



Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

YEAR-END ISSUE 1985

*There is a river
whose streams
make glad
the city of God*

Psalm 46:4a



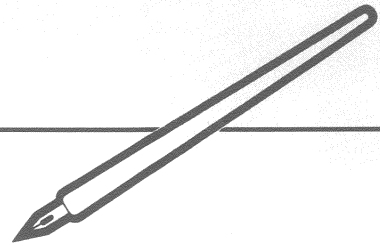
Be still, and know that I am God

*Come, behold the works of the LORD,
how He has wrought desolations in the earth.
He makes wars cease to the end of the earth;
He breaks the bow, and shatters the spear,
He burns the chariots with fire!*

*“Be still, and know that I am God.
I am exalted among the nations,
I am exalted in the earth!”*

*The LORD of hosts is with us;
the God of Jacob is our refuge.*

Psalm 46:8-11



Christ the great priestly King

The wise men from the East, upon arrival in Jerusalem asked, "Where is He who has been born *king of the Jews*?" Announcing to Mary that she would conceive and bear a son, the angel Gabriel said, "And the LORD God will give Him the *throne of his father David*, and He will *reign* over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His *kingdom* there will be no end." What we celebrate again is the birthday of Him who is not a baby anymore but our great King on the heavenly throne.

The evil of much of the present-day Christmas celebration is not only that Christmas has become one of the biggest business events of the year; nor . . . the surrender to sentimentality around a little babe in a manger. But the evil is especially the refusal to believe in the Son of God as the Saviour from sin in accordance with the Scriptures. It is the refusal to submit to His royal law and to live as His obedient subjects and servants.

At Christmas we must not forget that it has been Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day and Pentecost as well. Christ Jesus is the King of Glory on His heavenly throne, from where He rules all things in heaven and on earth as Head of His Church. This rule is first of all a rule of salvation. But it is a ruling with punishing judgments as well.

Three periods in the history of the church

In his paper for the ICRC in Edinburgh, Professor Faber divided the history of the New Testament church into three periods. The determining factor for this division is the struggle for the true doctrine. In the first centuries the church struggled to confess and maintain the truth of the Scriptures regarding God the Father in His divine relation with God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. This struggle resulted in the formulation and adoption of the three Trinitarian or Ecumenical Creeds.

The second period, beginning with the Reformation in the sixteenth century, shows the struggle regarding the doctrine of the Son of God and His work of salvation. The question being whether Christ is a total and complete Saviour, or whether we depend partly on our own good works for our justification and salvation. The result of this struggle was the many Lutheran and Reformed confessions.

In these two first periods the church confessed and formulated the truth of God's Word in accordance with that Word, abiding by that what "is written." In this manner the church followed obediently her King. When on earth, Christ Jesus lived obediently by all that "is written." God's Word was the only and absolute law for Christ. With this, "It is written," Christ defeated the devil when the evil one tempted Him. This, "It is written," made Him go the way to the cross, and via the cross to the resurrection and ascension. And with the same, "It is written," the church of Christ defeated the devil in his attempts to lead the church away from God's Word and so from the triune

God Himself. During the first and the second period of the history of the church, her Head and King protected His Church through His Holy Spirit by making her abide by the truth, by what "is written."

Professor Faber said that the third period of the history of the church can be characterized as the period in which the church is involved in the struggle to abide by the Scriptural truth regarding God the Holy Spirit. This is the period in which we live. Our days are the days of holiness and charismatic movements with their emphasis on the baptism in, and the experience of the Spirit, with the big question "Are you born again?" Doctrine is not really important. "Doctrine divides, but the Spirit unites." Here the Holy Spirit is disconnected from His Word.

Ours are also the days in which a liberalizing Christianity, that follows the "new hermeneutics" and wants to read the Scriptures in a "new manner," speaks so very much of the Holy Spirit leading the church in "new ways." These "new ways" are somewhat vague as far as their outcome is concerned. One gets the impression that those who lead the general membership on these "new ways" do not know themselves where the end will be.

These "new ways" include opening all the offices in the church to women, changing one's views regarding homosexuality, and going along with the ideas of a social gospel which is willing to promote revolution and civil disobedience in the name of Christ. With other words, it is evident that these so-called "new ways of the Spirit" are in fact nothing but a modern adaptation of the Christian faith to the worldly philosophies of the day. These "new ways of the Spirit" deviate from what "is written."

It is clear, then, that also in the third period of the history of the church there is one weapon that must keep the church on the right track. It is the weapon of the Spirit. It is the Word of God. It is that what "is written" which must be the weapon against modern, secularizing liberalism, as well as against shallow born-again-ism. Only with this old weapon in the hand can the church survive.

A different division of the history of the church

One can also divide the history of the church in a different way, namely, according to the names of the sons of Noah: Shem, Ham, and Japheth. We see Shem as the representative of the mainly Semitic nations, Japheth as the father of the European nations, and Ham as the forebear of the nations in Africa and Asia. Also this division is one of main emphasis.

The first period in the history of the church is then the first six or seven centuries, when the Christian faith conquered the countries around the Mediterranean Sea and roughly the peoples

living to the East, the peoples in Syria and Arabia, the world of the Semites. About the end of this period the churches had deviated quite a bit from the Word of the LORD. There was apostasy. Then came Islam, with its weapons of iron and steel, conquering the nations around the old sea and those to the East. And not much was left of Christianity.

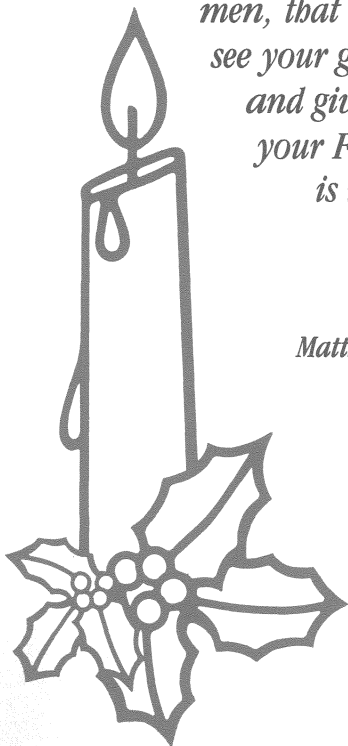
During the second period, the era of Japheth, the gospel conquered Europe. And with the white people of Europe, the gospel came to other parts of the world — America, Australia. The Christian faith was especially the religion of the white people, although not exclusively.

*You are the light of the world.
A city set on a hill cannot be hid.*

*Nor do men light a lamp and
put it under a bushel, but on a
stand, and it gives light to all
in the house.*

*Let your light so shine before
men, that they may
see your good works
and give glory to
your Father who
is in heaven.*

Matthew 5:14-16



Some time ago I read the following interesting information in the *R.E.S. News Exchange*, Vol. XII, No. 9 of September 3, 1985. It says:

“More nonwhite than white Christians in the world

Burbach, West Germany — Speaking here at a conference of the Association of Evangelical Missions, Tom Chandler, assistant-secretary of the missions committee of the World Evangelical Fellowship, told the mission leaders that white Christians are now in the minority in the world.

Chandler pointed out that in 1910 about six percent of all Christians lived outside Europe and North America. Today that proportion has increased to fifty-four percent. The majority of non-Christians also live in nations of the Third World.”

Often we read that in African and Asian countries many people receive the gospel with believing hearts and turn to God and to Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

At the same time we see increasing apostasy in the white world, where especially the main churches fall in the grip of modernism and liberalism, the so-called “new ways of the Spirit.” Moreover, we see in Europe as well as on the North American continent that the influence of Eastern religions, including Islam, conquer more and more minds. Not only are there many Mohammedan guest labourers in West European countries who came from Turkey, Morocco and other Islam nations, but also many Europeans turn to the Islam.

I learned from a pamphlet that there are more than ten-thousand different organizations in North America that, in one way or another, promote the influence of the Eastern religions and religiosity on this continent. In the public schools public Christian prayers are banned, but experimenting with and teaching yoga, transcendental meditation, and holistic health programs that have their roots in Eastern religions is quite alright. These Eastern religions fill the spiritual emptiness that comes about when the true God and His Christ are cast out. Rejecting salvation brings along the judgments of the rejected Saviour.

Is there not a striking parallel between the Islamic conquering of the old Christian world in and after the seventh century, and the conquering of our post-Christian Western world by a mystic religiosity that comes from the East? Certainly, in the seventh century the conquering was done with the sword. In our time the weapons are not made of iron and steel; to conquer bodies in the first place. Today the weapons are much more subtle. They are a matter of the mind, of philosophy, of false, humanistic religiosity. Nevertheless, the conquering is there. Is our Lord, who is now seated on His heavenly throne, surrendering our Western world, the world of the apostate white people, including its deviating churches, to their own humanistic philosophies, placing it under His judgments?

What must we do?

Does all this sound quite hopeless? How can those who believe in Christ Jesus, the eternal Son of God, be without hope? He took upon Himself our human nature to die under God’s judgment against sin. “He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world,” the Apostle John writes, I John 2:2. This means that the birth of Christ Jesus and the ensuing death unto salvation for “whoever believes in Him” (John 3:16) must continue to be preached in the whole world, in the Western world as well as in the Third World.

Christ, our King in glory, who partook of our flesh and blood and bought for Himself His Church, His Bride, will not be a king without subjects. He continues to gather, defend, and preserve for Himself His Church chosen to everlasting life. He gathers and preserves her out of all the nations, peoples, and tribes, in the East and in the West, as well as in the South.

What must we do in this situation described above? The answer is clear: be and remain churches that live by “what

is written" as it is written, rejecting the "new hermeneutics." Therefore, we must, in line with the early church and the church of the Reformation, abide faithfully by the truth as confessed in the Trinitarian Creeds and in the Reformed Standards, confessing this truth about *our God* as He revealed it in the Scriptures. We must use these means to abide, faithfully, by our God and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, not forgetting that the Spirit of Christ binds the church to "what is written." Love the Lord! Study and obey His Word! Know the confession of the church!

Only in the way of faithfulness to our Lord, that is of obedience to His Word and of faithful adherence to the creeds of the church, which means, only in the way of a true and obedient commitment to our Lord with our whole heart and mind, can we mean something for the world in which we live. Total dedication to our Lord and His cause, in humble, submissive, listening to, and obedient doing of, "what is written" can make the church a light upon a candlestick and a city upon a mountain.

Sometimes I am afraid that also we are losing that dedication and commitment, that being full of Christ and His cause. Sometimes I am afraid that we are sliding into an attitude of seeking our own comforts and conveniences rather than the preservation and further gathering of the church of our Lord. Sometimes I am afraid that we live more for a good life for ourselves here on earth than for obedient service to our King in the hope of eternal life.

What must we do? Rejoice that Christ is our Saviour! And spread this good news in our own surrounding, supporting the work of evangelism at home. Rejoice also that we are allowed to be involved in mission work in the Third World, in Irian Jaya and in Brazil!

What must we do? Let us watch ourselves in order not to follow the world where people exchange very elaborate and expensive gifts and have excessive Christmas dinners and parties, while, at the same time, surrendering themselves to a shallow Christmas sentimentality, trying to be of goodwill to each other. It is not necessarily wrong to have an enjoyable family get-together with a moderate dinner at the occasion of Christmas. Neither is it necessarily wrong to have another family reunion where small gifts are exchanged. But we should avoid the excessive. God's coming kingdom needs so much. That should come first.

Recently two mission meetings were held, one in Cloverdale and one in Edmonton, in connection with the mission work in Brazil. The council of the sending Church at Surrey came to the supporting churches with the question, should we not work toward the calling of a third missionary in order to further expand the mission work in Brazil? It was also asked, should we not have another sending church in that case, and split the supporting churches in the West into two groups of churches, one basically of the Classis Pacific area and the other of Classis Alberta-Manitoba? Many delegates reported that their consistory had come to the conclusion that the economic situation at the moment did not warrant a positive decision now. But not all were against the idea. We should work toward further expansion. There is so much work to be done also in Brazil. We are glad that Rev. Agema will go there soon.

What must we do? Keep realizing that we as Christians are soldiers of our King of Glory, called to conquer the world with and for Him. Hereby the most important thing is not whether we see result, although that is encouraging. What matters is that there is a task. And that task is ours.

May the Lord, once born as a baby, but now the King of Glory, preserve and increase His Church. May He find, among so many others in this world, also us faithful in His service. May He find us bringing the sacrifice of our thankful love, of our whole life, to Him for the coming of His Kingdom. Christ is King! Hallelujah!

J. GEERTSEMA



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The mind of Christ

In addition to the Christmas narratives related in the gospels especially of Matthew and Luke, we also find in the letters various passages which offer an exposition of the meaning of the Christmas event. A well-known passage among them is found in Philippians 2, the verses 5-11; "an early Christian confession" as it is called. A very practical matter led the Apostle Paul to write it. Discord among fellow workers of the apostle, Chapter 4:2, and the activity of false teachers, who violated the sound teaching of salvation by grace alone and by faith alone, threatened the purity

an overview of Jesus' ministry in Canaan, but starts way back in the aeon before the Son of God had come into the flesh; "the beginning" as John calls it when no Church at Philippi, nor any other for that matter, was around, but when the "Word" was. It was with God and it was God, John 1:1. Paul speaks of the Word as "Christ Jesus." That may surprise us because these names are the ones given to the Lord when He had assumed our flesh and blood. There are, for that reason, exegetes who are of the opinion that Philippians 2:5-8 deals with the attitude of the Lord after He had

it had its origin before the world began, when Christ Jesus was, as Paul writes "in the form of God." A lot of philosophizing has been done to get to the bottom of these words, and various explanations have been given. We do not have to choose however, the Bible itself directs us to the meaning. There is no better guide! "Father," the Lord Jesus prays in the prayer before the beginning of His suffering, "glorify Thou me in Thy own presence with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was made," John 17:5. "God," the author of the letter to the Hebrews writes, "has in these last days spoken to us by a Son. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of His nature . . ." 1:3. In II Corinthians 4:4 Paul mentions, ". . . the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God." In Colossians 1:15 this likeness returns, when Paul writes of Christ Jesus, "He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation . . ." In His likeness of God the pre-human Christ is portrayed in these verses, and the emphasis is on His glory and majesty; His radiant appearance which reflects the very nature of God. Commentators have pointed out that the qualifications "image" and "likeness" of God remind us of man's creation in the image and likeness of God, Genesis 1:26, 27. By using this terminology the Son of God is apparently presented as the last Adam, even before He became man.

Another reminder is the "equality with God" of which is spoken in connection with the preexistent Christ, v. 6. It calls to mind the narrative of man's fall. Over against the warning of the Lord that eating of the forbidden tree would mean death, the serpent said to the woman, "You will not die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil," Genesis 3:5. To express it in the words of Philippians 2:6, man counted equality with God, for example, being like God and thus being God Himself, a thing to be grasped. A word is used which has as first meaning "robbery," the attempt of seizing and ap-

"And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross."

Philippians 2:8

of the gospel and the unity of the church, which Paul calls "my joy and crown," Chapter 4:1.

To quell the arising trouble Paul makes an urgent appeal to the congregation of all it believes and stands for, Chapter 1:27 to 2:4. But he does not leave it at that. Admonitions, an old saying goes, wake people up, but examples get them moving. So Paul adds to his admonitions and exhortations an example of the kind of conduct which should be practiced by them, pointing to the example of their Lord and Saviour to whom they belong and in whose footsteps they, and the congregations of all times and places should walk, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus," or in a better and simpler translation as offered by the New International Version, "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."

In this Christmas meditation I like to restrict myself to the vv. 5-8 which spell out this attitude of the Lord. To give an idea of the mind of Christ and the life-style practiced by Him the apostle does not give

come into the flesh, but the content of v. 7 chronologically following what is stated in v. 6, make that, as far as I can see impossible. Verse 6 speaks of the preexistent, or prehuman Son of God. But Paul nonetheless calls Him "Christ Jesus" because he wants to express that the kind of mind which characterized the Lord when He had come into the flesh and walked the earth was already present with Him in His preincarnate state. He did not become our Saviour on the day that Mary gave birth to her first-born son. While as yet in the bosom of the Father He was already our Saviour.

Think about it!

There are Christians who have their doubts whether they can pass when it comes to the question of being received by God in grace; wretched people that they are! Whatever our fears, the application of the names "Christ Jesus" to the preexistent Son of God, tells that there is no ground for that doubt. He became Saviour in the fullness of time because He was it from the beginning. Redemptive history may be realized in the world-time;

appropriating something which does not belong to the one who tries to lay a hand on it and to which he is not entitled either. That's what the first Adam had in mind when, prompted by his wife, he also took of the fruit of the tree and ate. Pure rebellion, the attempt to take over from God and to place the law of good and evil over it, instead of submitting to it. It was different, or rather, it was the opposite with the Son of God, presented as the last Adam. The mind, the attitude which characterized Him, was that though He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, or rather *to cling to with all His might*. For, different from Adam, He shared in the equality with God as Son of God. It was His lawful possession. If, therefore, He had wanted to cling to it, to use it for His own advantage, to exploit it for His own purpose, He was entitled to do so. We are obliged to God for everything which we are, and have, and receive, but God — and that includes Him who was in the form of God, equal with Him, Himself God — is not in any way obliged to us. He is free, as God alone can be free, to do with what is His as it pleases Him.

Did He take advantage of His being like God?

No, He did not! He did not count equality with God a thing to be cherished, a privilege to clutch to, a possession to be taken advantage of. Instead of doing the one or the other, "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant," or as it literally says of "a slave," being born in the likeness of men," v. 7.

It made me think of King David who, at the occasion of bringing the ark of God back to Jerusalem, laid down his royal mantle and dressed like everyone else and took his place among the people as one of them, leaping and dancing before the ark, II Samuel 6:12ff. This comparison by its very nature is inadequate, but nonetheless helps us to understand what happened a little better.

"He emptied Himself." No, that does not mean that He stopped being the Son of God anymore than David stopped being king. It meant that the form of God, and the equality with God, insofar as it concerned His glorious appearance, His royal state, His visible equality, fell away. To let Scripture be its own interpreter again, to empty Himself meant to exchange the form of God for that of a slave, and the being like God — as far as the manifestation of it is concerned — for the likeness of men. Mind the plural; it does not speak of man as he was created by God, but of men as they had become after the fall, deprived of glory and honour, a shadow of man's former self. "He emptied Himself." To put it in the words of Isaiah 53:2, "... He had no form or comeliness that we should look at Him, and no beauty that

we should desire Him." In view of the word used by Paul it is not certain whether that reference is made to "the servant of the LORD" as portrayed by Isaiah in the chapters 42ff. of his prophecies. "Slave" seems to be the better translation, indicating the totality of emptying, the complete degradation which He underwent. But, if not the servant of the LORD, it is anyway the man of suffering of Isaiah 53:3 whom he portrays. Look only at v. 8 of Philipians 2, "And being found in human form He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross." "He has come a long way," we may say of people who have gone through hard times, but who have finally gotten over their troubles and are now doing well. Christ Jesus went a long way as well, but then the other way around; from glory to shame, from majesty to servitude, from being in the bosom of the Father, to being found as a man, from sharing the equality and the form of God to being humbled to death, even death on a cross, the most painful and the most shameful capital punishment, "Cursed be every one who hangs on a tree," Galatians 3:13.

This utter humiliation did not *come over Him* as is so often the case with human troubles. "He emptied *Himself*," it reads, and again, "He humbled *Himself*." "No one," the Lord Jesus spoke during His

ministry on earth," takes it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again; this charge I have received from my Father," John 10:18.

Why, why, why?

The apostle does not say it in this passage, but he has done so in another one, found in II Corinthians 8:9 where it reads, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich."

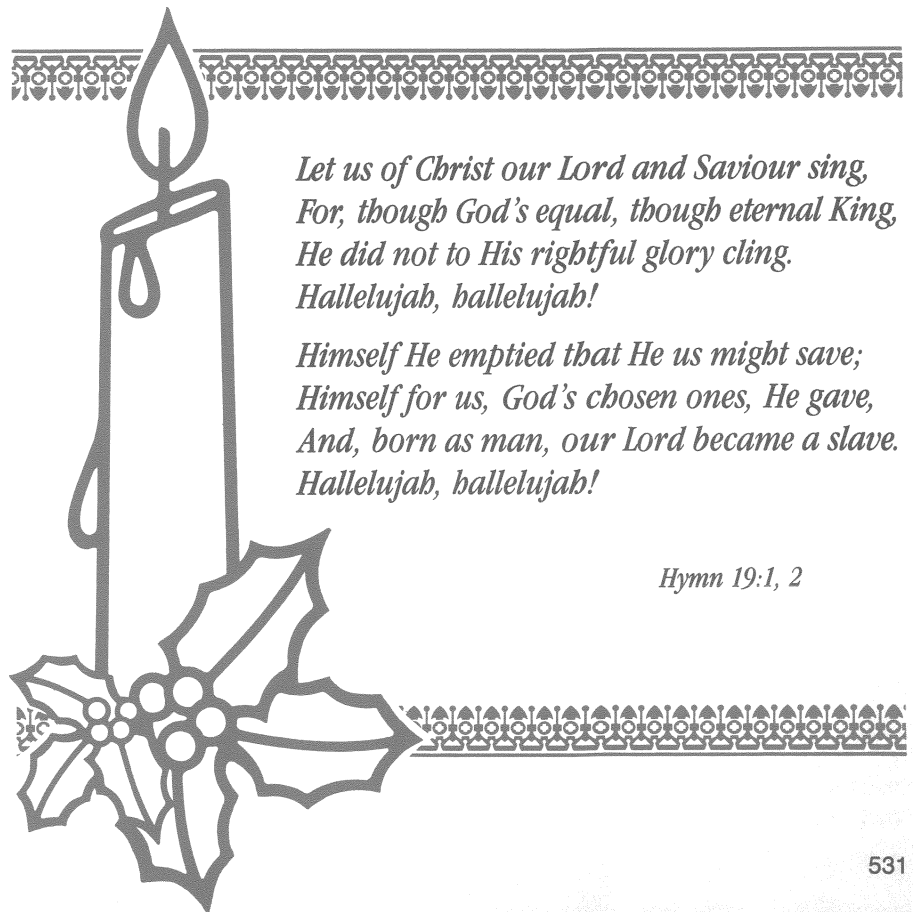
That's why!

And the reason why the apostle does not mention this in Philipians 2 is that he wants to focus all attention on that attitude of complete humility which was His, and which He showed, showed to the bitter but at the same time glorious end of having finished it all.

May your attitude be then as that of Christ Jesus. What *He did* we cannot do but we do not have to either. But that *mind* which was His, that attitude which He displayed, should be ours, as people who by faith are ingrafted in Christ and are called to walk in His footsteps.

This is your Christmas mandate based on that incomprehensible miracle of the Son's emptying and humiliating of Himself.

L. SELLES



*Let us of Christ our Lord and Saviour sing,
For, though God's equal, though eternal King,
He did not to His rightful glory cling.
Hallelujah, ballelujah!*

*Himself He emptied that He us might save;
Himself for us, God's chosen ones, He gave,
And, born as man, our Lord became a slave.
Hallelujah, ballelujah!*

Hymn 19:1, 2

Loving discipline₃

7. Teaching a value system

One of the main points in teaching a value system is to eliminate or discourage bad behaviour and to teach good behaviour in an effective way.

To be able to make decisions in their own lives, children need a value system to relate to. Such a value system has to be developed and learned. That can only be done by proper guidance. It is a wrong and very dangerous approach to leave it up to the teenager to develop this on his own. It not only makes him feel insecure, as we have seen before, it also denies him the guidance he needs and deserves. It presents great dangers. He might develop a completely wrong value system because of his lack of experience. He has to learn everything the hard way. It also conflicts with the Word of God. Parents and teachers have the duty to teach the children the one and only correct value system according to the Word of God. In Proverbs 29:15 we read: "... a child left to himself brings shame to his mother."

There are basically two ways to teach a value system and that is by discouraging bad behaviour and by encouraging good behaviour. Both principles have to be applied simultaneously and in proper balance, because the one does not work without the other.

Discipline and punishment is meant to discourage bad behaviour. One of the basic principles is that children, as well as adults, do many things not just for the fun of it, but rather for the pleasant and desired results or consequences of it. Although fortunately many people enjoy their daily job, still many would do their work with considerably less enthusiasm if they did not have the prospect of a pay cheque at the end of the week or month.

Not only money is a reward. To make other people feel happy or to be respected by others can also give satisfaction and



He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him. Proverbs 13:24

... the Lord disciplines him whom He loves Hebrews 12:6

encourage people to do a job which they otherwise would not appreciate very much.

Another reason why we do something or refrain from doing it can be the awareness that punishment will follow. To obey traffic rules or to pay taxes may not be our greatest priority but the enforcement of the law by the civil government makes us prefer to obey rather than to get a ticket or to pay a fine. That is also a matter of considering the consequences. In this case the consequence of not being bothered by penalties. Of course, for a Christian the main reason for obedience should be that the Lord requires from us to respect the authorities. We should not even obey the Lord out of fear of punishment, but in thankfulness for all that He has given to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Still satisfaction and reward are important factors in human behaviour. Psalm 19:11 says that in keeping the ordinances of the LORD there is great reward, and in Proverbs 11:18 we read: "A wicked man earns deceptive wages, but one who sows righteousness gets a sure reward." As is the case with many things, we should not make it an either-or issue but we have to be aware of the fact that it is the one as well as the other. The same counts for children. They have to obey their parents in love. Lord's Day 39 says that I have to show honour, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother. Still, in education we have to use the method of positive encouragement no less than discipline and retribution to discourage bad behaviour.

8. Discouraging bad behaviour

The process of discouraging undesired behaviour begins very early, before the children themselves are even aware of it. When a toddler does something without having the slightest idea whether it is right or wrong, but he finds out that it always has unpleasant results, he will give up this habit. On the other hand he will be encouraged to do something, if he feels that it has pleasant results. This happens without being aware of it. It is just a natural reaction. A baby will usually cry when he feels uncomfortable. But if the baby is held and cuddled every time he cries, he will associate the rather unpleasant activity of crying with some pleasant results and simply "communicate" in this way. He will cry more often, because he likes to be cuddled. This simple principle counts for almost every situation. Discipline has to be used as a punishment, to show and let the children feel that they have to obey authority. That is certainly an important aspect of it. However, no less important is the effect of the sometimes subtle discouraging of wrong behaviour. Bad behaviour, no matter whether it is a wrong habit, an intended challenging of the authority, or an attempt to get away with something they know is wrong, should never be rewarded. If children feel that it is not worth trying and that the result is worse than the pleasure derived from it, they will give up and comply with the rules.

9. Encouraging proper behaviour

We have seen in the previous section that discipline plays an important role in discouraging bad behaviour. The encouragement of good behaviour plays an equally important role in the teaching of a value system.

Let us use a simple example to explain. Some parents are very concerned because their children come home late and are out too often. They set a certain time for coming home and they set a limit on the number of times they can go out each week. They enforce these rules by a fair and consistent punishment for breaking the rules. If one comes home late he is grounded for a number of evenings. That seems to be a disciplinary method "according to the books." However, it is only one side of the coin. The parents should at the same time and with no less fervour encourage desired behaviour. The danger exists, and is very imminent, that staying at home for a number of evenings becomes synonymous with punishment. The parents should show their appreciation when their child comes home early or stays home. They should make staying home more attractive and less associated with a "must."

We all like to get a pat on the shoulder

once in a while. It is rather discouraging for children when they are criticized for their failures, and get punished when they do something wrong, but never get praised or rewarded when they do something right.

We all feel that way. An employee will feel much better, and work harder and with more enthusiasm, when his employer shows his appreciation and praises him once in a while. The pay cheque is important but a pat on the shoulder is certainly strong moral incentive and encouragement. The same counts for children. Chores which they do not like too much

loves him is diligent to discipline him."

b. All discipline has to be based on loving care, and also the obedience to the authorities has to be a matter of love. According to Lord's Day 39 the fifth commandment requires "that I show honour, love, and faithfulness to my father and mother and all those in authority over me."

c. A child, left to his own, will never develop a proper value system to refer to. Such a child will bring shame to his parents (Proverbs 29:15).

d. Two important aspects of discipline are: it has to be fair and consistent. Un-

"The encouragement through a reward is not less important than the discouraging effect of discipline."

become easier when they know that it makes their parents happy. The encouragement through a reward is not less important than the discouraging effect of discipline. Such a reward does not necessarily have to be by way of payment. In most cases moral encouragement and mental satisfaction should have preference over direct payment. The satisfaction of making someone feel happy can be of equal importance. However, the appreciation has to be shown before it can count as a reward.

There is another aspect we have to be aware of and that is the (sometimes unintentional) rewarding of wrong behaviour. A simple example will illustrate this. If a child, during a church service, is allowed to go to the washroom, it may experience this as a welcome break in a not too much appreciated time of sitting still. If the parents do not curtail and discourage this, the child may, even unintentionally, associate it with a nice break. It may happen more often and become a habit, which is difficult to get rid of. The same happens when a child ignores or challenges the decision of the parents. If the parents give in it works as an encouragement to try again.

10. Conclusions

a. The Bible teaches us clearly that discipline is an intrinsic part of child rearing and education. Parents have the duty to teach their children a proper value system. In this teaching corporal punishment takes an important place. It is necessary in order to keep them away from going in the wrong direction in a world which is infected by the influence of sin. Proverbs 13:24 says: "He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who

fair punishment causes children to lose their respect for the authorities. To explain the meaning and purpose of punishment which is felt to be unfair may be necessary. However, this should never take the form of a debate about the correctness of the decision. Inconsistent punishment makes children confused and makes discipline less effective.

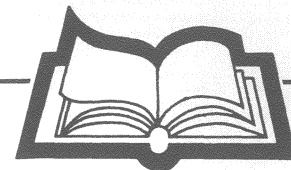
e. Discipline is important not only as a retribution for wrongdoing but also to discourage bad behaviour. It should always go together with encouragement of good behaviour. Every human being likes to be praised and many things are done not for enjoyment but for the rewarding results. Rewarding good behaviour works as an incentive and encourages the child to continue in that direction. Unintentionally the result will be associated with the action. Such a reward and incentive should preferably not be a "payment" in a direct way but rather a moral or mental satisfaction (compare Psalm 19:11 and Proverbs 11:18).

f. The main reason for all discipline and obedience to the authorities should be the fifth commandment. Lord's Day 39 says that I have to "submit myself with due obedience to their good instruction and discipline, and also have patience with their weaknesses and shortcomings, since it is God's will to govern us by their hand."

g. Let us pray to the Lord that the Christian family may remain the prime source of loving discipline and education. Not a free education is the ideal, but the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs 29:17 says: "Discipline your son, and he will give you rest; he will give delight to your heart."

W. POWELSE

FROM THE SCRIPTURES



“ . . . the first-born of all creation ”

“ . . . the first-born from the dead ”

Colossians 1:15,18

Christ, the first-born

This month during the festive season, we may especially remember the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. In itself, a birth is not something out of the ordinary; at least two or more children are born every minute. Even the word “first-born” does in itself not point to anything special, for in every family there is one who is “first-born.” So it can also be said of Mary, “And she gave birth to her *first-born* son . . .” (Luke 2:7). She would have more children, but Jesus is her first-born.

Yet we understand that when the apostle Paul uses the expression “first-born” with respect to Christ, he does mean something special. We are almost reminded here of another expression used in connection with our Lord, namely, that He is also called “the only-begotten Son of God.” Only-begotten means that this Child, this Person, is unique, the only One who came out of God and is like unto Him, God of God, very God of very God, as the Nicene Creed states.

So also the term “first-born” indicates something unique and special concerning our Lord. Paul calls Him first in Colossians 1:15, “the first-born of all creation.” Perhaps you know that the so-called Jehovah’s Witnesses use this text to claim that Christ is *created*, and that He as creature belongs to this creation. They portray Him as the first creature, the first in a long row of creatures, the first in a *series*. They see in Him nothing more than a created angel who can function on behalf of other creatures, but deny Him as the Son of God who is Himself divine.

And it is true that “first-born” can mean: the first in a series. But it can also denote a certain position: first in *rank* and authority. Being a “first-born” in this sense means having a position of headship, as Paul indicates later in verse 18, “He is the *Head* of the body, the church.” I think here also of Psalm 89:27, where the LORD says of David, “And I will *make* him the first-born, the highest of the kings of the earth.” We understand that David was not the first-born in the family of Jesse, even the last-born, and still he received the position and rank of the first-born to be king of all Israel.

So the term “first-born” means that Christ receives headship and dominion over all creation. Then we also understand what follows: Christ is not creature, but Creator, “for in Him all things were created . . .” (v. 16). This can

only be said of the first-born who is also only-begotten, and who is naturally and essentially one with the Father! The first-born of all creation is the King of the entire universe who governs and rules all things. The miracle of Christmas is that this first-born, this supreme King, lays down all majesty and glory and becomes like unto us in all things, sin excepted. On Christmas Day we do not worship a child because he is a child, but we honour the first-born of all creation in His wonderful work of salvation.

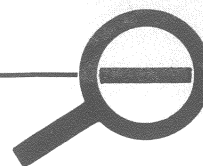
The same goes for the second expression, “the first-born from the dead.” This, too, does not mean the first in a series, but the first in rank. We know that before Christ’s resurrection, others rose from the dead. Just think of the ones whom Christ Himself raised! But when Christ is raised from the dead, He is the first one who receives as living King the highest position at God’s right hand. The first-born from the dead has POWER over death, and has opened the way of life for all God’s children. Paul speaks of the same in I Corinthians 15:22 and 23, “For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be *made alive*. But each in his own order: Christ the first fruits, then at His coming those who belong to Christ.”

Therefore we may receive in Christ the supreme King who has preeminence in everything. He rules over all of creation and in every aspect of our life. But also, He has complete power over death and the grave and will one day destroy both death and the grave at one time! So we may confess Christ as the One who governs both life and death, and who as the unique Son of God will lead all things to glory.

This gives unprecedented death to our Christmas celebration. Unto us a Son is given! A very special One! No one less than the only-begotten Son of God who is the first-born of all creation, the ruler of kings on earth. The only-begotten Son of God who is the first-born from the dead, who opens to God’s children the way of eternal life. He is the One who makes our celebration into a veritable feast.

Let us celebrate Christmas as the feast of the only-begotten Son, who is the first-born of all creation, the first-born from the dead. Then our joy will be full.

CL. STAM



Three hundred years ago the Huguenots left France

In October of this year attention was given in many a country, also in Canada, to the fact that three hundred years ago the Huguenots left France. *The Vancouver Sun* also devoted an article to this anniversary. It was written by Allan Swift.

After informing us that a number of well-known Canadians, have Huguenots "who fled religious persecution in France in the seventeenth century" as their ancestors, this writer continues:

Commemorations are being held this year in Canada and other countries to mark the 300th anniversary of the most important date in the troubled history of French Protestants, called Huguenots.

On Oct. 18, 1685, King Louis XIV revoked the statute that had granted Protestants religious freedom, and he ordered them to recant or leave France in fifteen days. The alternative for men was be killed or sent to the galleys; women were sent to prison or nunneries.

Encyclopedia Britannica says 400,000 men, women and children fled abroad when the Edict of Nantes, passed in 1598 by King Henry IV, was revoked by Louis.

Historians say the massive exodus robbed France of its best merchants, farmers, craftsmen and intellectuals, who helped build the countries that took them in.

Many Huguenots also found a home in The Netherlands. I am sure, that also many among us can say what some famous Canadians can say, "We have Huguenots as our ancestors." You may know that I am one of them. A large number of these persecuted Protestants, these refugees of the seventeenth century, migrated to and settled in South Africa. Many French names in South Africa are still the silent proof. Let me mention here the name of Jacob Daniel Du Toit, minister, professor, poet, of the Reformed Church in South Africa. He put to rhyme, in the South African (Dutch) language, the 150 Psalms.

Many of the Huguenots also migrated to Canada. Allan Swift writes further:

Huguenots played a significant role in Canadian history.

In fact, the first settlers in Canada were Huguenots. Henry IV, who was a Protestant before he became a Roman Catholic for political reasons, wanted to make Canada a Huguenot refuge, says Rev. Pierre Goldberger, principal of the United Theological College in Montreal.

"Canada got off to a good start," Goldberger says, explaining that the colony had a degree of pluralism and freedom of religion unknown in Europe. Generations of Protestants and Catholics lived in harmony in New France.

This period ended with the revocation of 1685. Jesuits and soldiers arrived from France to enforce the new edict, and the Canadian Huguenots were forbidden to meet for worship, hold land or settle permanently.

(One select piece of land confiscated from Protestant Abraham Martin, called the Plains of Abraham, was later a famous battleground.)

Huguenots moved to the United States or back to Europe, and Goldberger says that religious freedom did not return to French-speaking Quebec until 1959, when former premier Maurice Duplessis was swept from power.

For nearly 300 years the Catholic Church had controlled public education and social services in Quebec, discouraged missionary activity by other religions and wielded influence in the provincial government.

Many have speculated about what might have happened in Quebec if religious freedom had been retained from the start, says Goldberger, who was born in France. "It would probably have given a quite different type of society."

In a later period, many of the United Empire Loyalists who flooded into New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec and Ontario were of Huguenot descent.

During October, the Huguenot Society of Canada sponsored lectures and commemoration services, which featured costumes, hymns and musical instruments of the seventeenth century.

The commemorations "tend to dwell on the position 'Thank God our fathers made it out alive.'" said Michael Harrison, a Toronto management consultant and president of the society, which has about 350 members across the country.

"We studiously avoid the word celebration because they weren't happy times," adds Harrison, whose ancestors fled Lyon for Geneva shortly after the revocation and eventually came to Canada from Connecticut with other Loyalists.

The massive exodus around 1685 was merely the largest and latest in a period of 165 years in which Protestants trickled out of France because of civil religious wars and intense persecution.

I have a question? How many of the ancestors of the Huguenots who fled because of their Reformed faith, still adhere to the same faith? Is a "Thank God our fathers made it out alive" all that is left? Is their no "Thank God" for that faith, for which they left, anymore? That is very poor.

The italics in the quote were added by me to draw the reader's attention to the fact that even until 1959 there was no (formal) freedom of religion in Quebec. That is very remarkable, although it is characteristic for countries and regions that are predominantly Roman Catholic.

In the second place, I ask attention for the remark of Rev. Goldberger which I underlined. If there would have been religious freedom in Quebec, "It would probably have given a quite different type of society." I agree with this. Protestant countries, like Holland, England, and Germany, have a society that differs from the societies in Romanist countries, like Italy, Spain, and, to a certain extent, also France.

The writer of the article points in this connection to John Calvin and his influence in Protestant societies. There certainly is a connection here. Listening to the Scriptures, Calvin taught human responsibility to God the Creator. Calvin taught that we have to fulfill our daily task diligently, and work hard and responsibly with

the talents given us, to develop those talents, and to be able to support the work of God and the needy neighbour in this world.

But let us listen further to what Mr. Swift writes:

One of the most famous early exiles was Jean Calvin, who developed Reformed theology from his base in Geneva. Calvin, although a theologian, is

considered the father of modern capitalism because of his teaching that "work was worthy of merit and that anyone with financial means had a duty to help his neighbour," says Roland Piaumier, a French history buff who has studied Huguenots.

Piaumier said in an interview that the pious, hard-working Huguenots set up the clock and textile industries in

Switzerland, silk and silversmith works in England, the Irish linen and poplin factories, and founded banks.

England in particular "skimmed off the cream of the French people," he said. "It permitted the Anglo-Saxon hegemony that we still have today."

Piaumier, a Roman Catholic, says France has never come to terms with its treatment of the Protestants, nor the loss to the country of its intellectual and commercial elite. Nor has the Catholic Church ever acknowledged its role in the persecution, the way Pope John Paul apologized for the Spanish Inquisition.

Much of what is said here is interesting. It shows the connection between one's religion and one's attitude in society.

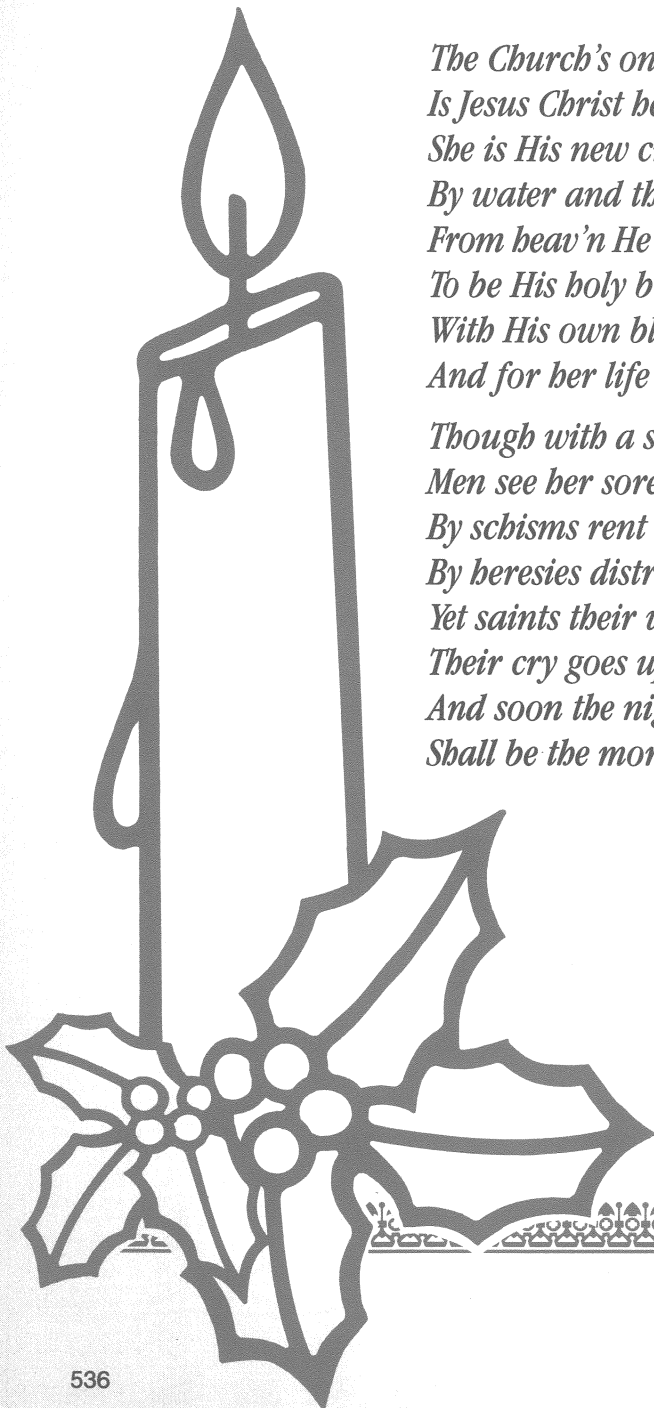
Roman doctrine says that only the pope and the rest of the clergy are to be priests; they only are to teach. The priests are the teachers of the church. The Reformation went back to the Scriptural doctrine of the office of all the believers. All the believers are prophets, priests and kings. That has its consequences in the church, but also in the life of the believers in society. In all of life, Christians have to be active as prophets, as priests, and as kings. That is their cultural mandate.

In this article we meet again that stubborn, but totally wrong view that Calvin is "the father of modern capitalism." Calvin was not. Do socialists deny that work — labour — is "worthy of merit?" Of course not! Is Calvin, then, also the father of modern socialism? One would sooner be inclined to say this seeing what Calvin further said, namely, that everybody has a "duty to help his neighbour." Calvin is neither the father of capitalism, nor of socialism. Calvin followed the Word of God. And this, neither of the two movements do.

Capitalism, which gives the owner the absolute right over what he owns (freedom to build and freedom to destroy what is his), was developed in the days of the humanistic Enlightenment, and has its roots in the classis Roman justice system. And that differed completely from the Scriptural view which denies that man has the absolute right over his possessions. God teaches us that the earth and its fulness belongs to Him. Man is steward. He is responsible to God and for his neighbour with regard to that what God entrusts to him.

Yes, God has given so very much in the (Reformed) Huguenots, and to those countries to which they fled, and where they were received and given a place to live and work. God gave much, not only materially; but also spiritually. Especially for the latter the Almighty should receive thanks. But, indeed, what is left of the spiritual heritage?

J. GEERTSEMA

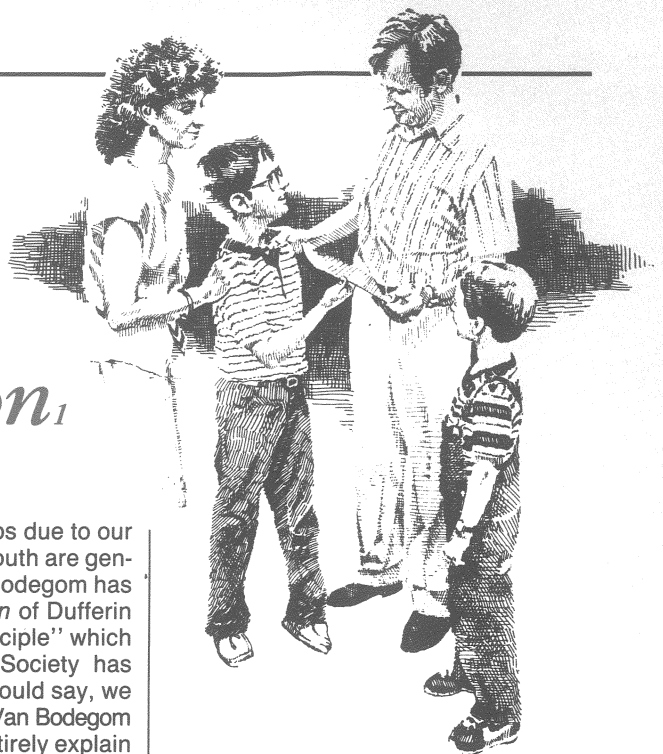


*The Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From heav'n He came and sought her
To be His holy bride;
With His own blood He bought her
And for her life He died.*

*Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.*

Hymn 40:1, 3

Christian ethics and Reformed education,



Speech held for the Canadian Reformed Teacher's Convention, at Burlington, Ontario, on Friday, October 18, 1985.

You have asked me to address you today concerning a question which has more or less plagued you these last months, namely, the relation between Christian ethics and Reformed education. I formulate it this way in order to get a better grip on the material myself. The question is one of great concern because of the obviously un-Christian behaviour of some (most?) of our young people. The question was specifically formulated by one of you as follows, "After receiving so much Reformed education, why do we still see so much un-Christian conduct? Why have the students not *internalized* this Christian behaviour?" In that question, already, the formulation of Nicholas Wolterstorff has been assimilated — the matter is one of internalization indeed.¹

I said, the question has *more or less* plagued you. Some of you have expressed great concern in this matter, stopping short of outright panic. Others have downplayed the matter, seeing this behaviour as a fairly common course of events in the process of growing up. Meanwhile, in various articles the inevitable analysis has begun under the general heading, "Where did we go wrong?" It is then assumed that we indeed *did* go wrong, somewhere, somehow. And if only we could put our finger on it, the problem could perhaps be corrected.

With all due respect to those who attempted to study this problem, when we now look at the various analyses given of the situation (where did we go wrong?), we find that a number of pretty *standard* answers are given, answers which have already done us good service at previous occasions of reflection and evaluation.

You could blame the current malaise among our youth on the sad moral state of our present society. In a society as we live in today, with very little true morality or very loose morals, how could our youth

not be affected? Is it perhaps due to our deranged society that the youth are generally so footloose? J. van Bodegom has written in the *School Bulletin* of Dufferin about the "trickle down principle" which also touches our youth.² Society has caught up with us, or, you could say, we have caught up with society. Van Bodegom admits that this does not entirely explain the problem, but it does make the problem stand out. Indeed, the world is "closing in" on us, and the youth have their own *modern* questions which we as educators and office-bearers perhaps have not fully understood or addressed correctly. Our answers may not fit the real questions.

Others have put the finger on the home environment and the failure of parents adequately to nurture their children in godliness. P.H. Torenvliet has written, "Many Reformed homes are in a shambles."³ Parents cannot cope with their own children, while secular media and the rock culture destroy the home. Many parents, it seems, have abdicated their parental responsibility to the teachers, who are, meanwhile, having their own problems. J.M. vander Meer in *Clarion* also points, among other things, in the direction of the parents, and feels that parents fail to exemplify the faith which is taught.⁴ He extends this to the entire communion of saints and speaks of "the result of a failure of us all as community of saints to effectively exemplify a Christian life-style." We are told to look at the problem "in the wider context of the spiritual climate in our churches."

Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff has voiced, as her opinion, that perhaps our doctrine is too one-sided, and that more emphasis should be put on the necessity of *conversion* of our youth.⁵ Do we still presume too much when we approach the children as (all) being born again? The doctrine of "presumptive regeneration" may officially be out of the door in our churches, but has it not crept back in to slay its thou-

sands?⁶ Perhaps in reaction to this, P.H. Torenvliet has written, "... our point of departure must be covenantal, in the sense that we must accept that these children are His *and as such they are already converted.*"⁷ (emphasis mine, Cl. S.) Some more remarks on this point later.

Meanwhile, we have come full circle. Society, home, and church are all indicated for the youth's apparent lack of Christian life-style. And who will deny that here, indeed, do lie major causes of our youth's current unresponsiveness? At the same time we should also recognize that such causes were also singled out in previous times. In 1940, Prof. B. Holwerda wrote about the breakdown of the family (the absenteeism of the father, also due to the mobilization) and he added, "A feeling of tiredness and uncertainty will again grab many, with as typical symptoms, on the one hand, syncretism and relativism, and on the other, agnosticism. On the one hand, I don't know anymore, so indifference; on the other, fear for life which drives people to all kinds of unhealthy, heretical trends."⁸ Perhaps in our time things have become more acute, but these things are in themselves not new.

Holwerda spoke of the nihilism and lawlessness of his time, which, he said, according to the Scriptures can only get worse. Syncretism, relativism, agnosticism and indifference, are not these the dangers we see with our own people? It has become worse, to the extent that even secular teachers in public schools have, since the 1960's, begun reemphasizing "Moral Values Education" (MVE). But the

problem for the secular teacher is that he knows of no constant norm on which to base any moral values. Some of the more courageous MVE teachers incline toward compilation of a list of "timeless principles," but others are quick to warn against any form of indoctrination.⁹ At most the teacher can engage in a process of "values clarification." Generally today the moral role of the school is being questioned and examined; we are not the only ones with certain misgivings on this point.

Perhaps some impact of this "moral values education" affects us as well. If I see it correctly, we are struggling basically with two questions, not one, but two:

a) how far may the school go in teaching moral values?

b) how do we get the youth to "internalize" these values?

And so we reflect today on the relation between Reformed education and Christian ethics.

Ethics and dogmatics

We should be clear in our terminology. There is a difference, as J. Douma has pointed out, between ethics and morals. Morals are the totality of customs or rules as adopted by a certain group, while ethics are the reflections on these morals. In ethics we examine existing morals; in Christian ethics we subject such morals to the only norm of the Word of God!

Of course we understand that ethics never stand on their own. Very often they are taught at theological seminaries in conjunction with dogmatics. Ethics do not stand over against doctrine; but are a part of it, for life and doctrine are not to be separated. I specifically mention this because there is sometimes a tendency, when faced with what is perceived as a dead orthodoxy (and the accompanying breakdown of morality), to flee from the straightjacket of doctrine to a more lively pietism. Ethics can then suddenly become the "in-thing" to promote. But we need piety, not pietism. For example, merely emphasizing conversion will not do, as if "conversion" is the missing link in our theology or pedagogy.

The connection between ethics and dogmatics is also otherwise important. Before we begin to apply any morals to the children, we must know something about the nature of the children. We must have a clear understanding of the Scriptural doctrine of man. Our confession teaches us that we are all conceived and born in sin, that we have a corrupt nature, one that is *totally depraved*. It would hardly be ethical to overlook this obvious Scriptural truth. Of course, our view of covenant children as having been born in sin, and therefore being sinful, should *not* become an excuse to rationalize away sinful behaviour. But it should make us more

understanding of the great personal and collective struggle which the youth have in this present evil society.

Empathic-critical

Should it not first be said to educators, to Reformed teachers, "Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Look to yourself, lest you, too, be tempted" (Galatians 6:1). What applies for a man, applies even more for a youth, or a child. When we remember our own weaknesses constantly, when we know of our own struggle as mature adults to serve the Lord according to His Law, we do not easily become discouraged with

"How far may the school go in teaching moral values? How do we get the youth to 'internalize' these values?"

our youth whom we must teach. The youth have to learn to see, to understand the terrible reality and the ugly potential of their own depravity (in ethics we speak of the "secundus usus legis," the second function of the law, namely, to teach us our sin and misery, cf. Lord's Day 2), and that is not something which is learned overnight. You know yourselves what the characteristics of adolescence are, how often the youth act impulsively, rashly and wrongly, without truly realizing the possible consequences of their actions. It is not without reason that David prays in Psalm 25, "Remember not the sins of my youth . . ." for who will not, when looking back at his/her own youth, think, "How could I ever have done such things?" The youth are still in a process of maturing and must come to grips with themselves and with this world, and often the time of youth is an emotional battlefield. Things which are not at all a problem for us, mature adults, are big problems for them. Therefore, the last thing that we as teachers and educators may do is come down on the youth with a lack of gentleness or downgrade them. Upbraiding someone is not the same as downgrading them.

If our educating is to be ethical, it must be *empathic*. Empathy is, according to Webster's dictionary, "imaginative projection of one's own consciousness into another being." More popularly said, we should not tower high above the youth, but stand beside them, trying to imagine *their* situation, trying to gauge the depth of *their* feelings. Show a spirit of gentleness, knowing that you yourself are a sinner and that your own path is not without stumbling. Empathy means the ability to listen and observe carefully before coming with a prepared lecture or sermon. If a teacher is empathic, I am sure it will increase the student's confidence and will foster trust.

This is especially so for young people who receive very little empathy at home.

At the same time I added the word *critical*: empathic-critical. For empathy should not be taken to mean: overlooking or shrugging off wrong behaviour. We are to be critical of the youth, in the sense that we must discern what is right or wrong, and the youth must be made to understand this as well. We cannot condone wrong behaviour, no matter how much we understand its reasons. Being empathic to the *person*, we must be critical of his *behaviour*. It is good to question certain behaviour or a specific action, to apply the norm of God's Law to it, to help the youth towards critical self-evaluation. Not in a

high-handed fashion, but in a sincere and sympathetic manner, firmly criticizing specific attitudes or behaviours. Then the youth will expect and receive from you, both, *understanding and guidance*.

All the above remarks may seem superfluous, but they are certainly in place in this gathering. The attitude of the teacher in the classroom is of decisive importance. If a teacher is constantly going off "the deep end" and is erratic in his approach, it will show in teacher-student relations. The youth will feel very quickly: this teacher is not on our side, and insolence will result. Some teachers actually do not like kids, and it shows in the way they treat the pupils. Condescension is, at best, their only method of approach. This becomes even more acute when a teacher gets the feeling, "No matter what I do, the students do not respond anyway." Then you get a burned-out teacher in the midst of an inflamed class, hardly a successful combination.

— To be continued
CL. STAM

¹ Speech P.H. Torenvliet, *Reformed Education and Objectives*, (stenciled) p. 1.

² School Bulletin, Canadian Reformed School Society of Dufferin Area Inc., May 30, 1985, p. 4ff

³ Speech P.H. Torenvliet, *Aims and Objectives in Reformed Education and the Consequences for Interpersonal Relationships*, (stenciled) p. 2.

⁴ School Crossing, *Clarion*, August 9, 1985, Vol. 34, No. 16.

⁵ Speech held for the Canadian Reformed High School Society of Smithville, Spring 1985.

⁶ See for the impact of the "Doctrine of Presumptive Regeneration," J. Fennema, *The Banner*; H.R. vanderKamp, *De Reformatie*; and Dr. K. Runia, *Central Weekblad*.

⁷ Torenvliet speech, *Aims and Objectives*, p. 11.

⁸ B. Holwerda, *De Betekenis van Verbond en Kerk*, p. 111, Oosterbaan en Le Cointre, Goes, 1958.

⁹ See for a discussion of MVE, Yes *Virginia*; Kathleen M. Gow, Toronto, 1980.

A report of the first meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches₃

An excursion with Prof. Collins

Saturday morning dawned, but it was no day for sleeping in. The delegates were up early again, this time in preparation for their trip with Prof. G.N.M. Collins. For those who are not acquainted with him, Prof. Collins is the Professor-emeritus in Church History of the Free Church College. He has authored over half-a-dozen books on Scottish Church History and in the process acquired an exhaustible fount of anecdotes and incidents. Although no one knew his precise age we were later told that it was in the neighbourhood of eighty-five years. This bit of information proved unsettling to some of the delegates for they could barely keep up with the pace set by the good professor.

In any case, after an early breakfast we piled into two blue minibuses and set off. Over the great suspension bridge that spans the River Forth we went and entered what is often called in Scotland, "the kingdom of Fife." Our first stop was the historic Falkland Palace, the place where Andrew Melville, the successor of John Knox, called King James VI "God's sillie vassal" and spoke to him about there being two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland. "There is Christ Jesus the King, and His kingdom the Kirk, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king, nor a lord, nor a head, but a member. And those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over His Kirk, and govern His spiritual Kingdom, have sufficient power of Him, and authority to do so, both together and severally, the which no Christian King nor Prince should control or discharge, but fortify and assist, otherwise they are not faithful subjects nor members of Christ."

Then we proceeded to Kilmany. Here Thomas Chalmers was inducted as minister in 1803 and experienced true conversion in 1811. In 1815 he left and became in due time a leader in the Evangelical Wing of the Church of Scotland. In 1843 he led 474 ministers out of that increas-

ingly moderatist church and formed the Free Church of Scotland. He was a man mighty in the gospel and a great champion of social reform.

From Kilmany we went to Dundee. Here we had lunch in the local Free Church of Scotland building, after which we went to view a portion of the ancient city gate from which the Reformer George Wishart (1513-1546) ministered fearlessly to those sick and dying of the plague.

Then it was on to Leuchars. The significance of this place has to do with the



Rev. N.P. Mpayipeli

fact that here one finds an ancient Norman church, dating back to the eleventh century, which is still in use. In later years this same church became famous due to an incident connected to the Covenanter leader, Alexander Henderson. Before the days of his conversion Henderson was appointed to serve the Church in Leuchars; however, the parishoners did not want to receive him, with the result that they nailed shut the doors of the church. Unable to open them, Henderson and his party had to crawl through a window, and so the induction proceeded. A few years later Henderson was converted under unique circumstances. Indeed, rarely has God's providential care been more in evidence. Henderson went to listen to Robert Bruce preach, and it so happened that his text was John 10:1, "Truly, truly, I say to you,

he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber."

From Leuchars it was on to the famous city of St. Andrews. Here we visited the ruins of the Cathedral and saw the grave of Samuel Rutherford, a famous Scottish pastor and theologian, a member of the Westminster Assembly of Divines and the author of *Lex Rex*, a classic on constitutional government. Next, we walked to the ruins of the Castle and saw the place where George Wishart was burned at the stake, as well as the famous bottle dungeon. Then, a few of us went to the nearby University of St. Andrews and viewed the spot where another Reformer, Patrick Hamilton, was martyred.

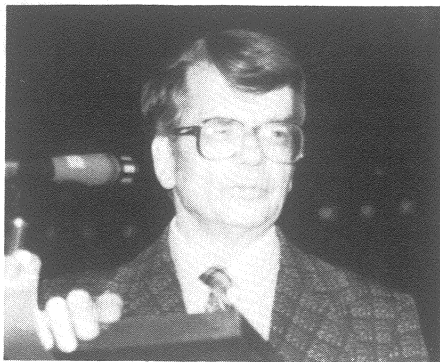
A Psalmody recital

By now the afternoon was nearly spent and it was time to head back to Edinburgh. That evening a Psalmody recital had been scheduled in St. Columba's Church for the benefit of the conference. After a hurried ride home, a quick meal, and some sprucing up, we traveled to the center of Edinburgh for the recital. There the combined choirs of Edinburgh and Glasgow entertained and edified us with some truly beautiful renditions of the Scottish Psalms.

A unique feature of these Psalms is that they can be sung to many different tunes. One person said that as many as twenty to thirty different tunes can be used with each Psalm. Now that number is probably an exaggeration, but the fact remains that through a very unique device a great variety of tunes are accessible. How is this done? By cutting the pages of the Psalter in two. The top part contains about 300 different tunes, and the bottom part contains the rhymings. Beside the heading of each Psalm one finds cited a number of the most common tunes for that particular Psalm. For example, Psalm 23 can be sung for starters to the tune Wiltshire (No. 136); St. Fulbert (102); Erin (60). In this way all kinds of combinations are possible.

Another treat that particular evening had to do with the singing of the "Dutch Seven" (van Beveren, Faber, Van Rongen, Veldman, Van Hulst, Slied, and Klamer), joined by others of lesser fame. They entertained the audience with a number of Psalms sung in the Dutch language. You may wonder how they managed without an organ, but they did. The Scottish choir leaders were even talking of conscripting them. In any case, it was a very enjoyable and enlightening evening.

On the following day, Sunday, September 8, the delegates dispersed to a number of the Free Church congregations in and surrounding Edinburgh. For most



Rev. J.J. Peterson

it was an opportunity to worship and to fellowship, to catch their breath and to prepare for the final days of the conference.

Monday morning — discussion

On Monday morning at 10:00 a.m. the Rev. D. Lamont, chairman, called the meeting to order. After opening exercises and the adoption of the minutes, the discussion began on Rev. J.N. Macleod's paper. It soon became apparent that the delegates were quite pleased with the way in which Rev. Macleod had treated this matter. It was a thorough and balanced piece of work. Naturally, that did not preclude the asking of a few questions. Was it really all that wise and accurate to speak of this covenant as a "covenant of works?" And did that not convey the impression of an Arminian way of speaking? Is the covenant of works of continuing relevance? What about the manner in which the Larger Catechism speaks about covenant and elect? What is the relevance of this topic for ecumenical relations?

In his response, the Rev. Macleod thanked the delegates for their comments and the brotherly spirit in which they were made. Proceeding to the particular questions, he remarked that as to the expression "covenant of works," he did not want to be a stickler on terminology and conceded that a different name could well be used. Nevertheless, he doubted whether the alternative name suggested, namely, "the covenant of favour" was all that for-

fortunate. It might well result in a coalescing of the Edenic and post-Edenic covenants. There is an element of contrast and an element of correspondence here and both must receive their proper due.

On the point of how the Westminster Standards speak about the covenant and its relation to election and baptism, Rev. Macleod acknowledged that there are elements of tension here. There are these elements of tension between the symbols of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, and there are even these elements between the Westminster Confession and the Westminster Catechism. Furthermore, it was his opinion that more work is needed in order to resolve some of the theological problems concerning these issues. Is the Heidelberg Catechism in its statement in Lord's Day 26 on infant baptism not too unqualified? Are the terms used in the Larger Catechism really so suitable?

As for the matter of how his paper related to ecumenicity, the speaker admitted that he had not given that much thought. He did feel however, that such a dimension would be worthy of further exploration at a future meeting of the conference.

In closing, he remarked once more that it was necessary for member churches to go out of their way to understand each other on these matters. The tensions that exist within Reformed theology on this point should be addressed, and hopefully resolved. These tensions do not imply that one or other confessional formulation is un-Scriptural, but they do require further understanding and elaboration.

Monday evening — interchurch relations

On Monday evening, the Rev. J.J. Peterson received the floor in order to say a few words about the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. Among other things he stated that there is no indication that women will be admitted to offices in the church. As for the study committee, that was appointed more to get a grip on the hermeneutical side of the issue. On the matter of child communion, he elaborated on the background of this topic and how it related to an Ethiopian chapel in Michigan with a Coptic background. He insisted that the OPC will continue to demand a credible confession of faith in order to partake of the Lord's Supper. As for the RES, he described the fact that the OPC found itself in a very difficult position. It has increasingly confronted the GKN (Synodical) with its deviations. It has never yet blurred its testimony. At the same time, he was of the opinion that there was a contest going on for the leadership of those churches in the RES from the Third World. The liberal elements want to give them their brand of leadership; whereas the OPC prefers to give them its kind of leadership.

In that regard the OPC has considerable influence. It remains very reluctant to leave the RES and in so doing abandon these churches to these dangerous influences. He requested the prayers of the delegates for the difficult situation in which the Lord has placed them.

After Rev. Peterson concluded his remarks, the Rev. J. Visscher received the opportunity to deliver his paper on "The Exercise of Inter-Church Relations." He began by sketching the background of this topic and how it came to be placed on the agenda of the conference. It was put there primarily at the urging of the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches which wanted a return to some semblance of order in a situation in which all kinds of different relationships were being considered among sister churches. Also the contacts in the ICRC would expose the CRC to churches who maintain "fraternal relations" and not "correspondence." In short, is there some common ground when it comes to interchurch relations?

Rev. Visscher then went on to analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the different relationships in existence, as well as those currently under consideration. He showed that these relationships can be placed in either of two basic frameworks. Furthermore, he showed how within these two frameworks there are different applications of the rules. After evaluating these



Rev. J. Visscher

applications, he went on to plead for the correspondence framework and showed how, with some modifications, this framework could remove most of the existing reservations and serve as a common relationship for members of the conference.

Tuesday morning — discussion

The next day this paper came up for discussion. Before that happened Prof. H.M. Ohmann asked permission to distribute a rough draft of certain proposals on interchurch relations which the Dutch Deputies had been working on. No sooner had he done so and he was asked to explain their background. This in turn led to an extensive discourse both on the past

history of the rules for correspondence, as well as a point by point clarification of the rough draft.

The unfortunate consequence of this was that the paper delivered the night before did not quite receive the thoroughgoing discussion that was hoped for. Still, a number of questions were asked. Rev. J. Galbraith said that he found it very basic to the underlying factors of the conference and an extensive and valuable review of the whole question in interchurch relations. But he did have some questions: What is the definition of a sister church? What are the criteria for a true church? What is the ultimate goal of interchurch relations? Someone else asked whether the goal was a world-wide Reformed, Presbyterian Church seeing that the Bible does not recognize national boundaries? What role do factors of culture, language, play in all this? asked another. What about the inclusion of "liturgy" in these rules, what does that imply? Another delegate stressed that the content of this paper would need careful consideration. Still another pleaded for the closest fellowship with other true churches in the world.

In his answers, the Rev. J. Visscher explained further the five criteria by which possible sister churches should be judged. He also employed the marks of the true church and elaborated on them when it came to the concept of true and false church. As for the ultimate goal of interchurch relations being one Presbyterian and Reformed Church in the world, he was of the opinion that while every obstacle that separates churches should be removed and unity should be promoted to the utmost, it would be idealistic, to say the least, to envisage one internationally organized church. It is not likely that what has failed to come about in the days of the early church or in the days of the Reformation will come about in our day. The complete and visible unity of the church will become the reality on the day of Christ's appearing.

Some time was also spent answering those questions which had to do with barriers between churches that relate to cultural and linguistic factors. The speaker stressed that we must make up our minds as to whether we are going to aim low or high when it comes to relations between churches. If we aim low we shall be able to live with our rules because they will not demand much. Only at what cost? At the cost of meaningful relationships perhaps? Conversely, if we aim high we may have to address tensions within our rules but then at least we will be giving expression to the fact that we are, and should be, as sister churches a hand and a foot to each other.

After additional questions were answered, the discussion came to a close.



It will no doubt take some time to determine whether or not this paper will have any effect on the exercise of interchurch relations. Each delegation will hopefully study it and pass it on to the appropriate committees in their local church for further consideration and reaction.

More business matters

This being the last day of the conference, it was necessary that a number of remaining business matters be dealt with. The day before the following people had been appointed to the Committee on Missions: Rev. M.K. Drost, Prof. Dr. K. Deddens, Prof. C. Graham, Prof. A.C. Boyd. To the Committee on the Ecumenical Creeds were now appointed: Prof. J.L. Mackay, Prof. Dr. J. Faber, Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes, Rev. G. Van Rongen. To supplement the Interim Committee, composed automatically from the executive, the following were appointed: Rev. O.J. Douma, Prof. J.D. MacMillan, Rev. J. Visscher.

It was also decided to accept the offer of the Canadian Reformed Churches to have the next meeting of the conference in the vicinity of Vancouver. The date remains to be determined, although it will be held D.V. in the summer/autumn of 1989. If, for one reason or another, the conference could not be held in Canada, The Netherlands will be the site.

A communique was also proposed and adopted which summarized this first meeting of the ICRC.

Special stress was also laid on the fact that the member churches are responsible for proposing topics which should be on the agenda. If the topics that were handled in Edinburgh were not specific or practical enough, then the fault lies in a lack of input from the member churches. Hopefully the next meeting will see a

wider range of topics being addressed, topics which relate to the struggles, issues and questions which member churches have.

The conference closes

That evening, Tuesday, September 10, the first meeting came to a close. Words of appreciation were addressed to the chairman and vice-chairman, as well as to the other members of the executive. The hosting church, the Free Church of Scotland, was thanked for the care and attention it gave to the needs of the delegates. Finally, Prof. A.C. Boyd gave a closing address on Matthew 6:9-13 (the Lord's Prayer) after which the conference came to an end.

In summary

In summing up this first meeting of the ICRC, it has to be said that these ten days in Scotland saw a tremendous amount of discussion and debate, both formally and informally. Indeed, some were led to remark that more business may well have been done over breakfast, lunch, and supper, over coffee breaks and excursions, then during the structured sessions. The result of all of this was that by the time the delegates left for home they had a fairly good understanding of what lives in the member churches.

And this may well prove to be the chief benefit of meetings such as these. Some ask, "What did you now accomplish in Edinburgh? What do you have to show for all of that time and money spent?" To be honest, there is little of a concrete nature to point to. Naturally, matters of missions and ecumenical creeds come to mind, but beyond that there are few specifics to boast about. But was that the intention to begin with? Some may have en-

visaged an organization that would make all kinds of pontifical statements, set up all kinds of subcommittees and develop into a real ecclesiastical bureaucracy, but that was never the intention of a conference such as this.

The purpose of the ICRC, as expressed in its Constitution, speaks about promoting unity, encouraging fuller ecclesiastical fellowship, missionary cooperation, studying common problems, and presenting a Reformed testimony to the world. In these areas progress has been made. Through the discussion held on the

sanctification. We must go on to learn from each other and to teach each other out of the respective treasures which the Lord has given to us.

In the area of missions, too, progress has been made. I realize that some might hesitate to call it that, but when ten churches can come together and agree to set up a study committee, it is difficult to think of another word. True, the work of this committee is mostly advisory, but that too can prove to be of great benefit. At the moment there is very little real interaction between the member churches in this area,



various topics our unity became more and more apparent. The paper on the doctrine of the church met with almost total agreement. No member church wanted to polarize the visible and invisible aspects of the church, or give room to any form of hierarchism. The paper on piety as that relates to the Psalms was favourably received. The paper on the relationship of the sacraments to new life in the Spirit was very controversial and not totally satisfying to all, but it did not undermine the underlying unity. The paper on the doctrine of the covenant was also well received and both it and the previous paper showed that no tendency towards presumptive regeneration exists. The paper on the exercise of church relations provoked no dissent, but brought the issue into sharper focus.

Naturally, it would be an exaggeration to say that we now understand each other perfectly and agree totally with each other. There are tensions that remain. There exists a need to go on and come to a greater understanding of each other's backgrounds and ways of doing things. On the topics of the covenant and church for instance, there exists a real need for those churches who have been shaped by the ecclesiastical controversies of the thirties and forties in The Netherlands to set forth their insights into print. Likewise, there is a need for the Scottish Churches to do the same in the areas of liturgy, regeneration and

with the result that our decision-making is not always able to take all the pertinent factors into account. At the moment no member church has a well-developed and mature missionary training program. At the moment there exists no modern Reformed introduction to the science of missions. If this committee can bring about improvements in these areas it will be performing a real service.

As for the matter of addressing common problems and issues, it has to be admitted that not much was done on this front. And the same applies to presenting a Reformed testimony to the world. The conference made no pronouncements concerning pressing issues in the world today, and that may be interpreted as a lack. At the same time this is an area that needs to be handled with care and discernment. Undoubtedly a future meeting will give more attention to these areas.

At the same time there may be some who are somewhat disconcerted by the fact that the conference did not deal with the amendments proposed by our churches. Technical problems prevented their being dealt with. Still, a few things might be mentioned regarding them insofar as the meeting in Edinburgh was able to shed some light on them. On the matter of subscription, the fear was expressed in the past that by joining the conference we would be subscribing to additional confessions, e.g. the Westminster Standards. I

personally spoke about this fear with one of the Scottish brothers who was with me on the constitutional committee in Groningen three years earlier. He, as well as others, expressed amazement that anyone would interpret the Constitution in such a fashion. We subscribe only to the confessions of our respective churches, he said. In this conference we do no more than recognize that each other's confessions are Scriptural and we come together in mutual recognition of this fact. For conference purposes the basis is the Scriptures and the subordinate standards.

On the matter of denying membership to churches who are members of the RES, there was again no formal discussion only the sentiment expressed that if you add the RES to the list, some other church will want to add the WARC and another the ICC. The result would then be that the ICRC takes on a completely negative image. Besides, the constitutional expression "or any other organization whose aims and practices are deemed to be in conflict with the Basis" should suffice as a brake on dual membership. As for the other amendments, they drew little reaction. It was felt that they were simply a matter of wording. No doubt all of these concerns will get a proper airing four years from now.

There remains one more thing to add to this summary and that is the fact that it was especially the delegates and observers from the smaller churches who proved the most enthusiastic about the existence and potential of the conference. Many of these churches have little in the way of resources. Their membership is small. They feel extremely isolated in the world. For them the conference is a source of hope. They see it as a channel through which to meet and develop ties with other churches. They see it as a visible expression of the catholicity of the church and concrete proof that they are not all alone in the world. They see it as a means to procuring theological study outlets for their students, as a way of stimulating missionary activity in their areas, as a forum for discussing problems that appear beyond their capacity to resolve. For them the existence of the ICRC is a very positive development, a development which they hope will produce many future benefits.

The first meeting of the ICRC is history. A step has been taken. Many more steps need to be taken. Where will it all lead? Only the Lord knows. Yet we abide in the conviction that if our efforts are in harmony with His Word He will bless what has been done at Edinburgh, and what will D.V. be done in 1989 and beyond. May the magnification of His Name be and ever remain the overriding aim of the ICRC.

J. VISSCHER

Australian impressions



Greetings! Salutation!

Yes, we have already learned what is called "The Australian Salute."

When you walk in town here in this summertime, you see all sorts of people waving at you. You praise the Australians for their friendliness, and are inclined to wave back, as it says in the song of "The Happy Wanderer." However, you soon come to the discovery that it was a good thing that you did not wave back: "The Australian Salute" is nothing else but the waving of the hand to get the persistent little flies off your nose, cheeks, forehead, ears or whatever other parts of your upper anatomy may be deemed suitable landing places for the winged creatures. There is one comfort: They don't sting, but are just a big nuisance. It is my impression that in this way they try to get the necessary moisture.

After this encouraging introduction you will hear something about our experiences so far, and also receive some of our first impressions.

More than some impressions we cannot give and a more glorious title than "some experiences" we dare not give to the piece which you have now before you. It is not our intention at all to give the impression as if we have become experts on this country in the barely four weeks we have been here.

The first thing we discovered was that it is good for the strengthening of the bond between the Australian and the Canadian Churches that there is a Canadian minister here in the midst of the West Australian Churches. Canada is so far away and, although *Clarion* is read here by quite a few, yet it comes from a faraway and mostly unknown country.

Gradually more contacts are being established: in some mysterious ways Canadian boys find Australian girls, and the other way around. This, in turn, brings about an increase in trips vice versa, which causes the distance to shrink even more

in the minds of the people and improves the knowledge about one another's ecclesiastical situation.

You discover that the Lord gathers, defends and preserves His Church all over the world. You already knew this to be a fact but it is a glorious thing to see it with your own eyes and to hear it with your very own ears.

Some geographical particulars

Let me first tell something about the region itself.

Last week we read in the paper that the Perth metropolitan area had passed the one million population mark. Armadale and even Byford are counted in with this metropolitan area. From out of our window we can see the high buildings of Perth in the distance. We are living "in the hills" and look out upon the "flats" which reach all the way to Perth and Freemantle, the port city.

In order to give our readers a point of comparison: For those in Ontario we could compare the place where we "live" with the edge of the Niagara escarpment, from where we look out into the direction of the Toronto Airport and Toronto City.

For our British Columbia readers, we

would mention Panorama Ridge in Surrey or the higher parts of the Marine Drive in Burnaby and Vancouver from where you look down upon the flats.

Our readers in other parts have to let their imagination work a little harder. Sorry, but that's how it is.

Driving from Freemantle through Perth, all the way to Armadale is like driving through one large city, such as 12th Street and Kingsway from New Westminster to Vancouver, or the Number Two from Mississauga via Oakville to Hamilton. You could take the freeway for part of the distance, as you could take the Number One or Lougheed Highway in BC or the Four-oh-one in Ontario, and this aspect, too, is a point of comparison.

As for the distance between the churches, this is a matter of a few kilometers. Coming from Perth you come through Kelmscott to "hit" Armadale, and from Armadale you are in Byford in a matter of seven or eight minutes. Compare it to Surrey — Cloverdale — Langley or to Burlington — Hamilton — Ancaster.

Perhaps the above will give our readers some idea as to the location of the three churches here and the distance between them. You read the names in Can-

ada but generally have not the slightest idea about location or distances. Before we came here I asked Rev. Wieske about the distance between the three churches here, and he told me that it was a matter of a few kilometers, but you have no clear picture unless you see it for yourself.

There are two more churches in Australia. There is Albany on the south coast, 398 kilometers from where we live according to a sign on the highway; and there is Launceston in Tasmania or Tassie as they say here, whose capital city Hobart is 3417 kilometers by air from Perth. The latter church is quite isolated as you can see.

Last week a brother from here took us to Albany for a visit to a brother from our first congregation who is terminally ill, and would love to see his "old" minister before being taken up to the Lord. We found our brother in good spirits, and were thankful for the opportunity to meet as yet.

It gave us at the same time an opportunity to see more of the southern part of Western Australia. Although the flora and fauna are almost completely different from those in Canada, the landscape as such reminded us of the Caribou region in British Columbia or the Gatineau region in Quebec or the view you have when driving the Number Nine from Orangeville to Newcastle. Flocks of sheep can be seen left and right and there must be hundreds of thousands of them farther into the "bush." We did not see any kangaroos except the odd dead one by the side of the road like you would see deer by the side of the highways in Canada.

By the way, do you know that young kangaroos (called Joeys) suck their thumb as many babies do? There is a young girl in Kelmscott who has such a Joey for a pet. Its mother had been shot and now she carries it around in a bag of cloth as the kangaroo mother would in its pouch. It hops around after the girl, but when she opens the bag, it jumps in and, lying on its back, contentedly sucking one of the "spurs" on one of the hind legs. On the 1800 acre farm near Albany where we spent the night with a family whose mother was also a former member of our first congregation, they had a pet kangaroo whose pouch was bulging with a Joey whom, however, we did not see.

In Albany we drove along the coast for some distance, and here we were reminded of the Superior route of the Trans-Canada Highway.

Have you received a fair idea of the scenery? I cannot describe it any better.

Then we proceed.

About the churches

In the above we already said something about the three churches here in the Perth metropolitan area.

They are in a peculiar situation right now.

The most northerly one, Kelmscott, will be vacant early next year when Dr. Hur is expected to leave to take up his duties as professor Church History, at the Seminary of Busan in South Korea.

The following one, Armadale, where we are, will be vacant in July 1986 when the Rev. Bruning retires. Right now he and Mrs. Bruning are in Papua New Guinea working mostly among refugees from Irian Jaya. That's why we are here to fill the pulpit during their absence and to assist in emergencies.

Then there comes Byford a little more to the south. This church was instituted a while ago, its members formerly belonging to Armadale. They are vacant as well.

Three churches close together which all three are trying to fill existing or upcoming vacancies: sixty percent of the churches here!

The Rev. G. van Rongen is also living in Kelmscott and gave assistance whenever asked, but he is retired as well and is at the moment in Tasmania where he expects to stay till the end of February. They will return just before we leave again.

Yes, that was a surprise to see quite a few brothers and sisters at the Perth airport when we arrived at 3:45 a.m. Among those present were also Rev. G. van Rongen and Rev. D. van Houdt who with Mrs. van Houdt is staying at the van Rongen's for a few months and now went with the latter to Tasmania.

Their presence gave us a unique opportunity, namely, to have a get-together with ministerial couples from four continents. Rev. and Mrs. Bruning were over for a brief stay to confer with the Albany Committee for PNG, to attend the wedding of one of their children, and to have an informative evening with the churches, where Rev. Bruning talked about and showed slides of the work they are doing.

On the occasion of their being here we had a get-together at the van Rongen place. There were Dr. and Mrs. Hur originating from Asia (Korea); there were Rev. and Mrs. Bruning and Rev. and Mrs. van Rongen of Australia, there were Rev. and Mrs. van Houdt from Europe and there were we from America: a truly international group, a truly ecumenical gathering, we might say. We still hope to be able to show you a picture of this event.

However, let us return to writing about the churches.

As for the membership, together they have a membership of approximately 1400, Kelmscott being the largest congregation and Byford the smallest, having split off Armadale earlier this year.

Both Armadale and Kelmscott have their own church building; in Byford plans are being discussed to build one. In the

latter congregation the plans include a design for a parsonage, while provisions are also made for a future school building, something of which both Armadale and Kelmscott can boast already.

After discussions about the bulletin these three churches made the wise move of combining their bulletins so that all the brothers and sisters can remain informed of each other's weal and woe. They call it the *District Bulletin*.

Yours truly has been chartered to provide the bi-weekly meditations, but these are the only items which appear by the way of general "articles." The bulletin is strictly for conveying official information, society notices, reports, and so on. In this way the churches can cooperate in such a combined bulletin without fear that something will be written in an article which is considered undesirable by the others. Bulletins, printed and financed on behalf of the churches should not contain articles in my opinion. Only in this way difficulties can be prevented and cooperation continue.

What we noticed in the course of these weeks is that the ties with The Netherlands and particularly with the Dutch language are still very strong. I have always had the impression that the Australian churches were far more Dutch-oriented than the churches in Canada, and this impression has not been weakened during the past four weeks.

I'll have to be very careful in my evaluation, but the practice that after so many years there still is a Dutch service here in Armadale — a service which is held at the same time as the English afternoon service — has not been very helpful towards the elderly brothers and sisters. For many, many years I have not spoken so much Dutch with members of the churches as is the case here, and it is my experience that the brothers and sisters with whom I speak in Dutch understand perfectly every sentence I utter in English. And so I have come to the conclusion that maintaining the Dutch services here and the wide-spread use of the Dutch language, although intended to be an aid to the older brothers and sisters, are in fact an impediment to the true unity of the congregation, and are not very conducive to the communication between old and young. There is an "above sixty club" here, but it might be more properly named the "Dutch Club." It is, of course, not the intent and purpose, but the practical result is, in my opinion, a little church within the church.

I am strengthened in my conviction that in this manner we do not do our older brothers and sisters a real service. It makes them feel strangers more and more, excluded from the main stream of ecclesiastical life. This is to be greatly deplored.

In the past some of the older and not-so-older brothers and sisters seemed to

have received the impression as if the trend towards all-English was directed against them and was intended to or anyway would result in depriving them of their position as full members of the church. In truth, "all-English" everywhere would have had the opposite effect and would have resulted in a greater unity and a more profound integration than is the case under the present conditions.

You notice, of course, that from the Armadale situation I have proceeded to a general "meditation."

Some general remarks

Let me conclude this "report" with some general remarks or general pieces of information, if you wish.

In vain would you look for the so familiar trees. Along the Albany Highway south of here, there is a stretch of pine forest, but it is a plantation, not indigenous but imported and "man-made." Trees and shrubs, grasses and flowers are different from those in Canada. Oranges and lemons, grapefruit and mandarin oranges grow in people's gardens. At the above men-

tioned farm near Albany we picked mandarin oranges which were the sweetest I ever tasted.

Crows are abundant here as everywhere else, but their "ka, ka" assumes a plaintive air when after their third "ka" they slide from g-sharp to f. Try it for yourself. Magpies are somewhat different from the ones we know. No mercy is shown to snakes, for many of them are poisonous. When we asked a young man what the about 10 cm long-reddish-caterpillar-like crawling insect was that we had swept onto a dustpan from the floor, he instantly proceeded towards its execution. He called it a . . . scorpion.

On the brighter side, the "bush" produces countless different kinds of plants and flowers. We were shown several kinds of orchids when touring the farm. There are cat's paws and kangaroo claws, there are bottle brush trees and hibiscus in abundance. And then we have seen only a very small part of this wide continent. The greatness of our Father can be read everywhere and the letters which spell out His power and care, His wisdom and glory

are so numerous that we can keep on reading for a long, long time, in fact, for as long as the world will stand.

Another time I may tell you some more, but I suppose that there are more urgent matters clamouring for publication, and for this reason I'll conclude my chat.

Greetings from "down under."

It is strange, but I had quite a discussion about this expression and had a hard time to convince a brother that nothing derogatory or scornful was meant with this expression, simply an indication of the fact that we are close to the bottom of the globe, a country where the sun goes from right to left, where the moon-sickle hangs differently in the sky, where Christmas Day is close to the longest day and where the temperature may go well above 40° when the pitiable citizens of Ontario fight either freezing rain or blizzards.

By the way, left hand traffic no longer holds any terror for us.

Cheerio!

Yours as always,
VO

HYMN 21

Mon Dieu, mon Dieu

Isaiah 53

Strasbourg/Geneva, 1551/Lyon

1. Who has be-lieved our mes-sage from on high
That God's own Son, who laid His glo-ries by,
Came down from heav'n to suf-fer and to die
For our trans-gres-sion?
Who saw re-vealed in Him God's power and fa-vour -
The might-y arm of Him who sent our Sav-iour,
That we, His peo-ple, might be free for-ev-er
From sin and shame?

Year review 85

Since the last annual review many things have happened in the churches of the Lord as well as in the world around us. It is impossible to mention everything in a review that covers a whole year. Besides, these reviews can only cover events that took place till the early part of November when the review was written.

Praise the Lord

A wonderful event in 1985 was the publication of our final *Book of Praise*. It was well received in, and also outside of our churches. It is an excellent edition and is being used in the worship services, catechism classes, schools, and in the homes, without falling apart. It is even available in Braille through the American Reformed Church in Grand Rapids.

What a privilege to have such a book! Much work, over many years by many people has gone into it. After a number of years that, too, will be forgotten and hardly anyone will remember who put so much work into it. Maybe that is a good thing. For now all the praise goes to the Lord alone who gave us this gem to glorify Him.

New churches

Nineteen eighty-five will be known for the fact that the number of churches in our federation jumped from thirty-two to thirty-six. A new congregation was instituted in Lynden, WA, U.S.A., on March 10: the second American Reformed Church. The Church at Ancaster, ON followed on May 5. On July 1 the institution of the Church at Attercliffe, ON became a fact, while on Sept. 12, at 7:15 p.m., the Reformation Church at Blue Bell, PA, U.S.A., was received into our federation by Classis South. The first three were "split-offs" from the existing churches of Abbotsford, Hamilton, and Smithville. The Blue Bell Church was different since it had separated from the Orthodox Presbyterian

Church in the U.S.A. They saw this as the way for them to remain Reformed in the doctrine of the covenant, confessional membership, restricted communion, the visible church, the true church, and the autonomy of the local church. Great was the joy and thankfulness of the brothers of Blue Bell present at classis. The third American Reformed Church!

Ministers

The Church at Smithville received its new minister when, on Jan. 6, Candidate C. Bosch was ordained as a minister of the Word. The Church at Lincoln received another pastor and teacher after a vacancy of more than two years, when, on Oct. 6, Candidate G. Wieseke was ordained as a minister of the Word.

Candidate A. Van Delden declined the calls to Attercliffe and Guelph and accepted the call to Lynden, WA. He was ordained on Nov. 24, after the necessary immigration procedures had been taken care of.

Rev. R. N. Gleason was installed as the new minister of the Church at Toronto. Rev. Cl. Stam of Smithville accepted the call to the Church at Fergus. Rev. J. Visscher of Cloverdale declined the calls to Lincoln, and to Lynden and at the time that this is written he is considering a call to Armadale, Australia. Rev. J. Geertsema of Surrey declined a call to Lincoln, while Rev. A. De Jager of Neerlandia declined the call to Smithville-South (now Attercliffe). Rev. R. Aasman accepted the call to Ancaster.

Rev. W.W.J. VanOene retired after 42 years in the active ministry. He preached his farewell sermon in the Church at Fergus on April 28. Presently he and his wife are enjoying a half year stay in Australia, to help out the Church at Armadale, while their minister is working among the Paupans in New Guinea.

Rev. and Mrs. J. Mulder celebrated

their Thirtieth Wedding Anniversary and Rev. Mulder's Thirtieth Anniversary as a minister. Rev. and Mrs. D. DeJong celebrated their Twenty-fifth Wedding Anniversary as well as Rev. DeJong's twenty-five years in the ministry. Rev. and Mrs. M. Werkman and Rev. and Mrs. G. Wieseke celebrated their Twenty-fifth Wedding Anniversaries.

Rev. and Mrs. J. DeJong left for Kampen, The Netherlands, he to further study for his doctoral thesis.

Church buildings

No new church buildings were erected, but plans are in the making to solve the problem of expansion in numbers. Burlington-East is overcrowded and so are Fergus and Brampton. London bought eighteen new pews and had the old ones up for sale. Ottawa made an offer on some property to build a church and manse. However, this offer was not accepted, and the property was sold in the meantime. Lynden, WA appointed a building committee. Orangeville is planning an addition to the present building. In the Okanagan Valley, BC, the house congregation is looking for a more suitable location for their worship services.

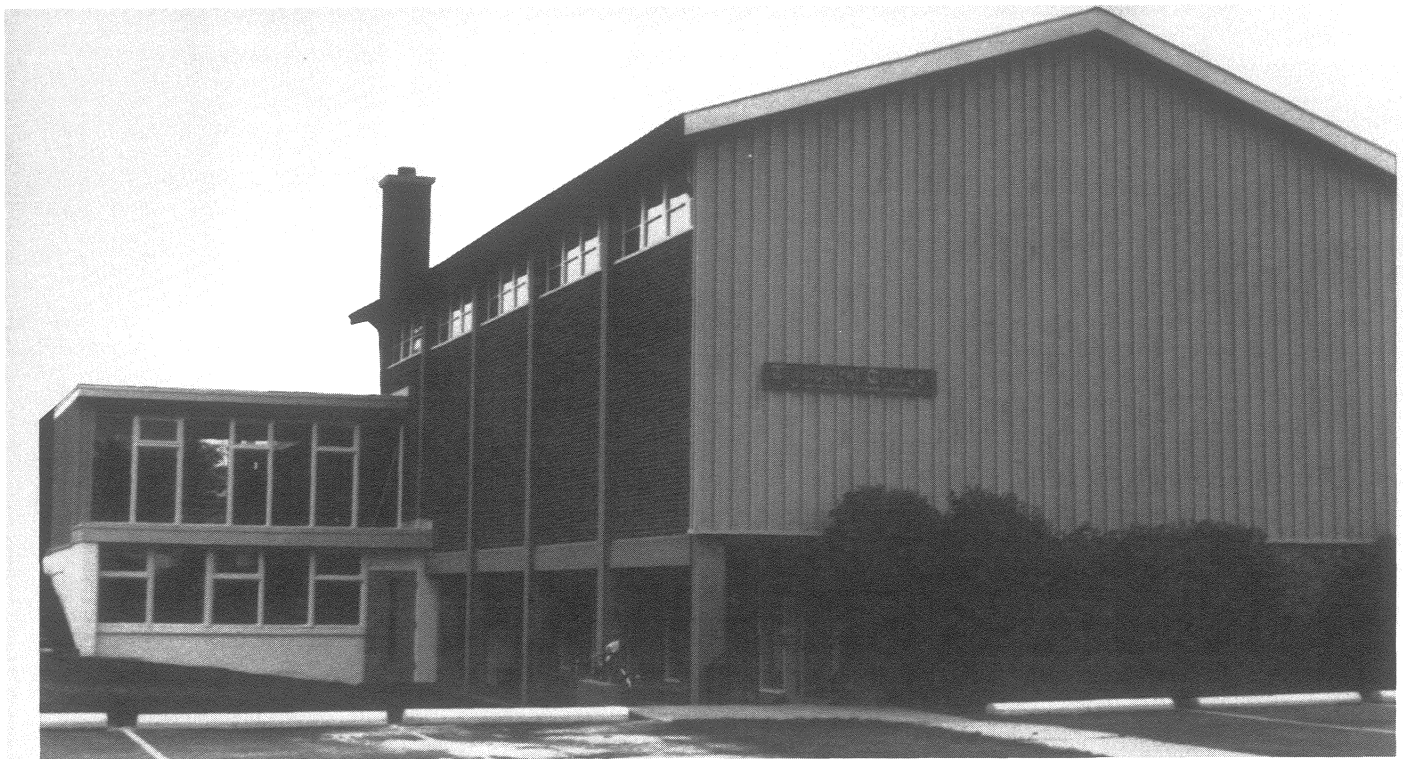
Theological College

Rev. VanOene delivered his farewell lecture at the College on the last day of April, completing his work as Lecturer in Ecclesiology.

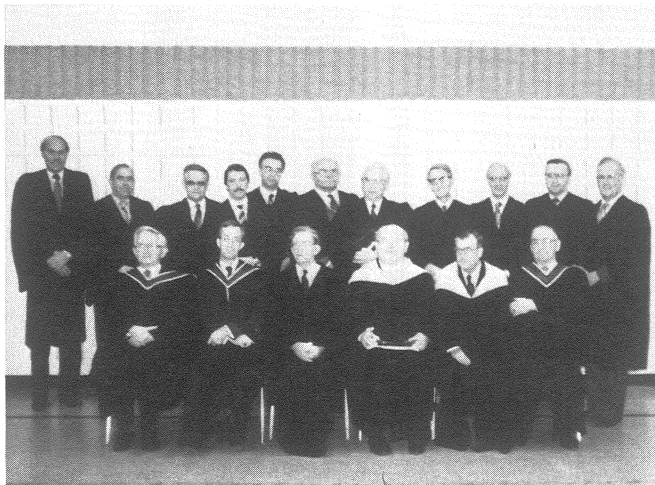
The old college building was vacated and the new one was occupied. Our College is now housed in a very functional building indeed.

On Sept. 27 the Thirteenth Convocation and Sixteenth Anniversary of our Theological College was held. This time in a different building where the acoustics were excellent. Candidates A. Van Delden and G. Wieseke received their degrees.

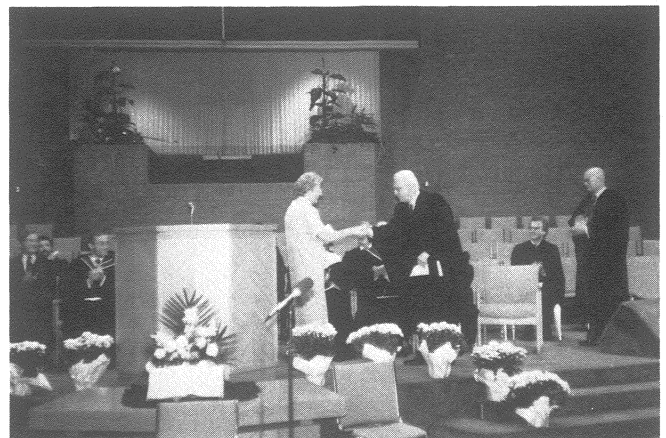
A few series of lectures were given



The greater part of the College seen from the back



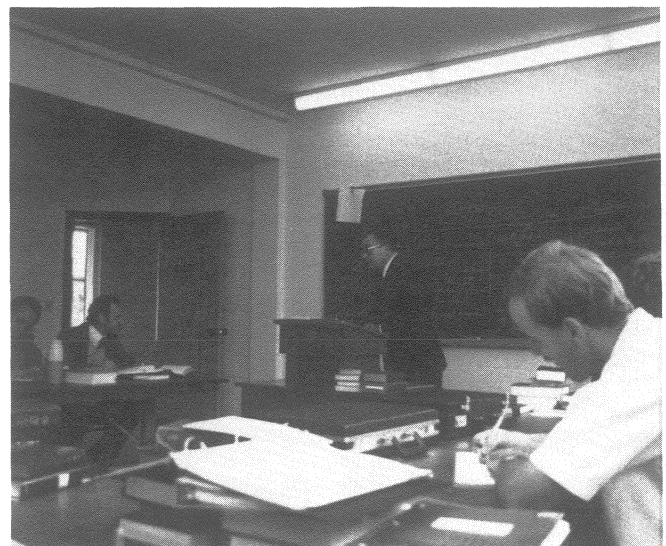
Senate and Board of Governors. Convocation September 27, 1985



Mrs. H. Selles presents the key of the library to the president of the Board of Governors on behalf of the Women's Savings Action, Convocation September 27, 1985



The library of the College



One of the lecture rooms, while Dr. K. Deddens is teaching

for the general church membership and, I heard they were well attended.

Teachers' College

On May 31 six students graduated from our Teachers' College, completing a three-year education program. Instructors and students are working hard. Our schools are benefitting from this college as well. This work is not to be underestimated or ignored. Rather, we should regularly remember our Teachers' College in our prayers. More financial support is needed for this important work.

Schools

A school society was formed in Calgary, AB. For the time being a Saturday school will be organized. In Houston, BC the same definite action was taken to form a school society with the aim to establish a Reformed elementary school.

Mr. Nick Vandooren who regularly contributed to *Clarion* in "School Crossing" asked to be relieved of this work. His request was granted, with great appreciation for his contributions. Mr. F.C. Ludwig, principal of the "Credo" School of Brampton-Toronto will take over his column.

A kindergarten was started in Orangeville, using the facilities of the church building. Teacher and children are enjoying it very much!

Mission

Toronto's missionary, Rev. Versteeg, and his family arrived with furlough in Canada and visited many churches. After a six-month stay they were able to leave again at the end of July. There has been considerable political unrest in the area where Rev. Versteeg works. Our prayers are needed!

Hamilton's missionary, Rev. D.J. Agema and his wife received a healthy child from the Lord. They are hoping to leave for Brazil in 1985, but are still waiting for a visa, which could take some time yet. In Brazil our missionaries have built an addition to the church building, which will serve as a parental school, financed, in part, by the local congregation there.

Evangelism

The Evangelism Taskforce published the *Evangel* regularly. Work is being done on a Bible course for outsiders. Vacation Bible Schools were held, in some places with a much larger attendance than expected, as in Burlington-East and Orangeville, for example. A camp for Native children was organized again in Smithers, where the work of Rev. C. VanSpronsen continues to receive a positive response. Members of the Coaldale congregation

also had such a camp in Taber Provincial Park and fifty-four Indian children attended. The seed of the Word of God was also sown among them. May it bear rich fruit.

"The Voice of the Church" was heard regularly every Sunday in various areas. A radio broadcast on Sunday evenings in Grand Rapids saw some responses.

Political activity

The Association for Reformed Political Action was active in several places. Petitions were sent on various issues and action was undertaken regarding Sunday shopping in certain places. Some positive reactions were received from nonmembers and some good results were seen. This is probably the area where our people are weakest. All the more reason to continue what has begun!

Anchor

Our handicapped brothers and sisters in Ontario held their annual Camp Boo again this past summer. They always enjoy it tremendously. It was a lot of work for the volunteers but it must also have been rewarding for them. The house on the Mount Nemo property in Burlington will be used as a residence for our handicapped. It is a good thing that this work receives our attention. The Lord has clearly blessed it.

Other churches

The March Classis Alberta-Manitoba enjoyed the presence of Rev. J.J. Peterson as an observer from the Orthodox Presbyterian Presbytery of the Dakotas. Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer was appointed as our observer to the OPC Presbytery.

The Orthodox Christian Reformed Church at Ripon, California asked for help. The Church at Langley, BC granted Rev. D. VanderBoom permission to preach in, and support the members of, the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church at Ripon, for a period of six months during which time he also was allowed to administer the sacraments. The Church at Ripon will also be encouraged to seek and establish contact with our churches.

The Church at Grand Rapids has regular contact with various churches who are interested in, or seek contact with our churches.

The Church at Hamilton has contact with the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church at Sackville, NS.

The International Conference of Reformed Churches was held in the fall in Edinburgh, Scotland. Rev. M. van Beveren and Rev. J. Visscher, with Dr. J. Faber as speaker and advisor, attended this important conference. Rev. van

Beveren wrote in the Providence Church bulletin that he expects the speeches to be published. We are thankful that the editor of *Clarion* promised that this was going to happen.

And more . . .

Yes, much more could have been mentioned. The Church at Orangeville celebrated its Thirtieth Anniversary as a congregation on Aug. 13. This memorable occasion was joyfully celebrated in the form of a well-attended church picnic. The Mount Nemo Nursing Home in Burlington was purchased in 1985, providing care for the ailing elderly. The Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund continued its work with the support of the churches. What else shall we mention? The most important things have not even been touched upon directly. The weekly preaching of the gospel goes on year after year. The instruction of the youth of the church in the catechism classes continues regularly. Home visits are made. The needy are taken care of. The sick are visited. And so on!

Our sister J.K. Riemersma of Fergus, who provided so many sick and handicapped brothers and sisters with a "Ray of Sunshine" is gravely ill herself at the moment of writing. May the God of all comfort strengthen her daily and fulfill His promises also to her.

During 1985 many children were born in our churches. On the other hand, the Lord has taken several brothers and sisters away by death, to live with Him forever. Several elderly members are not with us anymore.

One of our "pioneers," brother D. M. Barendregt was taken away at the age of 83 years. This brother has done a lot of work for the churches in the West in the early fifties. His labour in the Lord was not in vain.

Have you ever wondered who the oldest member in our federation is? As far as I can see it must be a single man of the congregation of Chatham! Brother Gerrit Noordhof reached his 91st birthday in February. Another oldtimer we could write much about. But we will end expressing our great thankfulness to our faithful God and Father who in the year 1985 has provided for every one of us day by day. His faithfulness is new every morning. Let us continue living out of gratitude to Him who has loved us. From Him we expect all our blessing also in the New Year 1986!

M. WERKMAN

Editor's note:

There is at least one older member among our congregations, and that is Opoe Buit, in Abbotsford. She will, the Lord willing, celebrate her 95th birthday in early January (J.G.).

To Our Readers

In a few days we hope to celebrate Christmas. By the time we as Christians celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour, we will have been bombarded for several weeks with songs about the little baby Jesus in the manger. In almost every store and on almost every radio station these Christmas songs are played over and over again to stimulate the so-called Christmas spirit, putting people in the mood to spend money. Sad to say, while many of the carols proclaim the Saviour and His work of redemption, many of the gifts purchased have nothing to do with a redeemed life: they are self-indulgent, destructive, or simply useless.

We, too, are vulnerable to the manipulation of the mass media and commercial establishments. Where are the same promoters in the days and weeks before Good Friday, Easter, Ascension, Pentecost? Are these holy days not much more supreme? Without them, the birth of our Saviour would have been futile and devoid of significance.

As the end of a year approaches, it is customary to reflect on the year gone by, and that is good. Although we, too, are often inclined to grumble and complain, as society at large does — even those of good income and position — we ought to be thankful. We here in Canada are richly blessed. This year again we received the opportunity to worship our God in freedom. We could support and maintain our "own" elementary and high schools, our own teachers college, our own theological college, our own Reformed publications. We could assist the needy at home and abroad and could continue the work of mission. We had clothing and shelter and an abundance of food on our tables. Blessings innumerable!

In contrast, there is so much misery in the world all around us: persecution, hunger, murder, wars, earthquakes, chaos. It is a world which has rejected and continues to reject the Saviour of the world. Great is the mercy of our Lord who has called us out of the darkness into His marvelous light. Out of thankfulness we may now serve Him, each in the place and task to which he has been called.

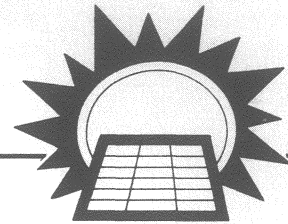
Again this year, *Clarion* could be published on a regular schedule, thanks also to the diligence and continuous efforts of the editorial committee — well known to you — and many others who have filled the pages of our magazine with articles to build us up in the Reformed faith. While I will not mention all the names this time, I do want to make one exception. With deep sadness we learned that one of our faithful contributors, Mrs. J. Riemersma, was taken up to her Lord and Saviour on December 3. Mrs. Riemersma has been very instrumental in bringing "a ray of sunshine" into the hearts and homes of so many of our handicapped and sick brothers and sisters. Sorrow fills our hearts for those who are bereaved of wife and mother. May our heavenly Father grant brother Riemersma and his family His comfort and nearness, the assurance that those who die in the Lord are taken up to greater glory. In faith, we may rejoice in our sorrow.

Yes, indeed, it is also in faith and in the unity of faith that we could do our work, and the Lord has blessed the work of our hands abundantly in the year 1985. We at Premier are thankful that we could be instrumental in bringing to you *Clarion, Reformed Perspective*, and other Reformed literature. Our sincere thanks to all of you — editors, contributors, correspondents, advertisers, readers — who have had a part in this work.

To all: May you have a truly Christian festive season and the Lord's blessing in Anno Domini 1986.

On behalf of the staff at Premier,

G. KUIK



Dear readers,

It is with deep regret that we must tell you that Mrs. Riemersma is unable to take care of this column. She asked me to take over again. We do not know how it will go in the future. Mrs. Riemersma needed another operation on a malignant tumor, and she has had more treatments but at the moment we write this — Nov. 21, 1985, — the doctors cannot help her anymore with medication. The last time we visited her she was of good courage, putting her trust in the LORD her God, who is her strength and refuge. We recommend her and her family to the grace and care of our God and also all other readers who have to go through times of trial and suffering. In this life many securities break down but not the strong hand and mighty arm of our God.

*"My flesh and my heart may fail,
But God is the strength of my heart
and my portion for ever."*

Psalm 73:26

From our mailbox:

Mary VandeBurgt sent us a note in which she thanks all brothers and sisters who remembered her on her 29th birthday by sending her cards and presents.

Mr. and Mrs. Hofsink from Smithers sent us a letter thanking everyone who paid attention to Trevor's birthday. He received 63 cards and all visitors had to see them. In the beginning of November Trevor had an operation on his feet and ankles and he now moves around in a wheelchair. His mother writes that he is happy and copes with it all quite well.

The Feenstras write: "On behalf of John we like to express our sincere thanks for all the beautiful cards with best wishes John received before, on, and after his 27th birthday. They came from all over Canada, Australia and The Netherlands. John will paste them all in a scrapbook so the whole year he has the joy of looking at them D.V. Thank you all brothers and sisters!"

Family H. Feenstra and with love from John Feenstra."

Our Birthday Calendar:

We hereby extend our belated congratulations to:

MR. C. SPEYER

*St. Peter's Hospital
88 Maplewood
Hamilton, ON L8M 1W9*

Mr. Speyer celebrated his 66th birthday on November 2nd. He has been in the hospital for years because of a chronic illness. I am sure that he will be happy to hear from you, even though his birthday was quite a some time ago. Also remember

WILMA VANDRONGELEN

*31827 Forest Avenue
Clearbrook, BC*

She turned 28 years old on November 3rd, 1985! Sorry we are so late with our good wishes but we hope you both had a good birthday!

LIZ KONING

*Michener Centre
Box 5002, Nightingale N.B., Deerhome
Red Deer, AB*

Liz is an epileptic. She also has scoliosis, which ties her to a wheelchair. She celebrates her 25th birthday on January 2, 1986.

CHRISTINE BREUKELMAN

*Box 666
Coaldale, AB*

Christine lives at home; she attends a school for the handicapped and she likes music. She will turn 14 on January 7, 1986, the Lord willing.

GRACE HOMAN

RR 2

St. Ann's, ON L0R 1Y0

Grace will be 30 years old on January 17, 1986.

HENRY DRIEGEN

*72 Ross Road, RR 1
Abbotsford, BC V2S 1M3*

Henry also has his 30th birthday on January 17, 1986. He enjoys helping his Dad on their chicken and raspberry farm.

JANINE SMID

RR 1

Arkona, ON N0M 1B0

Janine is retarded. She loves cards and pictures and saves them in her scrapbook. Her birthday is on January 19th when she turns 16.

HENK ORSEL

705 Surrey Lane, Apt. 1201
Burlington, ON

Henk does not only love to receive mail but also to write letters himself. Remember him on his 45th birthday, January 27, 1986.

Our very best wishes to all of you!

When you read this another year has gone by. What the new year will bring us, we do not know, but let us all also for the future put our trust in the LORD our God. Whatever changes, His faithfulness is the same year in, year out!

I know in whom my hope is founded
Through ever-changing day and night.
Thou hast me with Thy love surrounded;
Thou art my Rock, I trust Thy might.
When once life's evening veils enshroud me,
I'll bring, though worn by ills and strife,
For every day Thou hast allowed me
Thee higher praise, O God of life!

Hymn 63:2

Send your requests for the time being to:

MRS. J. MULDER
1225 Highway 5, RR 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

In Memoriam

For some time now the column, "A Ray of Sunshine," could not appear regularly on the pages of *Clarion*. The reason was that its author, Mrs. J.K. (Henny) Riemersma, was seriously ill and no longer able to write it. On Tuesday, December 3, 1985, the Lord took our sister out of her suffering unto Himself.

Mrs. Riemersma's column first appeared in the Year-end issue of 1977 under the heading, "A Corner for the Sick." At that time, the editorial committee of *Clarion* had been discussing various ways and means to upgrade our magazine and to make it more readable for our subscribers. One of the suggestions received was to include a special column for the sick in our federation. For those who knew her, Henny Riemersma seemed a natural choice to write and manage such a column. Our sister was known as a very giving person, always directed to others and their needs. She had developed the good habit of sending letters and cards of encouragement to those who were sick, inside and outside of her own local congregation. She liked to write and had a keen sense for poetry. And what is more important: she had a good knowledge and understanding of the Scriptures. It did not take long for her to be convinced to take this job upon herself.

From the moment that it appeared, her regular column was well-received by our readers. She began to keep a "Birthday Calendar" for those with lasting handicaps or illnesses. Be-

cause her column regularly mentioned more than just those who were sick, it was decided in 1981 to change the name to "A Ray of Sunshine." Thus the scope of this column was legitimately broadened. Not only did many of our sick brothers and sisters receive much happiness through her column, but also our handicapped members received more attention. Often she was able to convey their thanks to the readers. In this way, Sr. Riemersma brought all of us closer together and gave more meaning to the communion of saints. She indeed succeeded in bringing sunshine, the light of God's Word, into the lives of many who needed to be comforted and uplifted.

At first Sr. Riemersma filled her column mostly with her own meditations on portions of God's Word. Later, when because of her illness this became more difficult, she used appropriate poems to fill her space in *Clarion*. She always felt that she should have given more. To the end, "A Ray of Sunshine" had the love of her heart.

Henny Riemersma (nee Moraal) came to Canada in September, 1954 and was married the following year. The Riemersma family took up residence in Fergus and have lived there ever since. Already in 1971 our sister underwent a first operation to have a cancerous tumor removed. She knew what devastation this sickness could produce, for many of her own family members died of terminal can-



cer. Born into a family of eleven children, she was preceded in death by seven of them. But our sister was noted for her steadfastness of faith and her strength of character. She was able to serve as president of the Canadian Reformed Women's League of Ontario for a period of nine years.

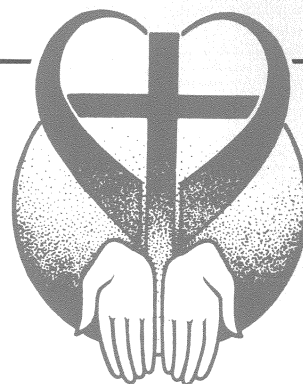
In May of this year it was discovered that Sr. Riemersma had again developed cancer, and one of her kidneys had to be removed. In August she was readmitted to the hospital. After four months of increased suffering, she passed away quietly into the glory of her heavenly Father, in the knowledge that "in everything God works for good with those who love Him, who are called according to His purpose," Romans 8:28. She was fifty-one years old.

We offer our sincere condolences to our brother Jake Riemersma and the Riemersma family, who are comforted in the knowledge that our sister has been relieved of suffering and anxiety and granted to be with our Lord and Saviour. We are grateful for the many rays of sunshine which she could through *Clarion* spread into our homes. May her loved ones, and we all, continue to walk in the Light of the Lord.

CL. STAM

CRWRF

Annual report — 1985



Hardship, disease, political turmoil, homelessness, hunger, drought: none of these is new. In fact, as we all know, one of the earliest narratives in the Bible is a graphic tale about the drought in Egypt. God enabled Joseph to interpret the meaning of Pharaoh's dreams regarding the upcoming seven good years and seven lean years so that Pharaoh, knowing what was ahead, could act responsibly. According to the information available regarding the need in our world, we too feel a compulsion to act responsibly in Christ's name. Thank you for practising compassion and responsibility through your faithful giving this past year. The following areas have seen benefit from your gifts.

Achego Children's Home, Kenya

Now that the long-awaited addition is in use, the numbers cared for in our home have risen to sixty. It is hoped that twenty more children will be admitted in the new year, bringing the home to full capacity. The drought and famine that have stricken so much of Africa including parts of Kenya, have happily not affected the Achego area. However, there is a pressing need for more water to meet the home's requirements especially since the number of children has increased. After her last supervisory visit this summer, Mrs. Rookmaaker reported that two additional rain water tanks should adequately meet this need. These, together with repairs required to give the



A grandmother and child near Bogra

original structure a needed "face-lift," will cost us about \$5,000.

Africa

A combination of drought, failures in agriculture, and political turmoil, has caused Africa's famine to remain a tragic reality. As the population grows, stable crop yields have declined and often failed completely. The result is an impoverished economy and an enormous food deficit. The human cost: rampant malnutrition of one third of Africa's 450 million people. It is beyond

comprehension that an estimated thirty-five million people in over twenty African countries face hunger today. Your generous giving this past year and a half has enabled us to send large sums of money to buy food — and life for those starving. Original gifts (\$5,000) went through the Sudan to aid those living in the hard-hit Eritrean province of Ethiopia. Subsequent aid (funds on hand plus your gifts — a total of \$32,000!) was channelled through the Canadian Foodgrains bank where it was quadrupled (the Canadian government gives \$3 for every dollar donated to this program) and sent to Ethiopia, the Sudan, Mozambique, Mali, and Kenya. Partners of this organization, which include the Mennonite Central Committee and the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee of Canada, rent shipping space to carry needed foodstuffs, and then they or partner organizations on the "field" such as Missionary Alliance, strictly supervise distribution on arrival.

Still other monies (\$5,000) were sent through the African Inland Church which has established churches in many of the famine-stricken areas. (Our Achego home is also supervised by A.I.M.) The food purchased is distributed by missionaries together with national co-workers who seek to bring the healing of the gospel along with physical aid. Gifts received through this Fall's Thanksgiving collection which several churches directed to CRWRF, will also be channelled through A.I.M.

In our giving, we are not unaware of the disadvantages massive food aid carries. Such aid can depress market prices, hold back production, discourage local governments from focusing on the problems, create stagnation and at times, through corruption and lack of adequate storage and transportation facilities, the aid does not even reach its intended recipients. Appropriate development is a much more positive approach. Yet, in the face of mass starvation, one cannot only speak ideally of long-term development, but must give *now*, with compassion and responsibility,

1986 BUDGET

Children's Home in Achego, Kenya	\$23,000.00
Health Care Unit, Busan, Korea	13,200.00
Community Development Project, Bangladesh	6,000.00
ZOA Christian International Refugee Care	2,000.00
Emergency Aid to Famine-stricken Areas	25,000.00
Slide/Film Presentations	250.00
Publications and Administration	350.00
Miscellaneous	200.00
Total Expenses	\$70,000.00

selecting truly *reliable* means that will ensure that the food reaches the people who so desperately need it. We at CRWRF allocate your gifts according to these criteria, with the prayer (which we know you share) that it may indeed relieve suffering, and that hearts may be turned to the Living Water, the Bread of Life.

And, according to widespread reports, foreign aid (including your gifts), together with much needed rainfall, has happily made a significant difference. Recently six African countries were removed from the list of those needing emergency food aid. In many areas, feeding camps are gradually being closed as people return to their villages to plant crops. However, the coming year will still be a *critical* year for several countries, and we ask you to remember this in your giving and in your prayers.

Health Care Unit, Busan, Korea

The two nurses continue to administer vaccines, dispense medicines, teach health and nutrition, and witness of their Saviour wherever possible, improving the lives of many who would otherwise have no access to such services. Dr. Benjamin Haah, wrote after a recent visit, of his pleasure at meeting the chief nurse again. He says, "While nurses come and go, Yun Ji Park, a thirty-four-year-old lady, has been living with this primary care ever since it started. Well trained, she has been practising as midwife for families who cannot afford hospital cost. I was convinced again that she is an asset for the community."

Development work in Bangladesh

Home to ninety-nine million people, Bangladesh knows great need. Good nutrition, literacy, health care, agricultural programs — many of the developments we take for granted are inadequate in this underdeveloped nation. We are grateful for the small contribution we have been able to make through the work of Peter and Geraldine Ysselstein (Guelph congregation) — and happy to see their work bearing fruit.

Peter's work initially involved supervision of a successful ongoing CRWRC program to assist very poor farmers in better irrigation, thus enabling them to produce an additional crop each year. During the past year, however, he has been concentrating primarily on a new project in the northwest among the Shantal tribal people, many of whom, unlike the Moslem majority, are Christians. He has initiated groups in several villages in which basic literacy, savings skills, health, Bible, and agriculture are taught.

The women's program Geraldine initiated has also mushroomed in an exciting

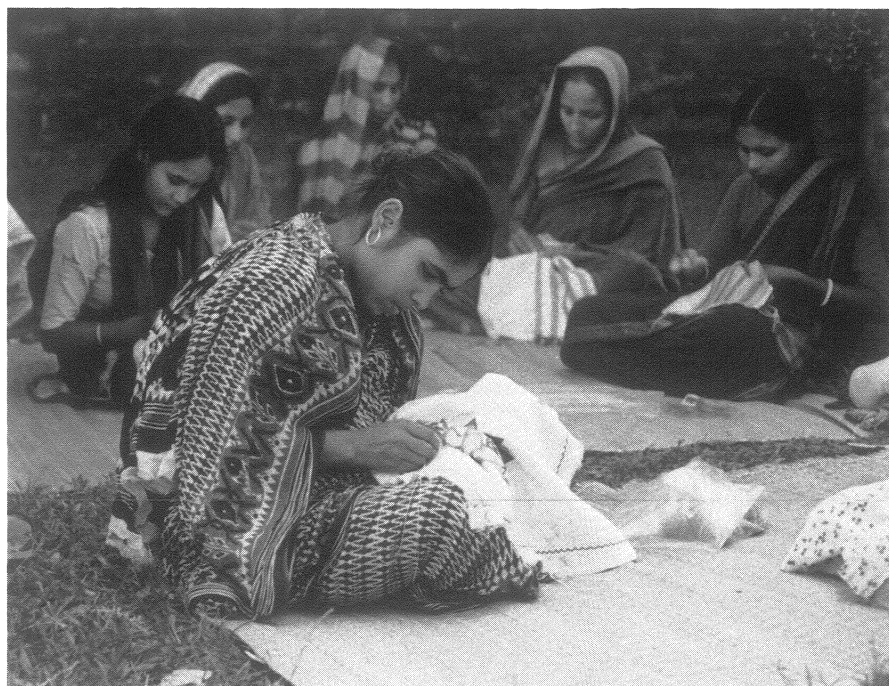


way to the point where four women's skills teachers have been hired. Every day, the women involved, come to the centre at Khanjanpur or to their skill teacher's village home to sew. Twice a week, group members meet to deposit their savings (around fifteen cents) and receive literacy, health, and cooperative training. Their progress is encouraging! In total, the native staff Peter supervises now totals eleven, the groups twenty-one, and the participants 300! (Sixty of these belong

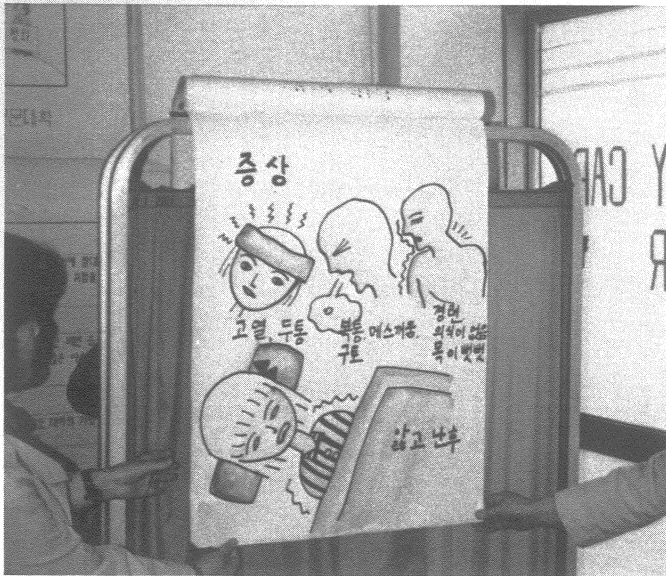
to the women's groups.) In the next few months much additional work must be done to ensure that these valuable programs continue to function effectively when it comes time for the Ysselsteins' departure next March.

Ban Vanai Camp, Thailand

Last year we sent a gift of \$2,000 to support the health care provided by ZOA to 43,000 Hmong refugees who have no recourse but to live within the confines of the



Women sewing at the Khanjanpur Mission. Some of these crafts are being imported and will hopefully be available at slide evenings in the near future



Pictorial charts developed by nurse, Yun Ji Park, right, to teach sanitation and health care

Ban Vanai Refugee Camp. Our appreciation for the work done there has continued as we have read reports sent by Dr. Diny VanBruggen, ZOA's regional director, and her assistant in Bangkok, Hilda Beijes (Smithville congregation) and met personally with ZOA's director. This year again, we have therefore allocated a further \$2,000 towards this worthwhile work.

Dr. VanBruggen writes that the situation in Thailand is tightening. The West is becoming compassion-fatigued, and Thailand itself shows signs of fatigue. Visa procedures for team members are getting

more troublesome and the influence of Thai government policies on the work is increasing. She writes, "With understanding for the problem of the Thai government, we continue to seek the best solutions for the refugees whom we serve, desiring always that our work may glorify His Name."

Leprosarium in Somalia

This year, after meeting with Michael and Oetje Madany, we also sent a one-time gift of \$1,000 to support their work as agriculturist and nurse at, and around,

the leprosy hospital in Jilib, Somalia. We have since learned that of over 300 leprosy cases Oetje recently reviewed, twenty-eight were happily able to discontinue treatment since there was no longer any significant level of the leprosy bacteria in their bodies. (See *Clarion* report in August 1985 issue for more information on this work and CRWRF's involvement in it.)

Public relations

Several slide evenings have been held this past year in Ontario, and also, in the West, due to the efforts of our enthusiastic Western representative, Sue VanTol. If you have not had a slide evening in your area during the past few years, we hope to inform you of one soon. Articles in *Clarion* have, we trust, kept you informed about the work of CRWRF. Also, an updated edition of our brochure "A Cup of Cold Water," printed this Spring, should be available at slide evenings from your local representatives and/or in your church foyer.

We appreciate your ongoing commitment to our efforts, and trust that in giving you will also be blessed, bringing glory to the Name that is above every name.



Geraldine Ysselstein with the newest addition to the family, Margaretha

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF
PO Box 793
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y7

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

A Hymn of Trust

In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.
Isaiah 30:15

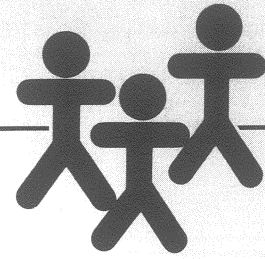
*In quietness and confidence
My strength shall ever be!
No weariness shall overcome
The soul that's stayed on Thee.
Though trials sore and hardships come
My strength He shall renew;
His presence shall envelop me—
No ill shall e'er pass through.*

*My case into His hands I've given,
He knoweth all my need;
And He who notes the sparrow's fall
Shall still provide and lead.
Though sudden sorrow pierce my heart,
Though storm-clouds rise and thunders roll
In quietness and confidence
Shall be my strength of soul.*

*Though friends may fail, the world be dark,
I know for me He cares,
And as a Father pitieth
In all my grief He shares.
And so, whatever may betide,
Or whether weal or woe,
In quietness and confidence
Shall be the strength I know.*

Nettie M. Sargent

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Communication

Greetings!

It is with some sense of trepidation that I embark on this new venture and adopt the role of "columnist." The question that comes immediately to mind is, "Just what is such a columnist supposed to do?" Is it to be a "News Medley" of items pertaining to schools and education? How much of the columnist's personal opinion should enter into the picture? What kind of items will have sufficiently wide appeal to merit inclusion? You get a sense of some of the concerns.

Of course, *School Crossing* is not a new column, and a precedent has been set. Br. N. Vandooren has done a commendable job over these past several years, and thus has set a good example. Nevertheless, no two persons are alike, and each has to address the issues in his own way.

I trust you will bear with me as I "cut my teeth" in this new role. Your input, in suggestions or in response to what has been written, is encouraged. Let us also use this as a means to build one another up in our mutual service of Him our King.

* * * * *

John Calvin School, Burlington, is "bursting at the seams." Since Burlington now boasts three congregations it was almost inevitable that the school would soon become too small. Quite some years ago the school already underwent a major expansion, adding a gymnasium and several classrooms as well as kitchen facilities. Limited property seems to preclude further expansion, so other alternatives have to be considered. A committee of the board is investigating such possibilities. The choices seem to be the possible purchase of a larger building which is no longer in use by the public board, or establishing a second facility just north-west of Burlington where there is a lot of growth. Either way, the community is faced with the considerable problems and expenditures involved in expansion. However, if we must have problems, let them all be so caused. Best wishes to the society, its board and committee in resolving this issue.

* * * * *

The following item is from the *LINK*,

a publication of the schools in Fergus/Guelph:

Public scrutiny

The hot issue of funding for the separate school system will have implications for us. We are all in agreement that we do not need funding to maintain our schools. We will continue with or without it. What is more important than the money issue is the new tact taken by a small vocal minority who wish to keep the existing public school system as is. There are signs that this group is ready to concede defeat in attempting to block full funding to Catholic schools. It is also apparent that they are turning their energies to all remaining private schools, including ours. In previous years we could claim that "justice" in a free country should allow parents to send their children to the school of their choice. However, the vocal opposition is bypassing the justice issue and is starting a terror campaign designed to convince the uninformed that private schools are breeding grounds for social and religious intolerance and will fragment society. Against this pending onslaught, we should be prepared by that our schools are:

1. an expression of the parents' universally accepted right of selecting the education of their choice;
2. an example of the diversity of ideas and culture that Ontarians like to see everywhere except in education;
3. dedicated to providing structure and direction for students who are living in a world falling apart because of a lack of these goals;
4. a part of the city and neighbourhood and a positive influence and example;
5. proud of our standards and Christian perspective and are willing to show this to outsiders.

Some of what is written here will no doubt sound familiar, especially to "Western" ears. If I understand it well there have been some commissions at work in Alberta over the last years, investigating the school system(s). In particular the "Ghitler Commission" has had some less-than-complimentary things to say about private, religion oriented schools. When the "Shapiro Commission" Report comes out in

Ontario in the near future, (more on that when it does) the scrutiny mentioned above will no doubt intensify. It would probably be very instructive for all of us to know how our "Western" readers responded in their situation. If someone will enlighten me, I'll be pleased to pass it on.

* * * * *

In the recent issue of *CRTA* (Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association) magazine an article appeared entitled "Home/School Communication." As you read the following extracts please keep in mind that the author is addressing himself to teachers in the first place.

"Reformed education is rooted in the home/school relationship. We believe that



neither the state nor the school as such carries primary responsibility for the education of children. This responsibility lies irremovably on the shoulders of the parents. And rightly so, since Scripture is clear in its admonition that education is a divine mandate given to the parents (Deuteronomy 6). This, of course, does not ignore the fact that those parents live and work within the community of saints, and thus the idea of parents combining their educational efforts to form a school society and establish a school is a logical consequence of that divine mandate. However, an established institution seems to have the strange characteristic that over time it takes on a life of its own. It generates its own rules, and starts to justify its own existence on the basis of arguments other than the original ones. It now considers itself a separate, perhaps even an autonomous entity. Reformed teachers must be careful not to fall into this trap. We so easily begin to consider the home/school relationship as a burden, interfering with the process of (school) education, and a source of conflict. Yet the justification for the existence of Reformed schools remains that they assist the parents in the covenantal education of the children of the church. During the past months concern has been expressed about the effect of Reformed schooling and education on our children. This discussion not only underlined the fact that neither school nor home can achieve the goals of education in isolation, but it also laid bare the fact that the relationship home/school does not always function as well as it should. Reason for self-examination rather than throwing stones!"

The author then draws upon a Canada/U.S., research study on this subject for the lessons it can teach us. In the final paragraph he concludes as follows:

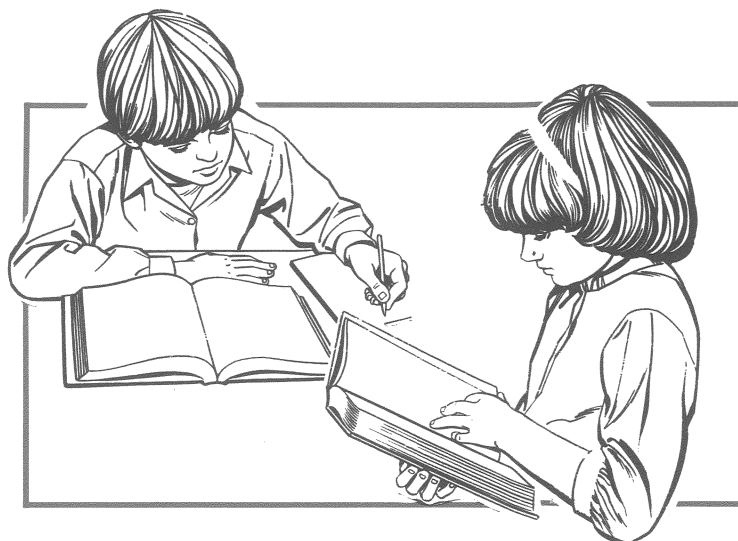
"How effective are our methods for two-way communication? How well have our methods of communication with the parents established shared goals, recognized each others strengths and weaknesses, fostered mutual respect and appreciation, and built support for and commitment to our schools and their educational objectives as part of that wonderful enterprise which we have come to define as COVENANTAL EDUCATION; the divinely mandated enterprise which has as its objective that our children 'should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments' (Psalm 78:7)! Indeed, if God would *not* be on our side"

As mentioned this article was directed at teachers, but communication is a *two-way process*, one that involves not only speaking and listening but also *understanding*. Schools and their staffs indeed have the obligation to set up effective channels of communication between home and

school, but then they also have to be used, by *both* sides. If the channels aren't working, as a recent ironic description of Parent-Teacher interviews seemed to suggest, then something should be said so that improvements can be made. Suffering in silence, in instances like these, is not particularly virtuous, and certainly not helpful. Let us seek to understand one another's situations, and then truly *communicate*.

* * * * *

One frequent item of communication between home and school concerns the matter of homework, which includes studying. In a recent issue of *Christian Home*



and School, Dr. Arden Ruth Post writes on this subject. One of the points made is that studying is something that does definitely *not* come naturally. Studying is a process that requires discipline, and like all discipline, involves some degree of self-denial. Although there are some self-starters, most children need training and encouragement in this area. Dr. Post provides the following seventeen points to help parents give their children the necessary encouragement. Why not give them a try!

1. Guide the child in understanding that schoolwork is a God-given responsibility.
2. Plan for study time every weekday afternoon or evening.
3. Arrange for a place where the child can work undisturbed.
4. Ask your child what homework has been assigned and ask to see the assignment sheet.
5. Help the child make a plan for getting it done.
6. Assist the child in making long-range plans for major assignments.
7. Check finished assignments and reward with praise, affection, or a treat.
8. For children with shorter attention

spans, provide recognition or reward upon completion of part of the homework.

9. Praise any efforts that result in success.

10. Encourage children who need to make better use of time to stick to a schedule by using a kitchen timer.

11. Empathize with the student when there is a large amount of work.

12. Help a reluctant studier with positive encouragement.

13. Save a favourite TV program or activity until after all work has been done.

14. When time is at a premium, have another family member call out spelling words or questions in the car.

15. Allow time on weekends for catch up work, when necessary.

16. Save some desk work of your own — letter writing, bill paying, school work — to do when the child studies.

17. Keep in touch with the teacher about your child's work so that you can take corrective action before the report card comes home.

* * * * *

An Ottawa mother, not unlike many mothers in our community, was babysitting a neighbourhood child for her working mother. When it came to lunch time Suzy informed the babysitter, "I can't pray." Not being too familiar with the child's home situation, this was accepted at face value.

Sometime later Dad happened to be home for lunch. When Suzy repeated her now familiar declaration, Dad, in all innocence asked, "Why can't you pray, Suzy?" Her reply? "I can't talk that fast!"

Something to ponder

Till next time,
F.C. LUDWIG
81 Seaborn Road
Brampton, ON L6V 2C2

Guido de Brès

High School commencement

It was 9:00 a.m., October 25, 1985. The weeks of preparation had suddenly ended and there was still so much to do. Although most classes were able to continue even though one or two students were missing, a hub-bub of activity began in the gymnasium. The tables had to be set and the decorations had to be finished yet. The Home Economics class and many of the grade twelvers worked very hard in order to get everything ready for the dinner. All the weeks of planning by a committee consisting of mothers of the present grade twelve class now culminated in a beehive-like activity in the kitchen. With all that noise in the gymnasium and in the kitchen, how could the rest of us concentrate on our studies?

The diners were seated at 6:00 p.m. in a gymnasium decorated with blue and gold ribbons and balloons. The tables were all set with dinner-ware properly arranged and all with yellow, white and purple daisies. After everyone was seated, Mr. J.C. Torenvliet read from Hebrews, Chapter 4 ("... entering God's rest"), and led in prayer. Salad, broccoli, carrots, corn, apple sauce, mashed potatoes, gravy, ham, beef, apple juice, buns, dessert; all this and even seconds. Truly sumptuous fare.

What next? On to Bethel Tabernacle, where the Commencement Exercises officially began at 8:30 p.m. The main auditorium was filled almost to capacity and when all the graduates were in their places everyone sang from one of the processional psalms of the people of Israel. The chairman of the board, Mr. G. DeBoer, opened with the reading of Proverbs 8:1-8 and led in prayer of thankfulness to the Lord for all that He had given us, a prayer asking for God's blessing on this very special occasion.

After the opening, Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff spoke what has become the traditional words of welcome. Noticing the large number present (approx. 800), the Principal expressed words of appreciation for the interest shown and support given for the school by the community, and hoped that all this may serve to upbuild the school and that in these activities the

glory of God may be preminent. The Principal also hoped that the years of Christian education may bear fruit in the lives of the graduates; that they may acknowledge the Lordship of Christ and so lead a life of obedience, aiming in their lives to reach the eternal goal — "indeed, that you may find life."

The audience then sang from Hymn 62:1,2 — "All Glory be to Thee." The presentations of the Secondary School Graduation Diplomas was next on the programme. The following were the recipients:

to Him in prayer; trusting, accepting as a child. We should pray: make me a child — everyday. Drawing the covenant line from Jeremiah, Chapter 31, Professor VanDam pointed out that we have to pray for conversion, to reaffirm our covenant identity. God renews us, causes us to be born again as His child, as a child of Father in heaven. It is absolutely necessary to experience this, the speaker said, for unless one is born again, as the Lord Jesus told us, one cannot see the Kingdom of God. Then we will be a new creation, God's handiwork in the midst of this

Henrietta Bartels
Clarence Blokhuis
Wayne Bos
Brian Bosch
Bonnie Bruinsma
Jeffrey Buist
John Buist
Frank Deboer
Irene Deboer
Joanne Deboer
Joyce DeGelder
Melinda DeGroot
Everett DeJong
Theresa Dykstra
Harold Elzinga
Paul Flach
Bruce Hartman
Jennifer Hordyk
William Horsman

Linda Jager
Andrew Jans
Yolanda Jongsma
Sherri Kampen
David Kampen
David Kieft
Sue Knegt
Cindy Linde
John Lof
Marc Ludwig
Sheila Ludwig
John Mans
Jacqueline Nyenhuis
Sheryl Schulenberg
Sherry Sloots
Shawn Smith
Carolyn Stieva
Corinne Tenhage

Theresa Terpstra
Walter Togeretz
Gerald VanDasselaar
Bernice Vandebos
John Vandenhaak
Jacqueline VanderHeiden
Dianne VanderLeest
Karen VanderVeen
Barbara VanderVelde
Margaret VanderVelde
Helen VanderVen
Anna Lynn VanderWoude
Sonja VanderWoude
Leona VanSydenborgh
Gerald VanWoudenberg
Henry Vis
Gary Wieske
John Zietsma

After the presentation, the assembly sang Psalm 90:1,8 — "Establish Thou the labours of our hand; establish them, that to Thy praise they stand."

Professor C. VanDam then delivered his address to the graduates with the theme that we are children of God and only if we acknowledge our Father in heaven will we be able to meet the challenges of the future and seek the real purpose of life. We are privileged to know our identity. Having been born in the covenant community we know what it means to be children of the Father: that we should look

world. Then we have been made after His image, the image of Father. Then we have been moulded and fashioned by his Word and Spirit so that we mirror and reflect Father's will, and desire, and goal for our lives. For the children of God are a new creation in a world that is an old, a fallen creation. That is what the world needs, children of God. The world needs very much that Christians show how God meant man and creation to be, namely, in everything submitting to the Maker of us all.

The question is often asked, the



Back row: (left to right) Brian Bosch, Shawn Smith, Paul Flach, Andrew Jans, Everett DeJong, John Mans, Gary Wieske, Clarence Blokhuis, John Vandenhaak, John Lof, Gerald VanDasselaar, Marc Ludwig, Jeff Buist
 Third row: Henry Vis, Jerry VanWoudenberg, Dave Kieft, Frank DeBoer, Theresa Dykstra, Sheryl Schulenberg, Sonja VanderWoude, Henrietta Bartels, Bernice Vandenbos, Walter Togeretz, Bill Horsman, John Zietsma, Harold Elzinga, John Buist
 Second row: Jennifer Hordyk, Yolanda Jongsma, Jackie VanderHeiden, Sherri Kampen, Corinne Tenhage, Joanne DeBoer, Dianne VanderLeest, Sheila Ludwig, Margaret VanderVelde, Bonnie Bruinsma, Linda Jager, Helen VanderVen, Barb VanderVelde, Bruce Hartman
 Front row: Cindy Linde, Lynn VanderWoude, Irene DeBoer, Joyce DeGelder, Jackie Nyenhuis, Melinda DeGroot, Karen VanderVeen, Sherry Sloots, Carolyn Stieva, Sue Knegt, Leona VanSydenborgh, Terri Terpstra

speaker continued, what do you want to be. At the very top of the list, no matter how old we get, should be, "I want to be a child of Father in heaven." Then we will be close to Him, listen to Him, study His Word in which he speaks to us, and as a real child boast of what a great Father we have — yes, then we will behave in such a way that praise is given to Father. For does the child not pray, "Father, hallowed be Thy Name"?

Professor VanDam showed that as Christian graduates, we have a fantastic future, for as children of God we will abide forever. And no matter what may befall us, all will be right if we but remember that we are His children.

Walter Togeretz, one of the graduates, thanked Professor VanDam for his speech, and also expressed thankfulness for the instruction given at Guido.

Next came the school choir led by Mrs. L. Snow with Ken Wieske at the keyboards. The choir sang three beautiful pieces, the words of which were conveniently enclosed with the evening programme booklet so that all could follow along.

When the girls again were seated, Mr. E. Baartman presented the school

Achievement Award. This award, based on a point system accumulated from both academic and athletic participation, was given to Bernice Vandenbos.

The 1985-86 Students' Council President, Rick Ludwig, presented the Students' Council Award jointly to Joanne DeBoer and Sherri Kampen. The award is given to those who promote school spirit, and the two girls were often together organizing special events in and out of the school.

Dr. W. Helder, assisted by Miss T. Hutten, presented the Grade 12 Proficiency Awards. In the past this award was given to students who had achieved exemplary standards in a particular subject area. Now it is given to those who have reached the highest overall average (over 75%) in all subject areas. The following received the award: Margaret Vandervelde, Karen VanderVeen, Sherri Kampen, Sherry Sloots, Clarence Blokhuis, Dave Kieft, and Bruce Hartman.

After this, Linda Jager gave her valedictory address on behalf of a class that began as seventy-one gummers and now became fifty-four graduates. She recalled many humorous events which have not only become fond memories but

will surely remain lasting memories. In her closing remarks she acknowledged the goodness of God and expressed the hope that the graduates would always make it obvious that they are children of God and in their life strive for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.

At the close of the ceremonies the audience sang from Psalm 138:1,4. Professor C. VanDam closed in prayer, whereafter the audience sang "O Canada" — "God keep our land glorious and free . . ."

After the recessional, the audience went to the Bethel gymnasium, where refreshments, cake and cookies were served. At this time everyone had an opportunity to congratulate the graduates, to meet old acquaintances, and to make new friends. Time to be homeward bound came at about 10:45 p.m. — a long but momentous and memorable day. Truly we have been blessed by the Lord far beyond our greatest expectations. We conclude with a psalm of David:

Thou dost show me the path of life,
 In Thy presence there is fullness of joy,
 In Thy right hand are pleasures
 forevermore.

H.D. NIENHUIS

Mt. Nemo Lodge Nursing Home

1972 — 1985

You may well ask, what have those years to do with the above mentioned name? Well, allow us to introduce ourselves and briefly explain what the name and the years signify.

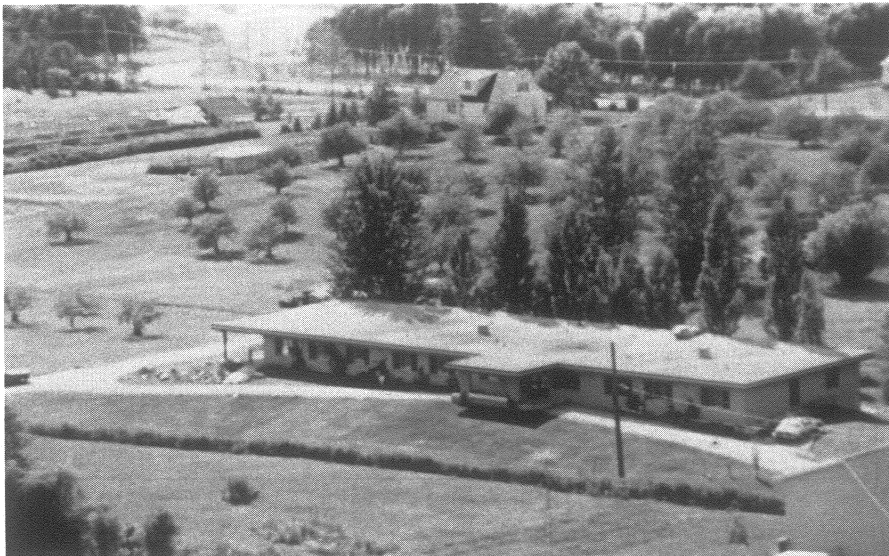
During the summer of 1972, the con-

The first general meeting was held in the fall of 1972, when a society was formed and a board elected. The name chosen was the Canadian Reformed Rest Home Society, which was later changed to Canadian Reformed Society for a Home

endeavour gaining the support of the members of the churches in Ontario. Point one took a long time. The second seemed even more difficult as many people were reluctant to support something so far away from them.

However, the board kept “plugging” away and in due time, plans for a home were presented to the membership. It was agreed to start with a ten-to-twelve-unit building, but this is where we got stuck, for no matter how we tried, we were unable to finance this project on our own. The only other alternative, was to work with CHMC, who would finance the project with a two percent mortgage. This meant housing for seniors but without the nursing care we had wanted to provide. However, we were told at that time, “Operate your home for the aged for two or three years and you will probably be granted a licence for a nursing home.” Needless to say that many changes in the area of nursing homes took place in the mid 70’s, not to mention the three-year freeze imposed on construction of new nursing homes. We nevertheless carried on. A local architect was obtained. Plans were drawn up for a fifteen-unit building, which had to be changed to a thirty-unit building in order to implement various extras in the building, such as a library, workshop, lounge, and an elevator to satisfy CHMC. The result is our “Eben-ezer” building which was opened February 1, 1983 to tenants and officially opened June 1983. It did not take too long for the building to be fully occupied and this has been so since.

We had, with God’s blessings, reached 50 percent of our objective. The other half remained unsolved until late 1984. Through one of the board members, it became known that a thirty-bed licenced nursing facility was for sale — Mt. Nemo Lodge Nursing Home in Burlington. But how could one obtain such a facility with practically no funds for a down payment? Not



Mt. Nemo Lodge is located on No. 2 Sideroad, just off Guelph Line, about 3 km. north of Hwy. No. 5. It has thirty beds, made up of private, semi-private, and wards, with a very large lounge. A country-like setting on about eight acres of land with room for expansion.

sistory of the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton gave their deacons the following instruction: investigate the possibilities open to us to care for the elderly among us, and more specifically, those in need of care who cannot look after themselves anymore.

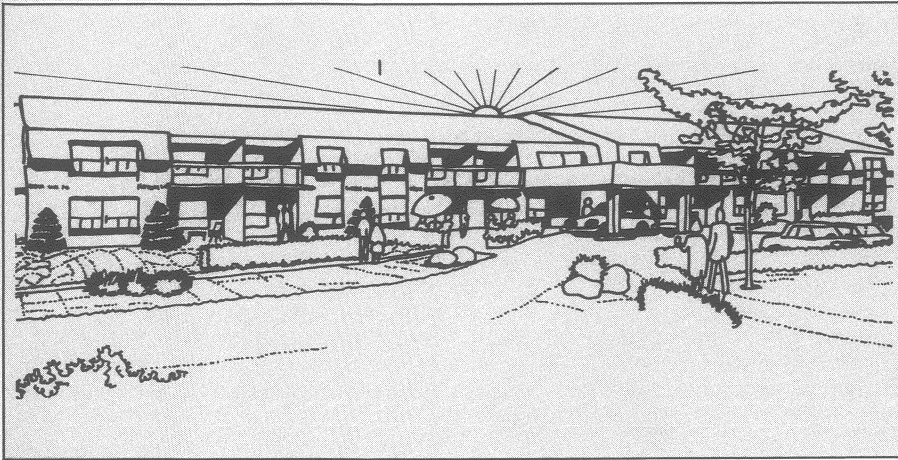
In order to obtain the best possible answer, we needed help — lot’s of it. In due time, after input from deacons of neighbouring churches, it was suggested that we carry on with our initiative.

What follows, in chronological order, are the main decisions taken since then.

for the Aged Inc. Membership dues were set at \$100.00 per year.

With the approval of the society two acres of land with an old house on it, next to the Cornerstone Church in Hamilton, was purchased in 1973. Membership increased from thirty in 1972 to over one-hundred and twenty-five by the end of 1973. Things looked promising.

In order for our goal to be achieved, namely, a home for the aged providing care, several matters had to be dealt with: 1. We needed a constitution and bylaws; and 2. We should make this a regional



Ebenezer Villa is located at 337 Stonechurch Road, next to Cornerstone Church. It has thirty self-contained one and two-room units. It offers a large lounge, library, crafts room, elevator and laundry room. A "house" doctor is available on a regular basis.

to let this, perhaps once in a lifetime opportunity slip by, the board decided to hold its annual membership meeting in Burlington. A large enthusiastic gathering attended this meeting. The proposal by the board to purchase this home, subject to several provisions, was unanimously accepted.

By now the work started in earnest. There were deadlines to meet. A conditional offer was accepted by the vendor. A call went out to all of our church members in Ontario. Local meetings were held in various congregations. To sum it up — in less than two months, we received pledges for close to \$200,000.00, 25 percent in gifts and donations, 75 percent by way of bonds which we hope to pay back over the next five years. After some ups and downs, the society, received a licence to operate Mt. Nemo Lodge Nursing Home and took possession on November 1, 1985. Our membership also increased to about two-hundred and seventy.

It had taken nearly eleven years to realize our first goal, but only about eleven months to obtain that which we had strived for all along. Namely, to be able to help those unable to help themselves. We are now allowed to operate and maintain a home for the aged as well as a nursing home, and have just filed an application for residential care for Ebenezer Villa.

It is our fervent hope and prayer that the Lord will continue to bless our work. We have received in abundance, and want to share our blessings with all members of the Reformed faith. If you want to place your name on the waiting list of either home, there is of course, no obligation. The point is, those first on the list are given priority over the others in the event they wish to occupy a vacant unit. In the case of the nursing home, it is up

to the Medical Advisory Committee and the Ministry of Health. One needs a minimum of 1½ hours of nursing care to be admitted. Both homes need to be operated to capacity. Ebenezer Villa has run quite smoothly for nearly three years now and there is an Active Care Committee which organizes various events such as bus trips, slide presentations, school choirs, social mornings, etc. As far as the nursing home is concerned, it is all new

PRESS RELEASE

“Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, November 22, 1985

After the singing and reading of Psalm 95, the meeting is opened with prayer.

All are welcomed especially br. K. Elzinga from the Church at Attercliffe.

The minutes of meetings held on Oct. 4, 11, and 18 are accepted as presented. The minutes of Oct. 25 are adjusted and accepted.

The minutes of an executive board meeting held on Nov. 4 are also accepted. A letter drafted by the executive to br. Kooiman is read.

A letter from br. Kooiman accepting the position as director, and a letter stating that he has a temporary work permit, and hopes to arrive in Ontario the beginning of December, are read.

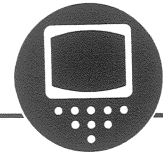
to us. We are thankful to have retained the services of a qualified administrator, director of nursing, as well as a food services supervisor, all in one person, probably a rarity in these days of specialization, and also a very dedicated staff.

We shall no doubt be confronted with some unforeseen obstacles, but with all the support received in the past, not only in words, but also in deeds, and with the blessings of our heavenly Father, we look with confidence to the future in the knowledge of our total dependence on Him. So then, as we have the opportunity, let us do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.

We wish all our members and supporters a joyous holiday season with best wishes for 1986.

On behalf of the board,
LEO KNEGT

Please direct your inquiries to the:
Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged, Inc.
P.O. Box 6032, Station F
Hamilton, ON L9C 5S2



A regular membership letter is distributed by the Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged Inc. “Anchor” will start renting the house on Mount Nemo Lodge property as of Dec. 1, 1985. The building committee will prepare the home for occupancy.

The Summer Camp committee reports on a successful reunion.

The public relations committee has resigned.

The treasurer requests membership fees to be paid.

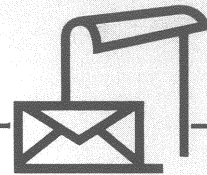
The press release is, after some adjustments, accepted.

A question period follows.

The meeting is closed in a Christian manner.

E. DEJONG

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Premarital counselling: a danger or a blessing?

One remark in the September 20, 1985 issue of *Clarion* cannot be allowed to go by without someone responding to it. (I realize I am late but the brunt of the blame can honestly be placed on the shoulders of the great Canadian postal system.) About the fact that the consistory of the Church at Toronto "recommends that those contemplating marriage attend the marriage counselling classes," Reverend VanOene remarks that he would not follow this recommendation because he is afraid of all sorts of special "counselling sessions" and because "ministers are not the exclusive 'pastors' of the congregations but they are servants of the Word, not instructors about all sorts of specific situations and relations, either within or outside of holy wedlock."

On the one hand, one can understand Rev. VanOene's concerns. On the North American continent today, there seems to be an obsession with the matters of psychology and counselling; man who has lost the true meaning of self when he rejected God, now seeks to regain that self through the study of psychology, among other things (compare Paul C. Vitz who says that "psychology has become a religion . . . a form of secular humanism based on worship of the self," *Psychology as Religion: The Cult of Self-worship*, Eerdmans, 1977). This new religion has not left Christianity untouched either; just think of the many seminaries and Bible colleges which have a much larger enrollment in their psychology and counselling classes than they do in the classes dealing with matters relating to the Scriptures. Certainly, that extreme is to be avoided.

But just as certainly, the other extreme is also to be avoided. Does Rev. VanOene maybe want to suggest that the ministers of our churches should not be involved in any counselling sessions whatsoever? Is he going to propose to our theological colleges in Hamilton and Kampen that they do away with the courses in which they teach ministers how to counsel? I know him well enough to know that that is not what he wants. Well then, is it not awfully artificial to suggest that, while a minister may and should become involved in counselling sessions when marital problems arise, he should not become involved in counselling before marriage? Anyone who is aware of what is happening within our Dutch sister churches knows that our colleagues there spend a great deal of

time on matters of marital breakdown, divorce, etc. And is the matter much better in our midst? And, then, think of the many husbands and wives who do stay together in marriage but for years already their marriages have been sour . . . ? If I am not mistaken it is these kind of concerns that have caused our brothers in Toronto to make their recommendation (and note: it was a recommendation, not a requirement). And those concerns are also mine as a pastor of the flock. For the past six years now, whenever young couples have come to me with the request to officiate at their wedding I, like other colleagues, have spent an hour or two with them discussing some of the matters that pertain to marriage; but always when they went out the door I had the feeling that this effort was terribly inadequate. It seems to me then that Toronto is showing us the way to go. For the Word of God (and not psychology first of all!) has much to say about marriage and surely not all of that can be adequately dealt with from the pulpit. It speaks about: the basis (not sex, but union in Christ!), purposes, permanence of marriage, the nature of love, the roles of husband and wife, having and raising children, stewardship within marriage, etc. Would not a number of sessions wherein these matters are wrestled out with young couples be invaluable? In medicine nowadays there are two approaches: one that deals with the illnesses and what-not that arise, the other that tries to prevent the illnesses altogether (so-called "preventive medicine"). Would it not be a good thing if our pastors took much more of a "preven-

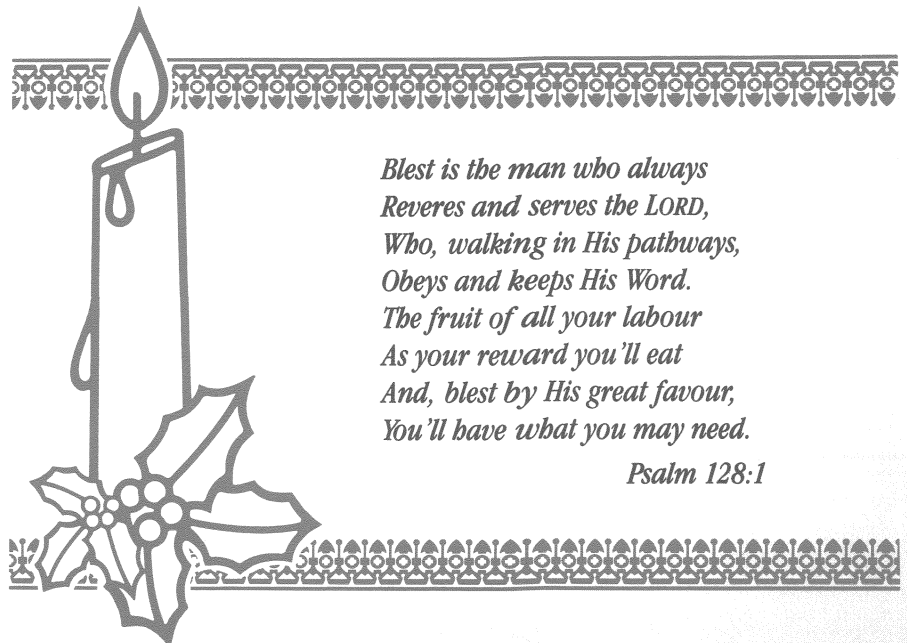
tive" approach? Especially with respect to marriage, our young people are bombarded with a lot of ungodly nonsense; certainly, the time to correct that is not when it has resulted in complex and often hopeless problems but before they even enter the state of holy wedlock.

At the end of his remarks, Rev. VanOene says that "when I see dangers I point them out." But surely, if the pastor of the Church at Toronto intends to teach his young people, not about the teachings of secular humanism but, about the always relevant Word of God, and I am confident that he does, then this is no "danger" but a *blessing* badly needed within all of our churches. Think of the kind of blessings that would result if we would experience an increase of happy and healthy marriages — blessings not just for the couples themselves and their children, but also for their churches!

One of the factors that prompted me to write this is the fact that this fall I have been enrolled in a course in counselling here in Ottawa (a very Reformed one, mind you) and there I was presented with material that is ever so very helpful for precisely such pre-marital counselling sessions. While I have yet to make use of them, I am confident that with this material, it will be a joy for pastors and young people to wrestle together with what the Word of God says about the institution of marriage. If any of my colleagues are interested in using this material, I will be most happy to make it available.

Ottawa, ON

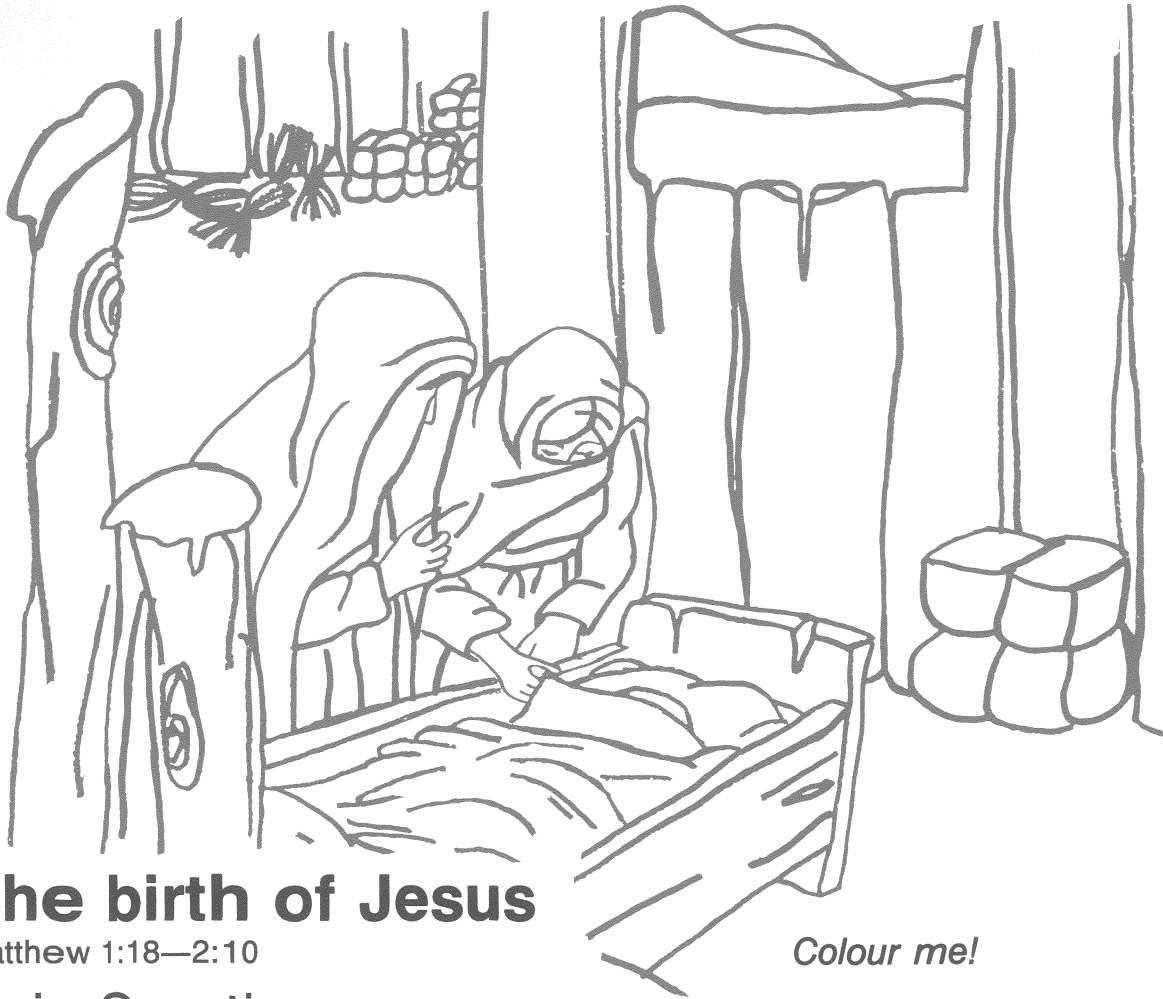
G.H. VISSCHER



*Blest is the man who always
Reveres and serves the LORD,
Who, walking in His pathways,
Obeys and keeps His Word.
The fruit of all your labour
As your reward you'll eat
And, blest by His great favour,
You'll have what you may need.*

Psalms 128:1

ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza



The birth of Jesus

Matthew 1:18—2:10

Colour me!

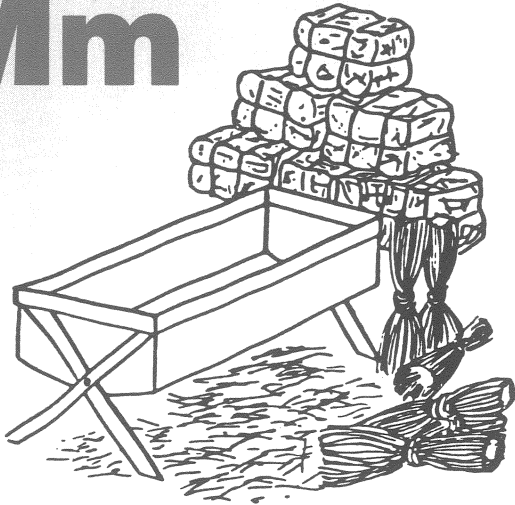
Quiz Questions

1. When Mary was betrothed to Joseph she was found to be with Child of the _____.
2. What was the Child's name? _____
3. Where was the Child born? _____
4. Some wise men were searching for the _____ of the _____, because they saw His _____ in the East and wanted to worship Him.
5. What did these wise men bring when they found Mary and the Child? _____
6. There was an evil king that wanted this precious Child destroyed.
What is his name? _____
7. Joseph was warned in a dream of the king's evil plan and was told to take his family to a safe place called _____. They remained there till the death of the king.

Answers for the letter "Q"

1. Sheba 2. Vashti 3. Esther 4. Jezebel 5. Michal

Mm



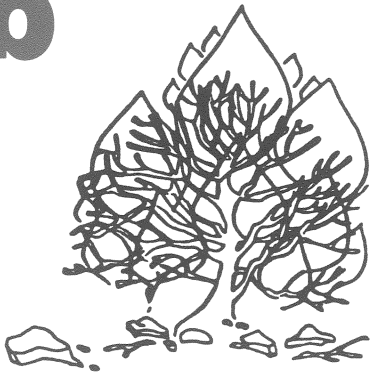
Kk



It's Re

Where in the Bible do

Bb



TEXT

Mm _____

Kk _____

Bb _____

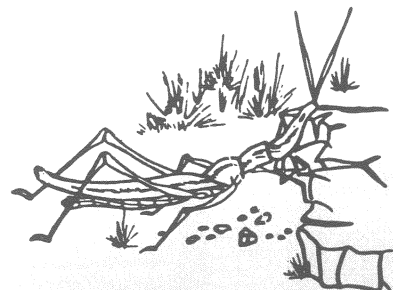
Hh _____

Nn _____

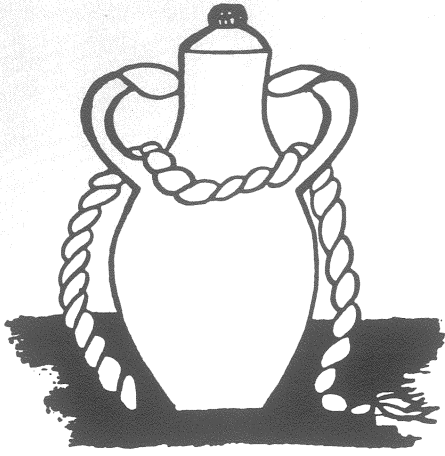
Hh



Ll



Jj



Dd



Time!

these letter pictures?

TEXT

j _____

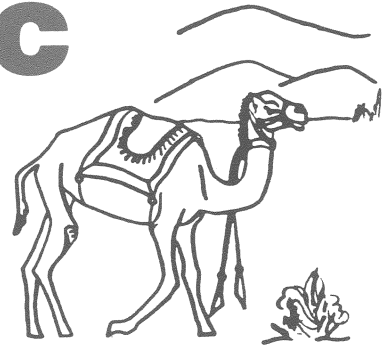
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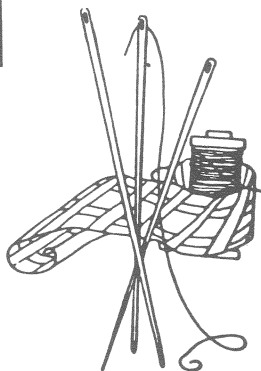
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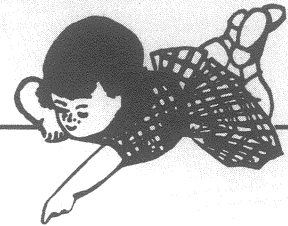


Gg



Nn





Dear Busy Beavers,

Just the other day a little girl told me "I love GOD the BEST!"

She really did mean it, too. She was so serious!

And then a text in beautiful calligraphy letters came in the mail. it said "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son . . ." (You know that text from John 3, don't you, Busy Beavers?)

Well, I was still thinking of what the little girl said. Then I looked again at that beautiful Christmas text. And then I remembered another text from the Bible — "We love, because He first loved us."

God loved us so much that He gave his only Son, That's what we remember at Christmas.

God gave us the Saviour we need. He gave His gift of love.

What do you think that means for us?

Let's listen to that Bible text again: "We love, because He first loved us."

That's what the Lord expects of His people.

And we can do it too, because of the Saviour God gave.

He did it for us. He will help us.

Let's remember to pray often "Lord, help us to love, because You first loved us"!

CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Rita Wubs*



LOOK FOR:

Herod
baby
Saviour
Bethlehem
angels
Gabriel
Mary
Joseph
king
manger
disciples
Christmas
birthday
gold
frankincense

myrrh
wisemen
shepherds
Zacharias
inn
Elizabeth
John
Anna
Simeon
Caesar
magi
enroll
stable
star
room



CHRISTMAS QUIZ

"Glory to God in the highest" the angels sang on the night of the Saviour's birth. Many places in the Bible speak of the glory of God. See how many blanks you can fill in. Use your Bible to finish!

1. The _____ are telling the glory of God. (Psalm 19:1)
2. Lift up your heads, O gates! and be lifted up, O _____! that the King of glory may come in. Who is this King of glory? The _____, He is the King of glory! (Psalm 24:9, 10)
3. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the _____ of _____. (James 2:1)
4. And the Word became flesh . . . and we beheld his _____. . . . (John 1:14)
5. Thine is the _____, and the _____, and the glory for ever. (Matthew 6:13)
6. They . . . crucified the _____ of glory. (I Corinthians 2:8)
7. They will see the _____ of _____ coming on the clouds of heaven with _____ and great _____. (Matthew 24:30)
8. Father, glorify Thou me in Thy own _____ with the glory which I had with Thee before the _____ was _____. (John 17:5)
9. Then the Son of man comes in His glory, and all the _____ with Him, then He will _____ on His glorious _____. (Matthew 25:31)
10. I saw the Holy City, _____, coming down out of _____ . . . having the glory of God . . . the glory of God is its _____ and its _____ is the Lamb. (Revelation 21:2, 11, 23)

This is a quiz to send to me, Busy Beavers. Then I will send you a bookmark! You remember my address?

*Aunt Betty
c/o Clarion*

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1249 Plessis Road, Winnipeg, MB R2C 3L9



From the Mailbox

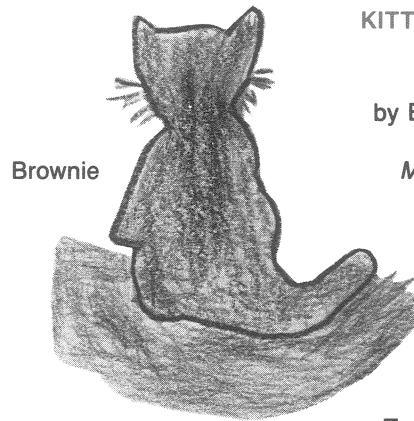
Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Emily Moes*. We are happy to have you join us. Thank you for your nice letter and picture. Keep up the good work!

What do you think will happen to all those fish at the hatchery now that it's winter, Emily?

Hello, *Betty Bergsma*. It's nice to hear from you again. Thank you for a very nice poem. Maybe you will send us some more poetry sometime, Betty? Bye for now.

Thanks for your poem, too, *Debbie Jagt*. And your word search. I see you've been keeping busy. Keep up the good work! Write again soon.

Hello to you, too, *Aimee Jagt*. You've been a real Busy Beaver, too, I see. Good for you! How do you like winter, Aimee? Are you looking forward to snow fun during the holidays? Bye for now, Aimee.



Brownie

KITTENS

by Busy Beaver

Mary-Lynn DeBoer

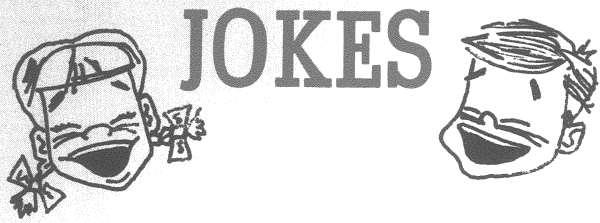


Sally

Twins

Suzanne





JOKES

First Twin: "Wow, it's cold! My feet are frozen and they're sticking out of the covers!"

Second Twin: "Quick! Pull them in!"

First Twin: "Oh, no! I'm not putting those cold things in bed with me!"

— from Busy Beaver *Sheila Wierenga*

Jill: "What's flat at the bottom, pointed at the top, and has ears?"

Bill: "I give up."

Jill: "A mountain."

Bill: "What happened to the ears?"

Jill: "Haven't you heard of mountaineers?"

— from Busy Beaver *Debby Jagt*

Busy Beaver *Jennifer Siebenga* says:

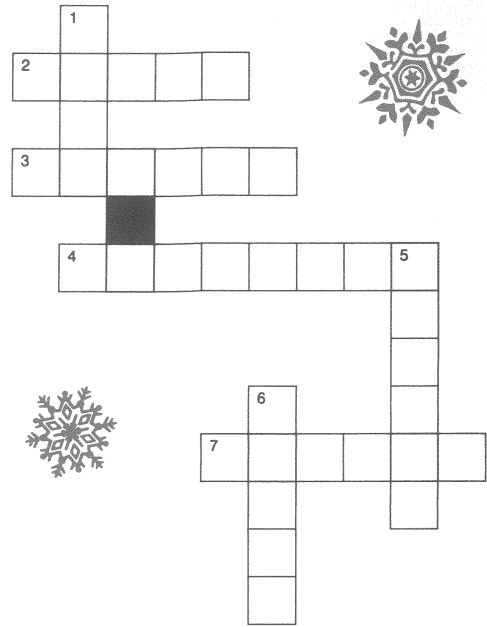
Make as many words as you can from these letters:

_____	C	T	L	_____
_____		Q		_____
_____	A	M		_____
_____	U	E		_____
_____		P		_____
_____	R	B	H	_____

Have fun doing this!

COINS OF THE BIBLE

from Busy Beaver *Brenda DeBoer*



ACROSS

- The smallest piece of money among the Hebrews; worth a little more than 3 cents. _____ (Exodus 30:13)
- Silver or gold money piece; silver worth \$2,000, gold worth \$30,000. _____ (Matthew 18:24)
- Roman silver coin which was a day's wage for a labourer; worth 16 cents. _____ (Matthew 20:2)
- Brass coins; worth 1/4 cent _____ (Job 28:2)

DOWN

- A Jewish weight of silver; worth 32 cents. _____ (Exodus 38: 26)
- Most used in the Hebrew history; gold worth \$9.60, silver worth 64 cents. _____ (I Chronicles 21:25)
- The Greek mina; worth \$16.00. _____ (Luke 19:24)



WORD FUN

by Busy Beaver *Terri-Lynn Schulenberg*

Unscramble these words!

- | | | | |
|-----------|-------|-------------|-------|
| 1. aedr | _____ | 6. shreo | _____ |
| 2. cpneli | _____ | 7. wstihc | _____ |
| 3. cbyowo | _____ | 8. bcouapdr | _____ |
| 4. kolcc | _____ | 9. tpuicre | _____ |
| 5. btibra | _____ | 10. apitn | _____ |

(Answers below)



CODE QUIZ

by Busy Beaver *Linda Van Sydenborgh*

1-I	7-O
2-L	8-W
3-K	9-N
4-E	10-D
6-S	11-Y
	12-U



$\frac{1}{6}$ $\frac{2}{9}$ $\frac{1}{7}$ $\frac{3}{8}$ $\frac{4}{10}$ $\frac{7}{7}$
 $\frac{11}{7}$ $\frac{12}{12}$?

Answers to WORD FUN:

1. dear 2. pencil 3. cowboy 4. clock 5. rabbit 6. horse 7. switch 8. cupboard 9. picture 10. paint.

January is almost here!
 Let's join in wishing all the Busy Beavers celebrating their birthday in January a very happy day. Here's hoping you have a really good time with your family and friends. And may the Lord guide and keep you all in the year ahead.

JANUARY

Susan Helder	3
Lois Helder	4
Vicki Roodzant	6
Jennifer Clark	8
Alan Van Raalte	8
Hinrik Nap	10
Teena Buzeman	11
Michael John Mans	11
Merika Linde	13
Marjorie Barendregt	14
Julie Stieva	14
Rita Wubs	14
Carl De Boer	15
Shelleen Bos	18
Cornelius Leffers	18
Sylvia Sikkema	23
Mary-Lynn De Boer	24
Bernard Breukelman	26
Krista Ellens	28
Carol Witteveen	31

Dear Busy Beavers, I wish you all a Joyous Christmas and a very happy holiday from school!

Send in your quiz very soon, all right?

Bye for now. Hope to "see" you all next year!

With much love from your
 Aunt Betty

