college study does not allow for many let ups in the course of the year, but we had a couple of them by the visits of the missionaries, R.F. Boersema and P.K. Meijer from Brazil and missionary H. Versteeg from Irian Jaya who told of their work and of the problems and the unrest

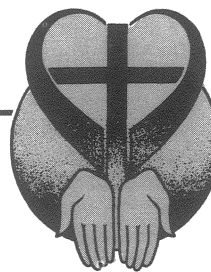
with which they have to cope in their respective fields. Another treat was a speech delivered by Dr. C. Graham, principal of the Seminary of the Free Church of Scotland in Edinburgh. He spoke about the Scriptural attributes of a pastor. Finally Dr. J.W. Wevers, professor at the Institute of Near Eastern Studies of the University of Toronto fascinated us once more by a talk on his work for the new edition of the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. In each of the two semesters representatives of the academic committee of the Board of Governors attended classes to oversee the lecturing of professors and lecturers. This interest from higher up is good for all of us, docents and students. To mention one more event, the last but certainly not the least, Rev. W.W.J. VanOene delivered on the 30th of April, 1985, his farewell lecture for students, Mrs. VanOene and two of their daughters, the president of the Board of Governors and a number of pastors out of the regions of Classis Ontario North and South. Rev. VanOene dealt in his lecture with the birth and development of the Reformed Church Order against the background of the contemporary history of the relationship of church and state. As so often when a dive into the troubled waters of history is made, one finds the confession confirmed that the Son of God not only gathers but also defends His church in its existence but in its government as well. When Rev. VanOene had finished, Rev. J. Mulder, Dr. Faber, and students, Wieske and Wynia expressed in prose and rhyme their appreciation for the work which, during

a lectureship of five years has been done. It was Rev. VanOene who, from the time of arrival in Canada till the establishment of the College at the Synod of Orangeville, 1968, strongly promoted the cause of the complete training for the ministry by our Canadian Reformed Churches. Principal and vice-principal represented the college at the farewell service from the congregation at Fergus. That ended Rev. VanOene's regular pastorate but if the Lord continues to give health and strength it will certainly not bring to an end the many activities of our brother. We can only compliment the Church at Armadale with the timely invitation extended to Rev. VanOene to come over with Mrs. VanOene for half a year and lead the worship services for the time that Rev. C. Brüning will work in Port Moresby in Papua, New Guinea.

So ended another academic year.

As to the prospects of new students nothing definite is known yet, but the expectation is that it may be a lean year. We have had that before and it is as such not alarming. It would be so, however, if a low enrollment had something to do with the declining number of vacancies in the churches. The noble task of aspiring to the office of overseer does not go up and down with the number of vacancies, neither should the aspiration of our young men go up and down with it. Let no one be kept from starting on the not easy but rewarding way of preparing for the ministry. The Lord will provide. New prospects are already opening up.

L. SELLES



CRWRF

Hunger in Africa

CRWRF is encouraged by your generous giving to aid the poor and hungry through the causes we espouse. Earlier this year, we were able to send a sizeable gift to feed those starving in the northern Ethiopian province of Eritrea, a gift made possible by special church collections and a large number of individual gifts. We are glad to see donations earmarked for this special cause still coming in, especially as we hear of the threat of famine spreading far beyond Ethiopia's borders to a growing number of African countries.

Though our focus has always been on long-term development-type projects, in view of the magnitude of hunger in

Africa today, we felt that any monies in excess of the three month "cushion" we keep on hand for regular projects, should reach those in need as soon as possible, rather than being kept on reserve in the bank for some future project. Thus the executive and local representatives were recently faced with the pleasant task of allocating extra funds on hand. These funds have accrued due to your generous giving coupled with somewhat reduced expenses over the past two years. (E.g. the Achego addition cost less than anticipated.)

We decided to donate an additional \$10,000 through the Canadian Foodgrains

Bank for the hungry in Africa, knowing that under this program there is the unprecedented chance for your gifts to be multiplied. Through the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the Canadian Government matches all gifts to the Canadian Foodgrains Bank three to one. That means that for every dollar donated or every dollar's worth of corn or grain given by farmers, three more dollars is available to aid the hungry. Our \$10,000 will thus purchase \$40,000 worth of food! (Earlier this year we were able to send \$21,000 which actually purchased \$84,000 in foodstuffs. So the small bills and loose change do add up!)

AFRICA'S FAMINE BELT

Member organizations, including the Mennonite Central Committee (which was responsible for initiating the "Bank" in 1983) and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee ensure that food is sent through reliable channels and that their own personnel are available on the scene to distribute all aid. For example, previous monies earmarked for Africa were sent to aid the hungry in Eritrea and distribution of food in neighbouring Sudan was supervised by Mennonite officials.

We also decided to send a \$5,000 contribution to Africa Inland Mission (AIM) followed by a further \$10,000 later this year. AIM is a strict, Bible-believing organization under whose capable supervision our Achego Children's Home is run. This mission, founded in 1895 now comprises over 500 missionaries and members. Over 5,000 congregations have resulted from the missionary effort over the years. The mission runs eleven hospitals and forty dispensaries in twelve East and Central African countries including Kenya, Uganda, Zaire, and Sudan. Underlying all humanitarian aid is evangelism, for their foremost goal is that the good news of the gospel of God's grace in Jesus Christ be communicated.

Personnel have opened a fund to aid in famine relief and will distribute food through their own missionaries and national co-workers. Giving through this group appealed to us, both because of our previous, positive association with them, and because we are assured that the physical aid given will be accompanied by the Good News, by pointing those who hunger to the Bread of Life.

Death from starvation and malnutrition is becoming an increasingly common occurrence in Africa. Famine is sweeping across the continent bringing untold human misery to each country it touches. Drought, oppression, unstable governments, mismanaged natural resources, poor policies, and war still plague the nations, draining the lifeblood out of this



its terrible effects. Let us not forget them.

We trust that the information received via *Clarion* and church bulletin articles speaks to your concerns and enables you

Bangladesh is extremely low. Nation wide, out of a population of nearly 90 million, about one-half of one percent are said to be Christian. Of these, some use "Christian" simply as a surname, so the number of regenerated or believing Christians is very small indeed.

In my encounter with Christians, I have also found that Bible knowledge is often very minimal, especially among the many illiterate persons. I once asked a Christian woman what the significance of knowing Jesus was. She promptly replied that she was too poor to send her two sons to the Christian Mission School. (School children usually have to buy their books and wear appropriate clothing; however, tuition is free.) Somehow, Jesus and the provision of a near cost-free education were intertwined. Basically, she didn't know much about our Saviour. In our development work, Bible knowledge will be an important part of the program.

In July, I hired my counterpart, a professing Christian from the Shantal Tribal Cast. His main job is to assist me in the

"He who has a bountiful eye will be blessed, for he shares his bread with the poor." Prov. 22:9

potentially prosperous continent. Twenty countries (out of a total of 45) have been caught in serious to critical food shortages.

Thank you for enabling us to reach a few of the needy on a continent that sadly, will know the hard pangs of hunger for many years to come. If you would like to continue contributing to this cause we would certainly be happy to receive and pass on your gifts. The famine in Africa is far from over. *Millions* continue to know

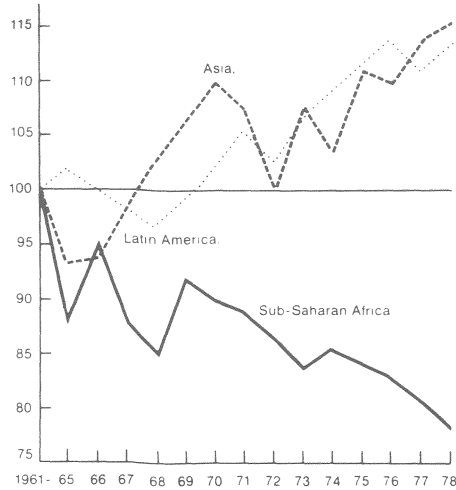
to more effectively support and pray for the work being done. If you have any unanswered questions, your local representatives or we in the executive would be happy to answer them. Just write to us at our regular address.

What follows are the latest two reports on our projects in *Bangladesh*, the first written by Peter Ysselstein, the second by his wife, Geraldine.

Peter writes:

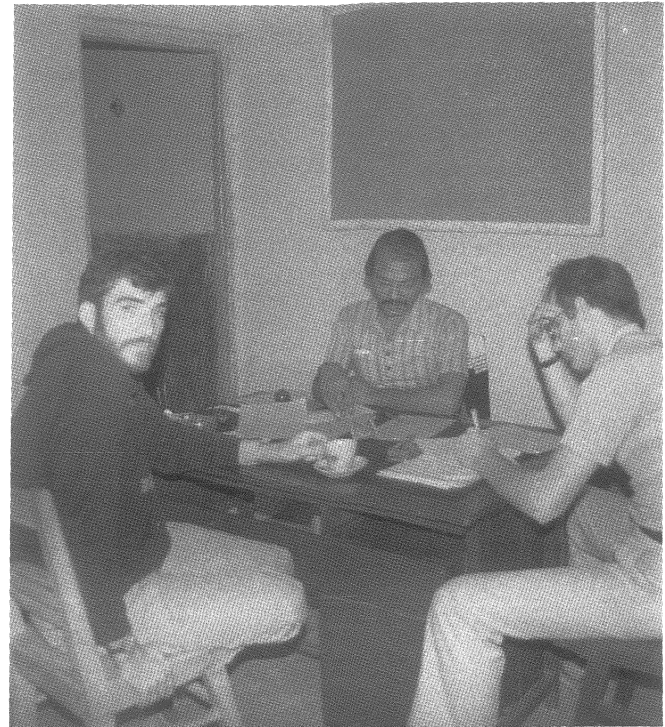
The number of professing Christians in

Index of Food Production per Capita
(% of 1960-65 average)



Source: USDA, Food Problems and Prospects in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1981

Africa is the only continent which now grows less food per person than it did twenty years ago. Present food availability ranges from adequate to famine conditions.



Peter (on the right) with the Bengali counterpart, Habel

management of a church supported community development program called "Christian Extension Services." Academically, he is well suited to the task for he has completed a Bachelor of Commerce Degree; ex-

perience-wise, he has worked as a clerk, relief distributor, educator and administrator of an orphanage, and as an extension agent for an agricultural program.

As part of our hiring procedures and se-

lection criteria, candidates have to submit to a written test to indicate their sincerity and commitment. Two questions deal specifically with the significance of the Christian life. They are: 1. What does it mean in your life to be a Christian? and 2. What does it mean to "love your neighbour as yourself?" How does this come to expression in your relationship and work with Hindus, Muslims, and Christians?

The responses of the candidate selected, who is now my counterpart, are as follows:

1. "To be a Christian means that I have received eternal life in Jesus Christ. I have learned to love my fellow beings as He loved me, and I have also learned to do good works as Christ did while on earth. Finally, I have learned to sacrifice myself for Him because He was sacrificed for me and has saved me from my sins."

2. "To love my neighbour as myself means that I understand and feel my neighbour's sorrows and happiness as my own. To express this love to Hindus, Muslims, and Christians, I have to help them at the time of their need. If some of them are in distress we have to comfort them. If they are poor, we have to give them food or we show them the way for income. If any of them are sick, we have to help them get treatment and so forth. In this way, we can express our love to Hindus, Muslims, and Christians."

We trust that this man will be a blessing in the work done in Khanjanpur.

PETER YSSELSTEIN
Bogra, Bangladesh
January 1985



A group is taught basic literacy skills — one aspect of the Christian Extension Services program



Lamb Hospital
PO Parbotipur
District Dinajpur
Bangladesh
March 1985

Dear friends:

Greetings! While you have been struggling through winter snow storms and freezing rain, the farmers here have been harvesting the cold season crops. In January the market was full of cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, Dutch potatoes and carrots. Now the wheat is being gathered and farmers who have access to tubewells or deep tubewell irrigation can plant a crop of rice. It hasn't rained here since October so you can imagine that the fields are very dry.

The village people are busy rebuilding their mud homes. Once the rainy season arrives (June - October) their houses tend to dissolve.

With plentiful vegetables available, we notice that the people are still very rice orientated. Part of our education program, therefore, centres on promoting vegetables in their diet. Mothers with small children need reinforcement to serve the flat breads, vegetables, and fruits that are available even to them as poor village people. It is so sad to see children as old as three years skinny, and lethargic, hanging on their mother's hips. The mothers tell us their children only drink breast milk. These women are amazed when their children eat some of the nutritious food the teachers prepare in the health centres.

Geraldine junior and I have been staying at the guest house of the Lutheran Mission Hospital. The roads and communications to Bogra are not exactly smooth so we decided to be safe and come here in advance of the arrival of our second child, D.V., sometime at the end of April. Peter visits us on weekends and we enjoy his arrival with mail, treats, and news on the work in Bogra and Panchbidi.

One of the highlights of the past few months was welcoming Peter's mother and father. Since dad is a farmer he could appreciate the amount of physical labour the villagers put into raising crops and working the land. Mom is an avid craftsperson and gave us many ideas for our sewing centre.

Projaputi Crafts is growing with now almost thirty women involved. The cross-stitch items are starting to come in demand, and we dream of sending goods to Canada and the United States. The women are proud of their skills and are enthusiastic about coming to work. Their family situations warrant a little extra income, for many of the women have been abandoned by their husbands and all are very poor.

Peter has been encouraged by the ability of his landless groups to save money. Many nationals are hampered by a relief mentality. Teaching to save, means that even the person without means discovers he can make a sacrifice of one cup of rice per week. This rice when sold becomes part of group savings. From this the members can afford to rent some land or start a small income generating project like stocking a fish pond. One individual borrowed from the group and was able to buy the bamboo he needed for basic weaving, in bulk. With the savings he could pay back the interest to the group.

The missionaries here at Lamb Hospital have told us that in some of the villages where they have health clinics only one person will be able to read (though official literacy is said to be 23%). You can imagine that it will not work to tell a Christian church in such a village to search the Scriptures for greater insight into God's Word. Stories, pictures and songs are the methods used to train them in Bible knowledge. Some of these people have no desire to be literate either, but for the ones who do persist in learning there are the wonderful promises of our Lord and Saviour to be comforted by.

"Thy Word is a lamp to my feet
and a light to my path." Psalm 119:105

Please remember us in your prayers as we anticipate the arrival of our second child.

With Christian greetings,
PETER, GERALDINE
AND GERALDINE YSSELSTEIN

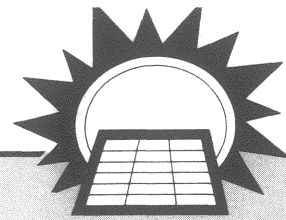


Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

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.

N.B. We have received word that Peter and Geraldine have been blessed with the arrival of another healthy daughter. Congratulations!



Hope springs eternal
in the heart
of the child of God.

Nothing is ever hopeless
when your ways are committed
to your heavenly Father.

God's power is unlimited;
His goodness knows no measure;
His mercy knows no end.

No matter what news
the day may bring you, therefore,
You can accept it
with quiet confidence.
For nothing whatever
will happen to you
beyond your Father's loving control.

Your Father
constantly watches over you,
Not a hair of your head
will fall to the ground
without His will!

Your confidence for the future
is built upon
an unmovable foundation.

"Those who trust in the Lord
are like Mount Zion
which cannot be shaken
but endures forever

As the mountains surround Jerusalem,
so the Lord surrounds His people
both now
and forevermore"

Psalm 125: 1,2

Tomorrow may be uncertain,
but the promises of God are not.
Do not let the fear of the unknown
take away the comfort
of that which is sure!

From our mailbox:

Mrs. Kok wrote how much Derek enjoyed all the cards, which even arrived from the USA and The Netherlands.

Derek loves to go to Summer Camp. He missed "Uncle Bill" at the reunion but hopes to make up for it coming July. Thank you, brothers and sisters!

On our calendar for June we have the following birthdays. God willing, these sisters hope to celebrate their birthdays;

JOAN KOERSELMAN

c/o "Rehoboth"

Box 1089

Stony Plain, Alberta

Joan will celebrate her 28th birthday on June 17. I have no updated information on Joan. Hope you have a nice day, Joan!

BEVERLY BREUKELMAN

Box 666

Coaldale, Alberta

TOK OLO



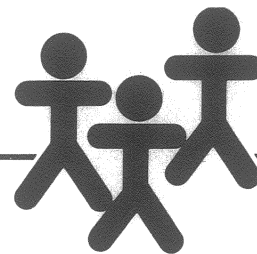
Beverly is looking forward to celebrating her 23rd birthday. Have a nice day with family and friends Bev! Regards to your parents (H.R.).

Please send your requests to:

MRS. J.K. RIEMERSMA

380 St. Andrew Street East

Fergus, ON N1M 1R1



A. Meaningful learning (Part II)

It is very simple to attack contemporary schools for failing to provide a meaningful education. According to many critics, too many students fail to measure up to acceptable standards. One educator put it this way: "Many children are receiving a smorgasbord of trendy, sugarcoated courses rather than a balanced diet with plenty of intellectual vitamins, protein and roughage." Annual Gallup Polls on public attitudes towards education continue to deal with a lack of discipline, low standards and a growing reservoir of functionally illiterate dropouts. It's easy to jump on the bandwagon. Obviously, we should be concerned about the state of education in general. Let's remember however that it is easier to diagnose social ills than it is to cure them. It is far easier to criticize institutions than to suggest remedies for their shortcomings. A school is handicapped in providing ideal solutions.

The answer in identifying meaningful learning lies not so much in studying endless theories or aiming for elusive concepts, it lies in working hard with the givens. Four main points come to mind.

a. There must be an educator who is able to teach effectively to the needs and the level of understanding of the child.

b. The child must have a suitable educational environment — a proper building, sufficient teaching aids and suitable equipment.

c. The school must have a structured formal curriculum that teaches life skills which are relevant to the child.

d. The school must give leadership as far as the informal curriculum is concerned. Children are to receive direction in regards to values, attitudes and self-discipline.

Meaningful learning implies that *specific* attention be given to each of these areas. Two other points are worth noting. First of all, let's recognize (again) that children differ in ability. It is nonsense to pretend that all children can learn the same things from the same teacher, in the same room and at the same pace. Meaningful learning implies that the below-average as well as the gifted child, receive the proper amount of attention in school. Secondly, let's reaffirm that discipline is necessary. Schools are not daytime warehouses for disruptive youngsters. Meaningful learning should be equated with peaceful environments for teaching and learning.

May these facts have our undivided and prayerful attention!

B. Teacher professionalism

Webster defines professionalism as

"the conduct, aims, or qualities that characterizes a certain job or profession." If teachers are professionals, they must examine what a "profession" implies. Professionals have mastered a certain body of systematic theory, peculiar to their specialty. This acquired knowledge allows him/her to speak with authority about one's expertise. Professionals are not working without restraints, for they are sanctioned by the community within which they operate. They adhere to a code of ethics and are part of a professional culture.

Teachers however, do not possess a unique body of knowledge and there is no mystique about it compared to the expertise of surgeons, for example. Teachers lack freedom from constraints, for they are licensed by the community to do their job.

As Christian teachers, are we merely dispensers of knowledge? Within our professional culture, are we only technicians or learning facilitators? Also, are we the parents' partners or substitute fathers and mothers at school?

Teaching is a limited profession. The teacher's authority is derived and his autonomy is limited due to organizational restraints. As professionals, teachers have a certain amount of expertise, which sets them apart from parents. Their colleagues, the parents, the board and the students, should expect teachers to act as professionals. Boards should recognize that teaching is a career. Professional conduct determines principal/teacher relationships, discussions about working conditions and the teacher's position of trust. As a group, teachers must win and maintain the respect of those for whom they work and advocate high standards of excellence. Teachers must show concern for each other, show a willingness to share and dare to speak out. Perhaps teachers can help solve certain problems that exist in school communities at large, such as those related to hiring dates and advertising practices, to mention a few.

Meanwhile, we will fulfill our task in all humility and with joy.

Summary of a speech from Mr. H.J. Ludwig
Canadian Reformed Teachers
Convention
Coaldale — March 1985
(from *The Beacon*, Carman, Manitoba)

C. A comparison of school fees

The amount of money that is needed to maintain our schools is not often talked about in specific dollars and cents. We speak about obligations, responsibilities and (sometimes) financial hardships. Do you know what your brothers and sisters pay for Reformed education? Recently, the

Parkland Immanuel Christian School in Edmonton published a survey of Canadian Reformed School contributions. The chart might be of interest to you.

D. Where do we go wrong?

During the past few meetings of the principals we have discussed as one of the topics: "Aims and Objectives in Reformed Education and the Consequences for Interpersonal Relationships." Mr. P. Torenlvliet, principal of the John Calvin School in Smithville, has written two discussion papers on this topic. Very lively discussions followed.

Why have we dealt with this so extensively? (And we're not finished yet; more discussing is planned on this!) Why should I mention this to you? Let me quote the first paragraph of this discussion paper.

"At our first meeting in September, where we discussed 'Personal and Societal Values,' concerns were expressed; concerns about the lack of a positive response from the students in matters of faith and religion. After receiving so much Reformed education, why do we still see so much un-Christian conduct? Why have these students not internalized this Christian behaviour? What are we doing wrong, or what should we be doing which is not being done?"

These are questions which need to be answered by all of us since our answers to these questions "determine what kind of an outlook the school has, in life-view, world view and in educational respect," and thus what view the student will have after receiving his schooling.

It is logical to state that the Bible is the essence of Reformed education. It teaches us the joy of faith which must permeate our whole life so that our whole life-style will also reflect the intensity of Christian faith.

Clear statements expressing Scriptural refutation of heretical errors had to be formulated over the centuries. Subsequently, church creeds have served to help us formulate our beliefs, to project our world and life views in our aims and objectives whether

CHURCH NEWS



CALLED to Lynden, WA, USA
REV. J. VISSCHER
of Cloverdale, BC.

CHURCH AT LONDON, ONTARIO
Starting on September 1, 1985
the p.m. service will be at 4:00 p.m.

FEEES FROM OTHER CANADIAN REFORMED SCHOOL SOCIETIES

Respondent	Fees		Grants (% of Budget)
	Member	Tuition	
William of Orange	600	1-7 2400 8-10 3300 11, 12 3780	yes (30%)
John Calvin, Yarrow	780	1-7 2640 8-10 3360 11, 12 3720	yes (25%)
John Calvin, Burlington	Single 600 M. PreSch. 1200 M. PostSch. 840 Seniors 420	2400	no
Timothy, Hamilton	Reg. 1300 M. PreSch. 1508 Spec. 830	2444	no
Immanuel, Winnipeg	Singles 840 Married 1680	2520	yes (± 7%)
Carman, Manitoba	Reg. 1080 PreSch. 1860	K(only) 2340 3000	yes (± 30,000)
Coaldale, Alberta	1200	3000	yes (45%)
Neerlandia, Alberta		4800	no

these are in education or anywhere else.

These confessions are to be cherished by us as teachers and are to be thoroughly taught to our students. How can they ever learn to love these church documents if they remain ignorant of their contents? If we hope to achieve the fulfilment of Reformed aims and objectives a specifically Reformed basis is absolutely essential. This Reformed basis gives us our Reformed perspective: the place we may have in our covenantal relationship with our heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

From these confessions we may learn about the place man has in his relationship with God (Belgic Confession, Article XXIV, Heidelberg Catechism, question and answer 6, Canons of Dort, chapter 3 and 4, Article 4); we may learn that we must live like spiritual beings; beings in which the Holy Spirit is allowed to work by means of the Word of God.

The Christian school is to be an instrument which will lead children to see they are owned by God, not yet as mature children of Him but as children who have received His promises when they were baptized. To lead them to maturity in faith is the task of parents and teachers. Using God's Word we will have to teach children to evaluate and to make value judgments. As each child develops he will discover what his strengths and weaknesses are, what talents he has, how to use his talents; he will learn that he is unique and that everyone else is also unique; he will learn to accept everyone as a unique being, with strengths and weaknesses; he will have to see that all he does should not be for his own glorification but to glorify God.

As teachers we will have to teach our students to maximize the use of their talents, encouraging the academically inclined to seek a profession commensurate to their talents, without making a god of intellectualism, and not allowing them to fall prey to the god of materialism. This work as teachers is done as delegates. We have a delegate responsibility from the parents to educate their children. Therefore we are responsible to the parents individually in some respects and collectively through the representation of the Board. As teachers we will do all that we can do to fulfil our duties

to train the students, "that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work" (II Timothy 3:17). The Holy Spirit uses us as instruments for this equipment but He is the One who makes it effectual. As Paul says so clearly (I Cor 3:6) "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth." Remember our responsibilities. Remember also our limitations of our responsibility. And remember the student's responsibility to respond faithfully to his baptism. Pray that he will respond to his Christian calling. The prayer of a righteous man avails much.

So far my much abbreviated version of Mr. Torenvliet's essays. Anyone interested in reading the complete paper? Let me know.

It is good to read about these points. Yet we can also see that there is nothing new under the sun; all the above points we are familiar with; we do know. Still the question stated at the beginning stands: Why do we still see so much unChristian behaviour? What are we doing wrong or not doing yet?

Is it because Satan tries harder with God's children? Is it because we have preached our children to death? Is it because our way of living reflects the statement, "Do as I say, not as I do?" What is or are the reasons? Your views on this will be greatly appreciated; why not write it down and pass it on to me. It is a point of concern to all of us interested in educating God's covenant (!) children.

Mr. A. VanOverbeeke
Dufferin Area Christian School
Orangeville, ON

E. From California — another point of view

Nick Vandooren
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON

Dear brother in Christ and the Reformed faith,
Grace and peace be unto you.

I read with great interest the comment by "A Parent" in the latest "School Crossing" of the *Clarion* (April 5, 1985). I thought that you might be interested to know that in our Christian School (Beverly Christian) we teach the native language of the

ancestors of our children. Of course, in our case that language is Spanish, not Dutch. At first, many of the parents opposed, and even resisted the idea of teaching their children Spanish, since many of them viewed Spanish as the language of the land that they had sought to escape. Now, however, there seems to be great enthusiasm for the idea that our children should become skilled at the use of a second language. Sometimes, the children can even excel their parents in their literary ability in Spanish, largely because of the poor education that many of their parents received in Mexico.

Perhaps one factor that makes Spanish more appealing in our situation is its evident utility in our community. While we are still a transitional community constantly changing from the use of Spanish to English (unlike Quebec), more than 80% of the people in this area use Spanish as their primary language. I suppose this is an advantage that we have that knowledge of Dutch among your children would not parallel. Nonetheless, I would hope that at least some would take the suggestion of this parent seriously in promoting the teaching of the Dutch language in your schools, for it is such a waste to see people lose such a precious gift of God. Here among the "Dutch" teachers of our own little school, I see exactly this happening, for even though their grandparents or parents speak Dutch, they have lost the ability. What a waste!

Yours in Christ,
Steve Larson, pastor
(and the Spanish teacher!)

Beverly Orthodox
Presbyterian Church

F. Getting ready for September

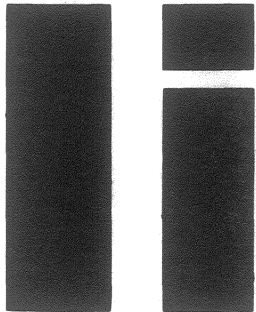
The Board is very pleased to announce that our current staff is intending to stay for the 1985-86 school year.

As you no doubt have heard by now, our staff for next year is in place. Considering the experience of other years, there is much reason for gratitude.

As far as I know all our schools were able to make similar statements in their monthly bulletins. With gratitude, we may take note of the fact that our staffing arrangements are in place for another year. A few years ago, telephone calls to Holland or Australia in May or June, were not uncommon. Let me add hastily that I am not trying to slight those teachers. On the contrary, their background and training in Reformed education often surpassed that of Canadian teachers. The point to be made is that slowly but surely, there is a sufficient number of teachers for our schools. May this be reflected in stability and maturity of Christ-centered education!

Until next month! (D.V.)
NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON

ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza



Colour me!

I-idol

(Isaiah 40:19,20)

Quiz Questions

1. Abraham and Sarah were blessed at a very old age with a son. What was their son's name?
_____ (Genesis 21)
2. Abraham also had another son with Sarah's maid Hagar. What is Hagar's son's name?
_____ (Genesis 21:8)
3. Man was created by God in His own _____ (Genesis 1)
4. Isaiah foretold the birth of this child which was to be a sign to Ahaz. What was the name of this child? _____ (Isaiah 7:14)
5. An idol is also known as a graven _____ and also a sin against the second commandment. (Deuteronomy 5)

Answers for the letter "H"

1. Hagar 2. heavens 3. hell 4. Hannah 5. honey



Hello Busy Beavers,

Contest news!

Yes, we have some winners in our Spring Contest. But first I want to thank everybody who participated. You sure were Busy Beavers!

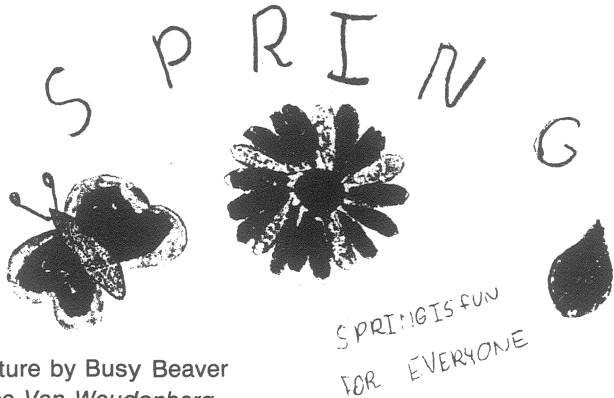
I was very happy to see all the lovely things you sent in! But it was very hard to decide who did best!

Thank you very much Busy Beavers.

You did some super work!

And now congratulations to these winners. They did very well indeed!

BEST POEM (Junior) — Busy Beaver *Katrina DeHaas*
 BEST POEM (Senior) — Busy Beaver *Cathy VanDelden*
 BEST QUIZ — Busy Beaver *Carolien Wubs*
 BEST PICTURE — Busy Beaver *Jeanette Barendregt*
 BEST STORY — Busy Beaver *Nicole DeHaas*



Picture by Busy Beaver
Alice Van Woudenberg

All the Busy Beavers join in wishing "Happy Birthday" and "Many happy returns of the day" to all the Busy Beavers celebrating a July birthday.

We hope you have a thankful, happy and fun day with your family and friends.

May the Lord bless and keep you in the coming year, Busy Beavers.

JULY

Ray Buitenbos	1	Yolanda Van Egmond	16
Ingrid Veenendaal	2	Anita De Vries	17
Jessica Bijker	3	Jessica Linde	18
Debbie Jagt	3	Lloyd Lubbers	19
Jeanette Barendregt	4	Tammy Veldkamp	22
Katrina De Jong	4	Marsha Stieva	26
Monica Haveman	4	Chad Pieterman	29
Wendy Beijes	9	Esther Bouwman	30
Shona Meerstra	9	Erica Moesker	31
Rosalin Swaving	9	Michelle Peters	31
Sharalee Terpsma	13		

From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Marjorie Helder*. We are happy to have you join us. We hope you'll enjoy all our Busy Beaver activities. Write back soon, Marjorie.

And a very big welcome to you, too, *Mary Jane Helder*.

I'm glad you enjoy doing the puzzles. Maybe you'll make up a quiz to share with us, sometime, *Mary Jane*?

Welcome to the Club, *Helena Beijes*. Are you looking forward to the holidays? What are you going to do? Have fun doing the puzzles, *Helena*.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Wendy Beijes*. Thank you for a very nice letter. I hope you'll write again soon, *Wendy*.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Corinna Stroop*. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already! Thanks for the riddles. Will you write soon and tell me your birthday, *Corinna*? Then I can add your name to the birthday list.

Welcome to the Club, *Monica Stroop*. We are happy to have you join us. And you're a real Busy Beaver, too, I see. What are you planning to do during the summer holidays, *Monica*?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Paula Grit*. Thank you for your letter with the riddle. What are you looking forward to in the summer holidays, *Paula*?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Wayne Penninga*. Have you found anything else with your metal detector? And how is your club coming along? Write soon to tell us, all right?

Yes, you're right, *Betty Bergsma*. I was tickled, too, to hear your Mom used to be a Busy Beaver! And you're a real Busy Beaver, too, I see! Yes, isn't it a lovely spring we're having, *Betty*? Thanks for the riddles!

I'm glad you had such a good time on your grandparents' anniversary, *Alice Van Woudenberg*. And in August you get to have another party! You lucky girl! Thanks for the pretty design, *Alice*.

You had lots of news, *Michelle Medemblik*! Did you like singing in the choirs? Congratulations on your baby nephew, *Michelle*! Do you get to see him often?

How did your duet go at the talent show, *Nicole De Haas*? Was it a nice evening? I see you have been very busy, *Nicole*! Keep up the good work! What are you planning to do this summer?

One time I will tell you how many people we have in our Busy Beaver Club, *Gwenda Penninga*. But I'll have to check that out first, all right? I see you've been busy, too, *Gwenda*. Keep up the good work! And I'm tickled your Mom used to be in the Club, too!

Hello *Marjorie Barendregt*. It was nice to hear from you again. Are you looking forward to the holidays? Are you planning something special? Bye for now.

You've done a lot of work, *Jeanette Barendregt*. Congratulations! Where in Terrace did you swim, *Jeanette*? Sounds like you had a good time. Did you get your fish yet?

RIDDLES

from Busy Beaver *Betty Bergsma*

1. What did the wall say to the other wall?
2. What did the big chimney say to the little chimney?
3. What vegetable describes a crowded bus?
4. Why did the clown wear purple suspenders?
5. What flower describes a teacher when he sat on a tack?

Answers:

1. I'll meet you at the corner. 2. You're too small to smoke. 3. Squash. 4. To keep his pants up. 5. Rose.