



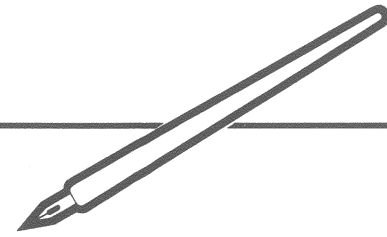
# Clarion

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## Should the sick have the Lord's Supper at home?

I received this question from a member in one of our congregations. I have been asked this before. I can understand the problem. Older brothers and sisters who are physically very weak, or members who have to cope with a lengthy illness, and therefore cannot attend the worship services, miss not only their health but also those services including the use of the sacraments. And while a tape can bring the church service with the preaching of God's Word into the sickroom, it cannot present bread and wine to the ailing. Handicapped members can truly feel this as a loss. And therefore there is the question: can the Lord's Supper not be administered to them at home? Do they not especially need the strengthening of their faith in their affliction?

### Historical data

Justinus Martyr, who lived in the second century, writes that in his days the elements of the Lord's Supper were brought to the sick at their homes. And the Council of Nicea recommended that this sacrament be administered to the terminally ill. This decision led to the Roman custom of administering the host (the bread that was changed into the body of Christ) to the dying. The background of this custom is the doctrine that the sacrament is the vehicle of grace and is indispensable for salvation. Besides, the Roman doctrine says that the priest, placing the host upon the altar, offers the sacrifice of Christ to God for the forgiveness of the sins of the believers.

Probably because of the Roman doctrine and practice, Luther rejected the administration of the Lord's Supper to the sick at their homes altogether. However, the Lutheran Churches did not follow him. They have always had the custom of bringing bread and wine to the ailing.

In the Reformed Churches there has been a difference of opinion. Dr. H. Bouwman writes in *Gereformeerd Kerkrecht* (Reformed Church Polity), Vol. II, pp. 394ff., that Calvin administered the sacrament to the sick at their homes in Straszbourg, but that this was not the custom in Geneva. Writing to Olevianus, in Heidelberg, in a positive way about the administration of the sacrament to the sick at their homes for the strengthening of their faith, Calvin, then, also said, "You know that the Church at Geneva has a different custom. I am content with it. I don't consider it good to contend on this point. Those theologians who are of the opinion that the administration of the Lord's Supper to the sick does not correspond with the commandment of the Lord, argue that the Holy Supper has been instituted as a holy meal in order that the believers might be nourished by it together as a communion. And I quite willingly admit to the truth of this statement." Calvin also wrote that such an ad-

ministration at home should take place only seldom and as an exception.

Reformed Churches in England, Scotland, Poland and Hungary were on the side of Calvin. But the churches in France and Holland were not. The General Synod of Middelburg, 1581, had to deal with this question whether the Lord's Supper could be administered to the sick at their homes, "especially when some form of church (i.e. part of the congregation and the consistory) would be gathered together there." The answer was, "No; the sacraments shall not be administered except in the normal gathering, at the place where the congregation ordinarily meets together." (Question 52) It must be admitted that Question 81 speaks about the problem of what the minister must do in churches that have the custom of administering the Lord's Supper to the sick at their homes, or celebrate at two different times. Must such a minister always take part in the supper? The answer was positive. This means, that although the synod spoke against it, it did not condemn the practice.

In our century Synod Utrecht 1923 of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands dealt with the same question again and formulated a number of conditions for the celebration at home. However, Synod Middleburg 1933 pronounced "that it is not desirable to introduce the communion for the sick as an ecclesiastical custom."

Dr. F.L. Ruthers, the teacher of Reformed Church Polity in the Reformed Churches of the Doleantie writes about the same question in his *Kerkelijke Adviezen* (Advice for Church Life), Vol. II, pp. 184ff. According to him the celebration of the Holy Supper privately at home by the sick is not good and should not happen; neither should this celebration take place at conferences. It belongs in the worship service of the congregation. That was his advice.

### The Church Order

The Synod of Dort, 1618/1619, determined in Article 62 of the Church Order which it adopted, that, after the sermon and the general prayers "on the pulpit" were finished, the Form for the Lord's Supper and the prayer connected with it had to be read at the table. This article clearly speaks of a celebration only in the public worship service of the congregation.

When the Synod of Utrecht, 1905, revised the Church Order, Article 64 was formulated as we find it in the English translation on p. 124 of the Acts of Synod Orangeville 1968, "The administration of the Lord's Supper shall take place only where there is supervision of elders, according to the ecclesiastical order and in a public gathering of the congregation."

In our Church Order, as revised and adopted by Synod

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Cloverdale 1983, Article 56 speaks about the administration of both sacraments and says, "The sacraments shall be administered only under the authority of the consistory, in a public worship service, by a minister of the Word, with the use of the adopted Forms."

Our conclusion must be that our Church Order does not allow for a celebration of the Lord's Supper in a private home or elsewhere, and that this is in line with the history of the Dutch Reformed Churches. We restrict the celebration of the sacraments to the public worship service of the congregation.

### Calvin on private masses

In fact, this is actually in line with the thinking of Calvin, even though, by way of exception, he allowed for such a celebration at home for the sake of the strengthening of the faith of the weak or sick person. Also for Calvin the rule is the celebration in the midst of the congregation. We see this for example, in book IV, Ch. XVIII, 8, of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Translation of Ford Lewis Battles, edited by John T. McNeill, p. 1436. Here Calvin writes against the Roman "private masses." He means with the Roman private mass a mass in which only the priest acts and eats, while the people do not have to be present and do not take part in the communion.

Calvin writes, "I say that private masses are diametrically opposed to Christ's institution, and are for that reason an impious profaning of the Sacred Supper. For what has the Lord bidden us? Is it not to take and divide among us? Luke 22:17. What kind of observance of the command does Paul teach? Is it not the breaking of bread, which is the communion of body and blood? I Corinthians 10:16. When, therefore, one person receives it without sharing, what similarity is there? But that one man, they say, does it in the name of the whole church. By what command? Is this not openly to mock God, when one person privately seizes for himself what ought to have been done only among many? But because Christ's and Paul's words are clear enough, we may briefly conclude that wherever there is not this *breaking of bread for the communion of believers* (italics added), it is not the Lord's Supper, but a false and preposterous imitation of it. But a false imitation is a corruption."

Now the Roman "private mass" differs completely from the celebration of the Lord's Supper by the sick at home. Yet, the argument of Calvin is that the celebration of the Lord's Supper is a matter of sharing; and this is basically the sharing by the congregation as one body. This is also the reason why the Reformed Churches bind the celebration of the Holy Supper to the worship service of the congregation. Therefore, when our churches go a step further than Calvin, the argument is fully in line with Calvin's thinking regarding sacrament, congregation and worship service as belonging together. And this, in turn, is based on what Paul writes in I Corinthians 10:14-22, where we have a clear connection between worship, Lord's Supper and congregation as one body, one communion. We find the same three elements also together in I Corinthians 11:17-34, and probably in Acts 20:7.

### Must those who suffer already, suffer more?

Now it can be said, that in this way we deprive the weak and sick among us of something that God has given to the church with the intention to strengthen faith. Is this really true?

Do our churches deprive some members of the strengthening of their faith?

In the first place, the table of communion in the midst of the congregation cannot be held or substituted for in a private home. Congregational communion at one table remains missing.

But what about the strengthening of faith through the sacrament? Should that not be an important argument for us, as it was for Calvin, to allow for a "private" celebration? The reply of Dr. Rutgers on this point is the following: "Receiving and enjoying God's grace is not bound to the sacrament. In case a person is able to attend, but does not do so out of negligence and indifference, he will do spiritual damage to himself. But this damage will certainly not be there when a person is not able to go to church; when God Himself places this inability in the form of physical weakness on the way of a sick person."

We can add to this that the use of the sacraments is not restricted to the moment in which baptism or the Lord's Supper is administered. This is evident with baptism. The believer can, and will, use his baptism during his whole life, even though he received this sacrament only once, and often in his infancy. In the struggle of faith he can, and will, constantly fall back on that baptism, and say, "I was baptized; God sealed His covenant promises to me; I can fully trust that these promises are certain, and that I can rely upon them; God does not lie; in Christ salvation is sure for me; that is what God confirms and assures me in my baptism." In this way the strengthening of faith through that one time baptism can never be taken away from the believers.

It is the same with the Lord's Supper. Using this sacrament for the strengthening of faith is not confined to the moment of celebration during the worship service. Also the next day, and the week after, and a month later, and so on, the believer still can use this sacrament, like his baptism, for the confirmation and strengthening of his faith. In his afflictions he can continue to remind himself that, e.g., a month ago, or a year ago, he ate the bread and drank from the cup as sure pledges of the Lord, and that the promises of forgiveness of sin and of renewal of life are as certainly for him as he ate and drank the bread and the wine as signs and seals of the body and blood of the Lord.

Not being able to go to the worship services of the congregation is a loss. There is no doubt about that. And so is losing the direct participation in the sacraments. But when our older and sick brothers and sisters, who are not able to come to church, keep what is said above in mind, and many do, they will continue to use their baptism for the strengthening of their faith, and when the congregation comes together to celebrate the Lord's Supper, they will be present in the spirit and tell themselves: the promises of God, signed and sealed to the congregation today, are certainly also for me, even though I cannot physically attend. And let them be assured, God will take care that His blessing and the joy in Christ as Saviour will not be taken away from, nor missed by, believing older and sick brothers and sisters. That one sacrament, the sign and seal itself, may be missing, but not the grace that is signified and sealed. Our God is faithful, especially to the afflicted who cry to Him.

J. GEERTSEMA

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# Adoption<sub>1</sub>

## 1. The basic question

Some people have asked me to publish a few articles on adoption. This issue has been under discussion in our sister churches in The Netherlands for the last several decades. Decisions have been made by general synods and still the matter is under discussion. The Canadian Reformed Churches, as far as I am aware, have never made a decision in this respect.

In our sister churches in The Netherlands all decisions of general synods since 1892 are considered to be settled and binding, as long as they have not been revoked or changed by a later synod. Although decisions of general synods in The Netherlands are not binding for the Canadian Reformed Churches, still in cases in which no explicit decision has been made by one of our own synods, most people go by what has been decided in the Old Country. With respect to baptism of adopted children we have a case in point. I have never heard that a consistory denied a request to baptize or acted in any way different from the churches at the other side of the ocean in this respect.

It is worthwhile to note that there has been a certain development and shift in the discussion about this issue. First, all the attention was focused primarily on the question whether adopted children could be baptized. Slowly, but very clearly, the point has become whether adoption, as such, is acceptable. The question of baptism does not cause a real problem, at least not with those who have an adopted child. Those who use the possibility of adoption, and in general those who are in favour of using this option, are usually of the opinion that adopted children ought to be baptized. Those who are against the baptism of adopted children are in most cases also against adoption per se. They will never adopt a child and they feel that the whole idea of legal adoption goes too far. They prefer not to go farther than a foster parent relationship in cases in which a child has to be placed in another family.

Because of this development in the discussion and this crystalization of opinions, we will deal in this article with the



adoption as such, and for the time being leave the question of baptism out of the picture.

We will focus on adoption as such, because not every case is the same. There are certainly situations in which an adoption should not be recommended. There are sometimes wrong motives, on the part of those who give up a child for adoption as well as on the part of those who want to adopt a child. There are also situations in which adoption is the most preferable solution. That is why we want to deal with adoption, apart from the question of baptism.

## 2. A compassionate emergency measure

Different general synods in The Netherlands have busied themselves with questions concerning adoption. In a study report of Deputies at General Synod Amersfoort-West 1966/67 adoption was called "a compassionate emergency measure in a sinful world." (Dutch: een barmhartige noodmaatregel in een zondige wereld, Acts p. 377.)

After lengthy discussions on different aspects of adoption the report comes to the conclusion that "the Lord opens two ways for responsible parenthood and the

constitution of a covenant family namely:

1. the ordinary way (flesh and blood);
2. in a few cases the extraordinary way of parental compassion (adoption).

Both ways are governed by His royal good pleasure." (Acts p. 381)

In a report of an advisory committee at the same synod we read: "If there is no longer any prospect of a proper functioning of the relationship between parent and child and the unmistakable interest of the child requires a compassionate measure, no objection can be made if the possibility of adoption is utilized. In such a case we are allowed to say that the child, under the guidance of God's providence, has been placed in the foster family." (Acts p. 508)

These statements of general synod were discussed extensively for a number of years. A final decision was made by General Synod Hattem 1972. With respect to the question whether it is correct to use the "Adoption Act 1956" for the purpose of adoption synod decided:

1. That no valid grounds have been brought forward for a general statement that believers are not allowed to make use of the "Adoption Act."

2. That, if believers submit themselves to the wisdom of the Word of God, they do not have to face any impediment to utilize the "Adoption Act."

We have to note how carefully synod formulated its statements. It does not say that adoption is *always* the right way to deal with the problem of a child. It does not justify *every* case of adoption. It only says that no grounds have been brought forward for a *general* rejection of every form of adoption. It says that the "Adoption Act" *can* be used in the *correct* way. This does not justify or deny the many cases of misuse or abuse of the law in this respect.

To understand the crux of the matter it is important to realize what the alternative to adoption is. Adoption means that the child legally becomes a member of the adopting family. All ties with the natural parents are terminated and the child receives all the rights of a member of the new family, including the name and the right of inheritance.

The alternative to adoption is fostering. A foster child does not legally become a member of the family. There is no legal relationship between the child and the foster parents. In some cases, especially with orphans, the foster parents may be given the guardianship over the child, but that is not necessarily the case. A foster child can easily be moved from one foster home to another, if the guardian wishes to do so; or the child can be brought back to the natural parents. In the case of adoption the child becomes a legal child of the adoptive parents. There are only a few, very restricted possibilities to revoke the adoption and that is always up to the courts.

Because adoption is such an extreme measure, with such far-reaching consequences, we will have a closer look at the different implications of it. In which type of situation is adoption acceptable? What should be the motives of parents to give up a child for adoption? What should be the motives of the adoptive parents? There certainly can be wrong motives for adoption on both sides, with the natural parents as well as with the adoptive parents. There are situations in which adoption should not be recommended. In what follows we will try to analyze the circumstances.

### 3. The unmistakable interest of the child

In the previous section we saw how general synod emphasized that the unmistakable interest of the child has to be the keynote in all decisions concerning adoption. Although this may sound obvious, it is too often forgotten or ignored by people who have to deal with the practical cases of adoption.

Many bad feelings with respect to adoption and many protests are caused by people who use invalid arguments for adoption. Why do people want to adopt a child? It is not always in the unmistakable interest of the child. Some want to adopt a

child to fill an empty place in their life. Others want to satisfy their desire to have a nice family, to have someone to look after and to keep them busy, while still others want to adopt a child because they hope it brings the joy and happiness into their life which they could not achieve without a child. In all these cases it is not to show compassion for the child, but to satisfy one's own desires. In such cases the child might not give the desired "reward." To adopt a child requires self-denial and great sacrifices. It often brings unexpected problems and disappointments. If the motive for adoption was the fulfillment of one's own desires, the disappointment might be so great that the adoptive parents give up the child and that he is again moved to another home.

Especially in countries where not enough legal protection against wrong adoption procedures is provided, there are terrible examples of the shuffling around of children in an unacceptable way.

Adoptive parents should realize before they start any action, that they have to be prepared to do it only for the unmistakable benefit of the child. They have to be prepared to bring sacrifices, to cope with unexpected problems, and to face disappointments. In many cases the child turns out to be quite different than they had expected.

Natural parents sometimes recognize their own character weaknesses in their children, although often they are in for a surprise; no two children are the same. Even the best mannered parents

can have ill-mannered children. Character and behaviour of the parents is not always reflected in the children, although some traits of character, either good or bad, are often found back in the children. In most cases of adoption the adoptive parents do not even know who the natural parents are, let alone that they can relate good or bad characteristics to the parents. There are many cases in which almost insurmountable problems arise when the children grow up. That can cause frustration and disappointment and it can become a matter of great concern. Adoptive parents have to be prepared to face such situations. If they do not begin the whole undertaking out of compassion for the child, they will not be able to cope with such situations.

It is perfectly clear that family circumstances can be a contributing factor in the decision to adopt. A couple without children, knowing that they cannot have children of their own, will sooner consider adoption than a couple with a fast growing family. It is also true that adopted children can bring, and have brought, happiness, joy, and the fulfillment of a dream in families without children. It can be very rewarding and it can give great satisfaction. However, that should never be the main reason for adoption. If compassion for the child is the aim, the parents will be able to cope with the problems and disappointments, and finally find satisfaction and a due reward.

— *To be continued*  
W. POUWELSE



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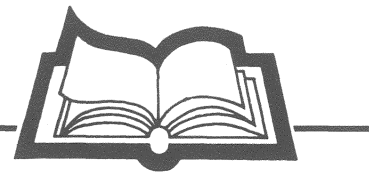
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“... for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.” James 1:24

## Mirror, Mirror

Undoubtedly you have more than once looked at yourself in a mirror. Probably in the morning, before going to work or beginning the day, you wash, shave, groom, and take one last look before continuing on. You give yourself a solid, appraising glance and feel confident to face the day. Some people spend very little time in front of a mirror; others have the habit of admiring themselves at length. You know how it goes.

We read here about the first group; those who take a quick look, are easily satisfied, and do not worry much about their outward appearance. James compares such a person to someone who is a *hearer* but not a *doer* of the Word. And this is a rather remarkable comparison.

There are people who listen to the Word of God every day. They read it, for example, at the supper table in daily devotions, and they hear it every Sunday preached to them in church. The Word is a regular part of their daily routine, just as the mirror is, and they would not think of passing it by. But now the point of the comparison: they do not really spend very much time with the Word of God or reflect on it in depth. They feel that someone is born with a certain face which cannot really be changed. They spend a few brief and compulsory moments with the Word of God, and then quickly move on to other, more important things. The Word does not really make an *impression* on them. They are as they are, with a set pattern of life which will not admit to any change. Customarily they take a peek into the mirror of the Word, and then hastily proceed to the order of the day.

The Word of God is compared here to a *mirror*. Why? Because the Word of God gives us a clear picture of who and how we are! In a mirror we see “our natural face” (v. 23). But in the Scriptures we also see our true nature; we are confronted with our sinfulness and sins. The same Word shows us where and how we are to be changed by faith and repentance. So, in the Word of God, as in a mirror, we see a true reflection of ourselves. Even more than in a mirror, in the Word of God we do not get a distorted, but an accurate picture of ourselves. For the Word does not lie.

But, just as there are those who hardly bother to look in the mirror to check their appearance, so there are those who have wrongly accustomed themselves to the Word of God. They cast a fleeting glance upon their sinful life, and may even detect a few wrinkles here and there, but they are easily reassured in themselves. The Scriptural portrait of their sinfulness does not impress them anymore — they’ve heard it so often — and their sins do not bother them very much. The daily reading of the Word of God becomes a mechanical activity without real effect. So they are still “hearers,” but no longer “doers” of the Word.

Perhaps you know that people who have never had a mir-

ror and who for the first time look in one, get quite a scare when they are confronted with themselves. There are stories about natives who fled in fright when traders gave them small mirrors as presents or barter. These natives were at first scared of their own image, but with amazement they would come back to look at the mirror again. Soon these mirrors became prized possessions, and the natives would admire themselves for hours on end. After a while, however, they became accustomed to them, and the mirror became a devaluated commodity.

How do we look at ourselves in the mirror of God’s Word? Are we satisfied with a quick, superficial glance, or do we really take a long, hard look at ourselves? Do we truly listen when the Word of God opens up our lives and shows us our sins? Do we then resolve to change our life in accordance with God’s will, or do we shrug our shoulders and just continue as we were doing? How often do we on Sundays admit that we heard a good sermon and yet have no intention of carrying out the Word that was preached? A “hearer” merely listens; a “doer” always *acts*.

We should never get used to the real picture of our sinfulness which the Word of God gives us. Or to say it differently, we should never make a compromise with our sinful nature. But we should take a good look at ourselves every day in the true mirror of God’s holy Word. We should never forget our “real face” shown to us in the Scriptures.

We have two kinds of mirrors at home. One is found in the bathroom, bedroom or hall. We do not have to spend so much time looking at that mirror. But we must take time for the *other* mirror, the Word of God, and look closely at our life as reflected in the Scriptures. Otherwise we might get and give a wrong impression of ourselves. We might forget what we *must* be in Christ Jesus. We should not use false make-up to hide our sins, but we must confess our sins sincerely before God, repent every day from the heart, and seek renewal of life.

There is a danger that we who grow up with the Word of God become accustomed to it in the wrong way. That we who know of our sinfulness, start to live with our sins. We can easily flatter ourselves with a false image, by thinking little of our sins and highly of ourselves, forgetting who we really are.

The great danger here is: if we do not see ourselves for what we really are in the mirror of God’s Word, we will not see the wondrous grace which God has shown us in Jesus Christ. Whoever does not see his sins, also has no eye for his Saviour. Whoever does not see his own weakness, will not pray for the Spirit of God.

Our manner of going about with the Word of God determines our whole life as children of God.

CL. STAM

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# The doctrine of the church in Reformed confessions<sup>1</sup>

## I. Significance

The topic of the doctrine of the church in Reformed confessions is a timely one. If we ponder the *significance* of this issue, we think of the famous characterization of the twentieth century by Otto Dibelius who, already in 1926, called this century “das Jahrhundert der Kirche,” the age of the church. If one sketches the development of the Roman Catholic doctrine, one finds as its apex the first and second Vatican Councils with the dogmas of the primacy and infallibility of the pope (1870), and of the sacramentality and collegiality of the office of the bishops (1964), dogmas concerning the church of Christ. The dogmatic constitution *Lumen Gentium* is called the Magna Charta of Vaticanum II. Its chapters, e.g., about the mystery of the church, the people of God and the hierarchical structure of Christ’s Church, are the basis of the decree on ecumenism *Unitatis redintegratio*, promulgated on the same day as the dogmatic constitution concerning the church, Nov. 21, 1964.

By its statements and actions, Rome attempts to grasp the lead in the ecumenical movement of the twentieth century. On the other hand, there is the World Council of Churches with its Faith and Order Paper, entitled *Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry*, the so-called Lima document of 1982. This document, fruit of study and discussion during almost fifty years since Lausanne 1927, shows the basic agreement in ecclesiology — the doctrine of the church — among the members of the World Council, and works towards visible unity. It is now in the process of being received by those member churches and it requires a response from truly Reformed and Presbyterian Churches.

Apart from this development in the Roman Catholic Church and the World Council, the contacts that some of us had in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod, and all of us now entertain within this International Conference of Reformed Churches, ask for ecclesiological clarity; clarity in the doctrine of the church.

One would almost be inclined to speculate somewhat about the history of the

church and the development of its dogma. In the first centuries the confession of the triune God was at stake and especially the work of the *Father* in creation — over against gnosticism. In the sixteenth century, the dominant issue was the work of the *Son* in redemption and its perfection and absoluteness — over against Roman Catholicism. And now the church is engaged in a struggle to understand better the Word of God concerning the work of the *Holy Spirit* in sanctification. Of foremost importance in this broad primatological context — “I believe in the Holy Spirit” — is the confession concerning the holy catholic church, the communion of saints. We have arrived at the struggle concerning the third part of the Apostles’ Creed, over against false ecumenicity. It has been said that the struggle regarding the doctrine of the church will be the fiercest, because it is based in the trinitarian dogma and deals with the communion. The conflict concerning the communion can only end in a definitive separation and therefore the end of this antithesis will coincide with the appearance of the Antichrist.

## II. Scope and division of the Reformed confessions

In this eschatological light, of a generation upon which the end of the ages has come, we now look at the doctrine of the church in the Reformed confessions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. For, although in this twentieth century we may have arrived at the period of a further and decisive development of the third part of the creeds of the early church, we should not forget that already in the time of the Reformation the doctrine of the church had to be refined. We cannot now elaborate on the scope or the characteristics of the Reformed confessions in general. Let it suffice that I characterize them in a fourfold manner: they are Scriptural, catholic, anti-Romanist, and anti-spiritualist. *Thematically* speaking they are Scriptural and catholic, for they intend to speak obediently, following Holy Scripture as the only rule of faith and they stress

the continuity of the church of all ages. *Antithetically* speaking they reject Romanist doctrine, church government and ecclesiastical practices, which rejection is a specific characteristic of the doctrine of the church in the Reformed confessions. They also oppose spiritualism, especially as it had become manifest in the Anabaptist movement. Also in this antithetical context, there is a remarkable parallel with, e.g., Augustine’s struggle against Donatism and this reflects not only upon the Reformed doctrine of the sacraments — especially baptism — but also upon the doctrine of the church. So the Scriptural and catholic character of the Reformed confessions is evident also in their anti-Romanist and anti-spiritualist tendency.

In their Scriptural, catholic, anti-Romanist and anti-spiritualist nature or scope, the Reformed confessions show a remarkable unity and harmony, although there are many variations in the manner of expression and even some discrepancies. In the various confessions there is unity of faith also with respect to the doctrine of the church.

## III. Division

When we now come to survey and a division of the Reformed confessions, we must mention the twentieth century German collections of E.F.K. Müller, Wilhelm Niesel, Paul Jacobs and the English collection of Arthur C. Cochrane *Reformed Confessions of the 16th Century*, complimented by the catechisms employed by the Church of Scotland since the Reformation, and edited by Thomas F. Torrance under the title *The School of Faith*.

There is quite a variety in the selection and the number of documents collected. Müller gives fifty-eight, Niesel fifteen; and they have only six in common: four confessions — the French, Scottish, Belgian and Second Helvetic Confession — and two catechisms — the Geneva Catechism and the Heidelberg Catechism. Five of these documents are also found in Jacobs; but he does not republish the Heidelberg Catechism. It is noteworthy that neither

Wilhelm Niesel or Paul Jacobs pay any attention to the Westminster Standards. Although Arthur Cochrane prints twelve confessions, he restricted himself to the sixteenth century and therefore omitted the Westminster Confession.

One of the results of this sorry state of affairs is to be seen in the most elaborate study of our topic. Under the direction of Hans Küng, the Roman Catholic scholar Benno Gassmann wrote a doctoral thesis entitled *Ecclesia Reformata: Die Kirche in den reformierten Bekenntnisschriften* (The Church in the Reformed Confessions, Frieburg: Herder, 1968). He utilized for his extensive study, eighteen documents, namely, thirty-three from the sixteenth century, seven from the seventeenth century, five from the nineteenth, and three from the twentieth century. But again, he restricted himself to the continent of Europe, and excluded, therefore, also the Westminster Standards, and is, thus, less serviceable for our purpose in this international conference of Reformed and Presbyterian Churches.

If, in the line of Gassmann, I try to give a division of the Reformed confessions, I would divide them into five periods:

There is the period of *the first reflection and consolidation*, in which period cities such as Zurich, Berne, Basel and Strazsburg are in the centre. At the beginning of this period stand Zwingli's Sixty-Seven Articles of 1523 and the Ten Theses of Berne (1528), and the end is formed by the First Helvetic Confession of 1536.

Then follows the period of *new orientation*. It is the period of Calvin with his Geneva Confession (1536) and Geneva Catechism (1541), and of Bullinger with his second Helvetic Confession (1562 or 1566).

In the meantime a third group of confessions arises: the confessions of the Reformed Churches *under the cross*: the French, Scottish and Belgic Confessions of Faith (1559, 1560, 1561).

The period of the *Second Reformation* brings us the Hungarian Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism (1563).

Then the last group is formed by the confessions of the *Reformed posterity*. To

this period belong the Canons of Dort and the Westminster Standards.

When, after this division, we now try to come to grips with the broad contents of Reformed confessions as far as the doctrine of the church is concerned, we could approach these groups of confessions in chronological order. Gassmann does so and he provides his readers with many details. I prefer to take a more synthetic approach and to show that the four characteristics of Reformed confessions in general also apply to their doctrine of the church in particular. This doctrine is a. Scriptural, b. catholic, c. anti-Romanist, and d. anti-spiritualist. Thereafter we could deal with two specific distinctions: e. the "visible" and the "invisible" church (in Reformed confessions), and f. the true and the false church (in Reformed confessions).

— To be continued  
J. FABER

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# Introduction to Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church

## Background information

The members of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church originally belonged to the Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church in Halifax. This latter church belonged to the Presbyterian Church in America. A few years earlier it had belonged to the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod, but this federation of churches joined and were received into the Presbyterian Church in America. We know this latter federation best because of its invitation to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church to join and be received into this same federation of the Presbyterian Church in America. The Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church in Halifax belonged to the Presbytery of Eastern Canada of the PCA.

Owing to doctrinal and church governmental differences six families and three ruling elders seceded from the Grace Reformed Presbyterian Church and from the Presbyterian Church in America. They have established the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church of Canada. It is located in Sackville, a suburban community just outside the Halifax-Dartmouth area.

## The controversy

From the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church (CORC) we received two "Position Papers" prepared by the session of the CORC. These position papers explain the controversy which resulted in the formation of the CORC. In short the controversy centered around the issues of the relation between saving faith and Holy Scripture, the induction of a pastor in Grace Church who was not perceived as Reformed, and the illegal suspension of elders.

There was a controversy in the Presbytery of Eastern Canada about the relation between saving faith and the need to believe all of Scripture. This issue came out clearly in the correspondence between Grace Church in Halifax and the elders who left that church. The Grace Church (PCA) took the position that a minister did not need to believe all of Scripture in order to be a Christian. They considered it un-Biblical to add any other requirement than faith in Jesus Christ (they used the Letter of Paul to the Galatians to defend this). Had Peter not denied

Jesus and yet been a good servant of the Word? And had Luther not rejected the Letter of James? The elders who left Grace Church refuted these obvious erroneous statements, defending the position that a man of God must cling to the whole Scripture. They elaborately denied the statements of the Grace PCA Church.

In September 1983 the Grace Church called a minister. With the informal approval of presbytery (via the telephone) he commenced his work in November 1983. It soon became evident that he was not Reformed but neo-evangelical in his perspective on Christian doctrine and life. Very quickly the congregation became divided through his ministry. In late February 1984 the presbytery met in Halifax. In the Presbyterian system of church government it is the responsibility of the presbytery to give the final decision on the calling, ordination or installation of a minister. The congregation was invited to attend and make known their views about his possible induction (the minister was still "on trial"). Fifty percent were in favour, forty percent against and ten percent



were uncertain or unwilling to state their views. In spite of this serious division in the congregation the presbytery voted in favour of his induction (installation, we would say). This occurred by a "Tie Vote," with the elders of Grace Church voting against the installation. However, the moderator cast the deciding vote in favour and the die was cast!

It was unacceptable to the members of CORC to remain saddled with a neo-evangelical minister. They had not left deforming and liberal denominations for that purpose!

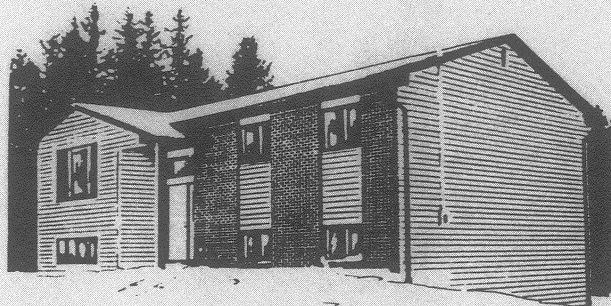
But a second problem became attached to this first one. Two days later the presbytery met again, in New Brunswick. No notice of this meeting had been sent to the elders who had protested against the induction of the minister for Grace Church. Yet at that meeting the presbytery decided to impose a sentence of indefinite suspension against these elders until they would "repent" of their objections to the minister. The elders were notified by mail of their suspension from office. The CORC session had amply explained from the *Book of Church Order* of the PCA that this action was illegal and must be rescinded so that the honour and office of the elders could be upheld. However, this was not forthcoming. Meanwhile, the dissenting members and elders formed the CORC. Since the elders were no longer members of the Grace Church or of the Presbytery of Eastern Canada of the PCA, they asked that their resignations be accepted. But this, too, was denied since there were charges pending against them. Indeed, the presbytery laid charges against two elders before the General Assembly. To defend these elders the CORC sent a second position paper to the PCA General Assembly. The doctrinal issues would thus possibly be considered at the broadest assembly! But this was not to be. The General Assembly of the PCA did not deal with the complaint of the elders, nor with the charges against the elders, because these elders had renounced the jurisdiction of the PCA, and the General Assembly advised the Presbytery of Eastern Canada to deal with them likewise and to acknowledge their resignations. But the presbytery chose to ignore the entire matter. Thus the resignations are still not accepted. Meanwhile, the doctrinal and church governmental questions have been neatly swept "under the rug."

These two position papers (56 and 15 pages respectively) reflect theological faithfulness and knowledge which has impressed the visitors. There is good Reformed discretion and insight into specific issues.

### Contacts

Personal contacts have led to con-

# COVENANT ORTHODOX REFORMED CHURCH OF CANADA



ADDRESS: Henry J. Moes, Clerk for Session of Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church  
Compartment 88, Lively Road  
RR 2, Lower Sackville, Nova Scotia B4C 2S7  
TELEPHONE: (902) 865-6360 or (902) 865-8868

sistorial involvement. The CORC asked for a visit in order to become better acquainted with the Canadian Reformed Churches, to discuss doctrinal issues which they consider to be of high priority, and to investigate the possibility of having them join the Federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.

Elder T.M.P. VanderVen and Rev. W. Huizinga were appointed by the Hamilton consistory to visit the CORC in conjunction with their visit to the Reformed Church in Blue Bell, PA. Since Rev. C. Bosch travelled with them to the Blue Bell Church, he also took an active part in the visit to Sackville. This made the picturesque journey of almost 2000 kilometers (one way to Halifax) most enjoyable. We were treated to Christian hospitality and generosity, making the trip memorable.

On June 20, 1985 we arrived at Lively Road, welcomed by "forerunners." In the evening we met the congregation. We introduced the Canadian Reformed Churches, giving an outline of our history, our confessions, and our church government.

After this we met an avalanche of questions, one leading to the next. They asked whether our assemblies made political decisions or statements (we quoted Art. 30 C.O.), how evangelism was practised, what term and duties the elders have, the position of the local church in relation to the assemblies, our relation with other churches, our stand on marriage and divorce, and our definition of a believer.

The next morning the visitors met with the four ruling elders. Our relation with other churches was made clear. They had no relations or contacts with other churches. They have no deacon owing to the shortage of manpower, and accordingly the elders assume this task as needed. The term of office for elders was thoroughly discussed. We read and explained Art. 24 of our Church Order. There is a minimum but no maximum placed on the term. Also, the circumstances of a small church could be considered. Some of them did not object to term eldership, but some preferred what they had practised for a long time. Another pressing issue was whether elders may also teach, preach, and administer the sacraments. They allow elders to do these things in the absence of a minister, founding their practise on such passages as I Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:9-16. Mind you, their elders only do these things in the absence of a minister.

To put the discussions into proper perspective, it was very encouraging that they were ready to adopt the Reformed confessions and church order with the on-

## OUR COVER

Nature scene (owl)

Photo courtesy:  
Government of Nova Scotia

ly exception being the term and duties of the elders. That in itself is very heartening.

We asked them to discuss among themselves what they would like to do, and what they would like us to do. Also, we invited them and their members to visit our churches during the summer vacations and to pay an official visit to us as soon as possible.

### Some statistics

CORC consists of a small group of believers with a wide, Biblical vision. They are only about 20-30 members strong. They enjoy good leadership in four elders: Dean Veinott, Ferenc Stephani, Henry Moes and Robert Odekirk. Worship services on Sundays are at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m., while Sunday School (instruction for all ages) is at 9:45 a.m. The members bought a four-acre property and cleared a portion of it to build a combination manse and meeting place. The rest of the property is kept in the hope and Christian dream that a Christian school might be built there in the future.

The members and adherents come from a variety of backgrounds (Reformed, Presbyterian and others) and from a number of countries (Scotland, England, Germany, The Netherlands and Hungary). The common denominator is a strong love for the historic Reformed faith and the desire to hear the whole counsel of God preached from the pulpit.

The confessional standards are the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards. One might say that they are Reformed in doctrine and Presbyterian in church government.

The four ruling elders are ordained for life. Each elder assumes the responsibility of taking turns in preparing and delivering sermons beside their other duties as elders. At the moment they are using sermons from our series, *Preach the Word*, and tapes of our church services for their evening church services. The church is still too small to call their own minister but they hope to do so in the near future.

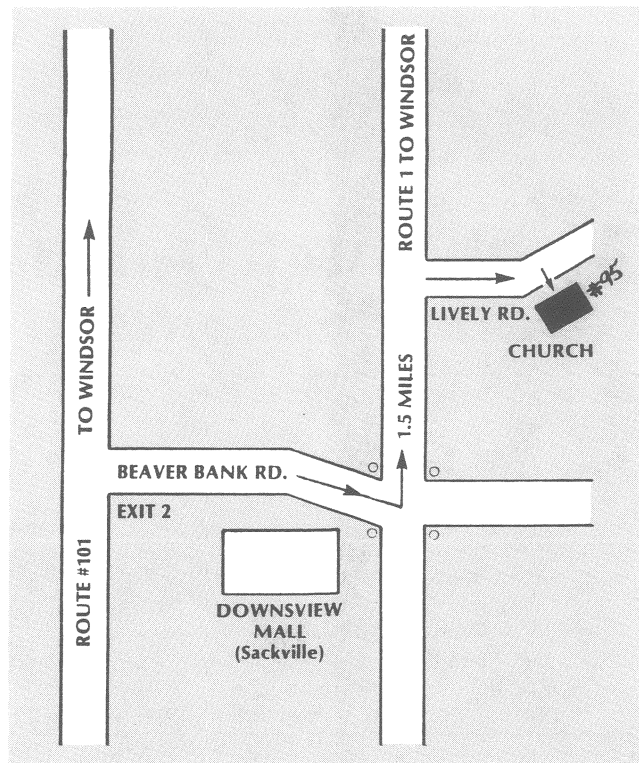
Covenant Church desires to affiliate with truly Reformed churches, knowing that independence is not the Biblical norm. However, since experience has taught them that all who call themselves Reformed are not always such, they practise caution in affiliating with another federation of churches.

### Progress report

In our correspondence with them they have addressed us with four questions to which we are busy preparing consistorial answers. It will be best to quote these questions:

"First, how would the Canadian Reformed Churches deal with us as life-ordained Elders especially in view of

*Directions to the  
Covenant Orthodox  
Reformed Church*



the fact that the Presbyterian tradition allows (in fact, encourages) Elders to exhort using their own original sermons? Second, we need more information on Reformed church government. Our Session is concerned about how the Canadian Reformed Churches maintain equality between the offices of minister and elder; how the ruling function of the office of elder is exercised and the extent of a consistory's authority over the minister. Third, we would appreciate a thorough explanation of the Canadian Reformed view of the Covenant. I am sure that you are well aware of the fact that the "Covenant" is not stressed within Presbyterian Churches. Fourth, does the Canadian Reformed Churches permit a formerly Presbyterian congregation which has joined its federation to continue using the Westminster Confession and Catechisms as doctrinal standards locally?"

Evaluating their position about the term and tasks of the elders is no mean task. Our churches have not struggled with these matters as the Presbyterians seem to have. More study on our part will be necessary, it seems, since we will be confronting Presbyterian church polity more often. Hopefully, the Head of the Church will be pleased to use such further study and discussion of these practical matters which the Covenant Church deems important. Dr. K. Deddens, who teaches church polity at our Theological College, has offered and given help to us in this respect. We hope to have an answer for them soon.

Their request for more information re the covenant and the covenantal understanding of the Scriptures falls into good soil. We will be most happy to comply with this request. Literature from Reformed authors has been sent to them to acquaint them with this. Our *Book of Praise*, *Directories* and *Acts of Synods* have been sent to them already. Also, we should mention that by reading sermons from our ministers they will gain more insight into the covenant and its implications for understanding the Bible and our position as covenant people.

The matter of confessional standards should be addressed squarely so that they know what to expect from us. It is our contention that in one church federation one set of standards instead of two is both preferable and necessary in order to avoid confusion and in order to build unity. Thus the Westminster Confession and Catechisms could be used for comparative purposes, but only the Three Forms of Unity should function as the standards.

In summary we have met a small but living church which actively confesses the faith once and for all delivered to the saints. It has zealously contended for this faith over against intruders. Now it seeks to affiliate with those who abide by the true faith, and who exhibit the marks of the true church. They do this with caution and with honesty, making sure that there is doctrinal unity based on God's infallible Word. This makes us eager to continue the contacts and to pray that our Lord Jesus Christ will bring us closer together.

W. HUIZINGA

# Twenty-fourth Annual Convention of the League of Canadian Reformed Women's Societies in Ontario

Its silvery spire high above the street, Grace United Church was easy to spot in downtown Brampton. It was the location of our Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention and generously accommodated all our convention activities with a cozy roominess.

The members of the Brampton Society "Struggle and Triumph" welcomed the crowd of 300 sisters of the Ontario Societies with coffee and goodies to refresh us from our morning's trip. This was accompanied, of course, by many cheery hellos and exchanges of news and greetings — It's always great to meet so many of the sisters from all over the province and even beyond!

By ten o'clock we were all assembled in the beautiful sanctuary of the church. Surrounded, literally, by the very ornate balcony and wonderfully colourful stained glass windows depicting Biblical scenes, we felt our surroundings reflecting something of the special feeling that League Day always brings. This special feeling soon found expression in our singing of Psalm 150 accompanied on the piano by Mrs. Vander Wal. Our president, Mrs. Lynn Van Delden then read Revelation 22 from Scripture and led in prayer. She heartily welcomed all present and introduced the theme of the day "Maranatha! The Spirit and the Bride say, "Come, Lord Jesus." The day's topics, "The Holy Spirit as We Confess Him in the Three Forms of Unity" and "The Visions of Daniel" would elaborate on this theme, the president said. Recalling last year's topics of "The Role of Women in the Church" and "Living in the Covenant Today," Mrs. Van Delden noted that although these topics were very different, the line and the goal of what we want to achieve is the same. This year as well as last year we look for inspiration and encouragement to live toward the glorious coming of our Lord.

On being introduced by our president, Rev. Purdy of Grace United Church welcomed us to Brampton and to "his" church, and wished us a rewarding day. He then explained a bit of the history of the church which began in 1822 as a mission. In 1867,



*Rev. G.B. Nederveen, speaker; Mrs. L. Van Delden, president of the League Board*

the year of Confederation, the sanctuary was built and in 1920 the pipe organ was added in memory of World War I servicemen. The Christian education building was later added. Rev. Purdy concluded by saying, "We are grateful that we may contribute to your upbuilding."

Mrs. Fransen, delegate from the Women's Society at Wageningen in Holland, brought greetings and congratulations and wished us a good meeting in the unity of the true faith.

Mrs. Van Delden then introduced Mrs. A. Nobel who had been elected recording secretary at the Delegates' Meeting the previous evening. The president read a thank-you letter from "Anchor" for last year's collection, and also a letter of congratulations from the Dutch Vrouwenbond expressing their best wishes for our convention. Next year, it was announced, our Twenty-Fifth Annual Convention will be held, D.V., at Burlington East. After sever-

al more business announcements, roll call was held. A special welcome was extended to our many special guests from as far away as Australia and Irian Jaya! As is our custom at the conclusion of League business, we joined in singing our League Song.

Now we were ready to start the main part of our morning program. Mrs. Gerda Godschalk's essay on the topic "The Holy Spirit." In preparation we read from Galatians 5. Then the essayist read her introduction in which she first showed from our creeds and the Three Forms of Unity the place and relationship of the Holy Spirit to the Trinity. Whereas some teach that the Holy Spirit is a power, not a person, Mrs. Godschalk showed that Scripture clearly reveals the Holy Spirit as a person with personal traits and a specific task within the Trinity. The essayist traced the development of teaching and thought concerning the Holy Spirit throughout church



Mrs. L. VanDelden, president of the League Board; Mrs. G. Godschalk from Brampton, essayist

history, and explained how some of the heresies of earlier times are continued and repeated in various sects and movements today. The work of the Holy Spirit, Mrs. Godschalk explained, began already at Creation and continued through the Old Dispensation. The greatest miracle in history, she said, the incarnation of our Saviour, was through the working of the Holy Spirit. And since Pentecost, the Holy Spirit having been poured out over the church, makes believers partakers of all they have in Christ.

After singing from Hymn 36, the discussion of the morning's essay was opened. And a lively discussion it was, touching on many different aspects of the person and work of the Holy Spirit. A collection was held for the Home Mission work at Smithers, BC. Collected was \$475.59. Singing Hymn 50 concluded the morning's program.

A hearty, traditional League Day lunch was served by the hosting Society and of course we enjoyed lots of chatter. The InterLeague Publication Board book table in the church lobby also attracted lots of attention.

Soon enough it was time for the afternoon session which was opened with the singing of our national anthem. For our entertainment (and exercise!) the Brampton sisters had contrived a very amusing game complete with modern costumes.

Singing from Psalm 75 and reading from Daniel 7 followed. Mrs. Van Delden then gave the floor to Rev. G. Nederveen, pastor of the hosting congregation, for his speech on the topic "Visions of Daniel." First of all Rev. Nederveen distinguished between dreams and visions, pointing out that not all visions are dreams, since Daniel was awake during some of his visions. Then the speaker showed that the purpose of the visions was God's revelation which was faithfully recorded for God's people since the visionary was so completely involved in the vision that he never forgot any detail of it, and what God revealed to him stayed with him for life. Indeed Daniel tells us that he had been so overwhelmed, by one of his visions that he "was overcome and lay sick for some days." These symbolic revelations of what was/is to happen were given by God as

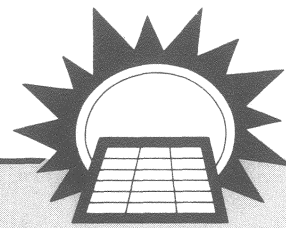
a means of comfort to His people. Rev. Nederveen described and explained the visions of the four animals arising from the sea, the ram and the he-goat, the seventy sevens (weeks) and Daniel's great vision of Chapters 11 and 12. What is the relationship between the visions Daniel records? Sometimes different symbols stand for the same things, for example, in Nebuchadnezzar's dreams the kingdoms are represented by different metals whereas in Daniel's vision the kingdoms are beasts arising from the sea. Daniel's later visions concentrate on the end times. As for the interpretation of these visions the speaker briefly explained how Daniel in his visions saw the first coming of Christ, the "Son of Man" while John on Patmos, in visions in many ways paralleling those of Daniel, saw the second coming of Christ. Both these men foretold how earthly powers would blaspheme God, "wear out" the saints by persecution, exchange the laws of God for a new morality, but in a final confrontation would have to bow before the dominion of Christ. Jesus, in Matthew 24, points to Daniel's prophecy as foretelling the end times. Rev. Nederveen's whole speech showed us how as Christians we should be sober and aware, and yet we have the glorious comfort that God is in control, that ultimately all will lead to the victory of Christ and all who are His.

After the singing of Psalm 68:8 and 12, Rev. Nederveen led the discussion on his speech. Many participated in this discussion and different aspects were clarified and elaborated on.

Mrs. Van Delden then closed the discussion and went on to say thank-you to all those who had contributed to the success of our League Day. In the first place of course, the hosting Society of Brampton who had done a simply marvellous job of organizing everything and looking after us so well. Then also the essayist and the speaker were heartily thanked for their important work. The president thanked Mrs. Hofsink, the retiring secretary for her work on the Board over the last five years. Also to Mrs. Vander Wal, our pianist for the day, a hearty thanks was due. Then the vice-president, Mrs. Reinink came forward to thank also Mrs. Van Delden for her capable leadership this League Day. In closing we sang Hymn 35 and Rev. Nederveen led in thanksgiving prayer.

Our Twenty-Fourth Annual Convention, too, had been a rich, rewarding, and joyful day. To stretch it a little we all gathered once more in the lunchroom for coffee, refreshments and fellowship. May what the Lord gave us this day inspire and strengthen us as we return to our task.

E. HOSFINK



During her illness Mrs. Riemersma, in consultation with Premier Printing Ltd., asked Mrs. J. Mulder to take care of her column.

Since the passing away of Mrs. Riemersma, Mrs. Mulder readily agreed to Premier's request to continue providing our readers with this much appreciated column for the sick. Please direct all correspondence regarding *Ray of Sunshine* to Mrs. J. Mulder

1225 Highway 5, RR 1  
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

## Dear readers,

*There are among us brothers and sisters who daily have to struggle with illness, a handicap or discomfort, which cripple their activities. They are unable to enjoy life!*

*Sometimes the question must arise. "Why?" Why so much suffering and pain? In the gospel according to John we read about a man, born blind. Among the disciples of the Lord also the question came up, "Why?" They ask, "Rabbi, who sinned this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (John 9:2). In other words, is this man the victim of his own or his parents' sin?*

*The Lord Jesus Christ's answer to that question is a definite "No." And then the Lord reveals the purpose and meaning of this man's severe handicap. He was born blind "that the works of God might be made manifest in him."*

*All things, even afflictions and adversities have as ultimate purpose the glory of our God. Also those who are ill or disabled have received an office to fulfill in God's service. In the way they cope with their afflictions, they can be living witnesses of the grace and care of God, who sent His Son into this world to bear our griefs and redeem our life from destruction. The Lord Jesus Christ will come once again in glory and majesty and then He will according to His promise open the eyes of the blind, unstop the ears of the deaf and make the lame leap like a hart and the tongue of the dumb sing for joy (Isaiah 35:5,6).*

*That also belongs to our only comfort in life and death!*

## Our birthday calendar:

February 12

**ALBERT DORGELOOS,**  
199 Westwood Road, Unit 91  
Guelph, ON N1H 7F1

*Albert was born in 1959, so he will be 27, Deo Volente. He lives with two others in a town house and works in a packaging business.*

February 12

**CONNY VANAMERONGEN**

Russ Road, RR 1  
Grimsby, ON

*Conny hopes to celebrate her 21 birthday. Because of a physical handicap she has to spend her days in a wheelchair.*

February 18

**CORA SCHOONHOVEN**

700 D'Arcy Street  
Cobourg, ON K6A 4I5

*Cora will be 35-years-old. She belongs to the Toronto Church but cannot live at home because of her handicap.*

*We wish Albert, Conny, and Cora a very happy birthday and the Lord's blessing in the year to come.*

*Please, remember to send them a card or note. I am sure they will appreciate it!*

## From the mailbox:

*I received a request to mention here:*

**PETER VERHELST**

c.o. Strong Rehabilitation Centre  
4255 Laurel Street  
Vancouver, BC V5Z 2G9

*Peter is sixteen-years-old and his family lives in Smithers, BC. In the beginning of September 1985 Peter was involved in a tragic vehicle accident. Peter's father was instantly killed and Peter himself critically injured and due to brain damage partially paralyzed. After having been in a coma for almost a month Peter woke up, starting the long road back to regain his health. He is now in a rehabilitation centre in Vancouver, far away from home. Through exercises and special therapy he is making progress, slowly regaining his coordination skills. He has to stay in this centre for at least another two or three months and he is going through a difficult time. He would like to receive some mail to help him through some of the long hours in which he is alone.*

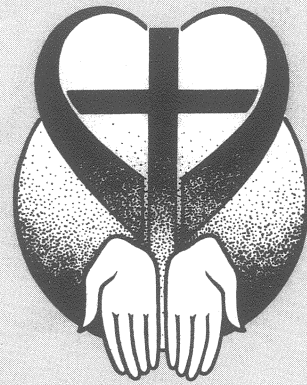
*May the LORD grant Peter the strength and patience he is so much in need of.*

*If there are others who would like to be included in our birthday calendar or who would like to receive mail, please send your requests to:*

**MRS. J. MULDER**

1225 Highway 5, RR 1  
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

# Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund



Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF  
PO Box 797  
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y7

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



Teaching mothers to supplement breastfeeding with nutritious food: eggs, vegetables, fruits . . . .



Winnowing rice with a "kula"

Bogra 25-1

## Dear friends and family:

One of the lasting images of Bangladesh is young girls, women or grandmothers carrying a baby on their hip. In the absence of modern babysitters such as playpens, strollers or television, I too walk with Margaretha on my hip and Geraldine copies straddling her doll on her side!

Our work does not deal with children directly, but through health teaching on diet, hygiene and home health care we hope mother's can improve their child's welfare. The newspapers tell us that 100-200 out of every 1000 children die before the age of ten. Many of these early deaths are due to dehydration or infections from the naval cord at birth. When you meet the mothers of these statistics, the glaring truth of malnourishment due to improper diet, low blood in young women to repeated abortions and favouritism towards male children to the neglect of female children. . . can become disheartening.

One cannot project the impact "modern" teaching has on ingrained traditions. A mother will not supplement a baby's diet under the age of three because she argues, ". . . it will not be able to walk and a baby doesn't have a neck to swallow food and besides everyone knows vegetables cause diarrhea!" Amulets, mother-in-law's advice and rice only diet are the mentality of villager. Health workers have found that they have to provide the example in their own eating habits as well as let mother's cook and feed their children nutritious meals in the field office to try to make an impact on changing their habits.

In this country, children are bearing children and that too adds to the ignorance on child rearing. Many women argue that even if a doctor prescribes eggs, bananas, papaya and other nutritious vegetables, how will they as poor village women ever pay for the foodstuffs?





Literacy teaching in the Villages — Bangladesh

*We hope that by giving some women income generating work, they will become penny-wise in choosing nutritious food for the whole family. The temptation with an increased income is to eat a greater quantity of rice only.*

*It is unfair to think that this country has no natural resources and that the "starving millions" have no recourse. Many poor village people can learn to plant pumpkin and spinaches on roof supports, small kitchen gardens are possible if roaming chickens and goats are restricted by fencing, a cup of rice saved each week shows the housewife she can save and plan for the future and for those who have a bit of land, there are year-round crops to be planted and harvested.*

*As we approach the end of our term here in Bangladesh, we hope you will remember in your prayers the national Christian staff who will continue to work with village groups, teaching both men and women of Muslim, Hindu, Animist and Christian faith, to use their God given resources for the welfare of their families and communities.*

*We are thankful for all your prayers that have supported us during our work here in Bangladesh. Letters, cards and pictures brought you into our home so we could also think about you!*

*Think about us now as we look for the Lord's continued care and blessing in our "repatriation" as my father has called it! We look forward to showing slides and stories with you in the near future.*

In His service,  
 GERALDINE, PETER  
 GERALDINE JR. AND MARGARETHA  
 YSSELSTEIN



## Gratitude

Although it will be 1986 when the readers scan these lines, they were written in the last working hours of 1985. The College building is deserted, the students and their wives held their annual Christmas dinner and relax in the coziness of their homes. It is a good moment to reminisce a while. The main feeling is one of great thankfulness. We could begin the new course in a new building and the first months have confirmed the general sentiment that we obtained very useful premises. The bond with the churches showed itself again: the final result of our Building Fund Drive is \$81,211.88, an amount to make us deeply aware of the active love for the school of the Churches. If I may mention some specifics, without becoming too personal, there was a professor in Kampen who sent us a substantial gift. I do not mention a name, but oh what a man! A missionary in Brazil regularly remembers our College in a palpable manner. The Young People of Grand Rapids sent the proceeds of the activities during last year, to the amount of \$408.60. Their counterparts, the guys and the gals of the Fraser Valley, held a rally: the result

was \$134.15 for their Theological College. And then there are the Australian Free Reformed Churches: e.g. lately we received \$539.34 from Kelmscott. If you work closely to the Administration office, you see almost weekly the regular cheques of the churches floating into the College in order to keep our operation going. In this we all lift up our hearts in gratitude to the Father of lights from whom comes every good endowment and every perfect gift.

During the three "Open Houses" some of our neighbours complimented us for the landscaping around our building. The Linde's of Mike's Landscaping performed a good job and they did so at cost for our College, again one of those things that struck us and makes us thankful to work in and for the Canadian Reformed Churches.

When we now look forward to 1986, and the practical work that has to be done yet, for the sake of the training for the ministry, we think of our library. One of the most important gifts in 1985 was the letter of Mrs. G.J.D. van der Waal — Braaksma in Pretoria, South Africa, in which she donated the collection of the late Dr. C. van der Waal. It concerns a

library of about 4,500 books, among which are valuable sixteenth and seventeenth century volumes. Apart from his *Sola Scriptura* series and his commentaries on Revelation to John, the theologian Van der Waal wrote much about the cultural mandate and, as a student of K. Schilder, he sought to fulfill this calling for himself in an immigrant situation. Is it not a fitting destination that his collection will be taken up into the still fledgling library of our Canadian immigrant churches? We are looking forward to receiving this collection and promised to make a special list of it. Is there a volunteer in Hamilton or surroundings who is able and willing to help in this?

This substantial addition makes us think of the automation of our College library functions. Mrs. Janet Marren wrote a report for the Women's Savings Action. Our readers may be interested and therefore we publish it in the next College Corner.

May I request your prayers, especially for the health and welfare of our students in the year of our Lord 1986?

J. FABER

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

Whenever ecclesiastical unity can be established with brothers and sisters of the one faith in the Lord there is reason to be happy and to thank the Lord. It seems that the acceptance of the Reformed Church of Blue Bell (PA) within the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches has been reason for the Classis of Ontario-South (Sept. 11 and 12, 1985) to express its gratitude. In his editorial (Vol. 34, No. 24), Rev. Geertsema also seems to rejoice in this development.

The churches in Ontario that "consider the matter of Blue Bell and the OPC inseparable" (Vol. 34, No. 22) are quite right in this judgment. Rev. Steve Larson already expressed his concern in May, 1984 with regard to the "Hofford case"

that this issue "will not automatically mean the end of our fraternal relations, but it will most certainly put a strain on them" (Vol. 33, No. 9). It is only logical that the admittance of a whole church to our federation will do even more to damage our relation with the OPC.

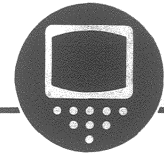
The reason the Classis of Ontario-South gave for its decision to accept the Reformation Church of Blue Bell can only be partly justified. It is clear that the act of separation was not "in agreement with the Form of Government of the OPC" as Classis asserted. As Rev. Geertsema aptly quotes from the report of the consistory of the Reformation Church: "Blue Bell did not exhaust the church courts, but the church courts exhausted Blue Bell." The fear that continuation within the Philadelphia Presbytery might destroy the congre-

gation can never justify the break of promise of this local church to adhere to the FOG. The refusal of Blue Bell to go with its problems to the General Assembly is against the ecclesiastical rules to which this church adhered. Therefore, its act of separation may well have been an "act of self-preservation," but, at the same time, it was a schismatic act.

It is for this reason that I deplore the decision of the Classis of Ontario-South and hope that a reconsideration of this decision may lead to a unity not only with the brothers and sisters in Blue Bell, but with all believers in Christ.

Yours in His service,  
HANS BOERSMA





## Classis Ontario-South, December 11, 1985

1. *Opening.* On behalf of the convening Church at Attercliffe, elder P. Oosterhoff opens the meeting. He requests the delegates to sing Psalm 145:1,2, reads Psalm 145 and leads in prayer. He welcomes everyone and gives a special word of welcome to Rev. C. Wieske and Rev. R. Aasman who are present for the first time as delegates.

2. *Credentials.* The delegates of Chatham check the credentials and find them in good order.

3. *Classis is constituted.* The following officers are appointed: chairman, Rev. P. Kingma; vice-chairman, Rev. M.H. VanLuik; clerk, Rev. C. Bosch.

4. The *agenda* is adopted after a few additions.

5. *Question Period Ad Art. 44 C.O.* In closed session, the Church at Smithville asks for advice concerning a disciplinary matter. Advice is given.

### 6. Reports

A. Report of Classical Committee concerning the implications and consequences for our ecclesiastical contact with the OPC.

1) The committee asks for approval for a procedure it proposes to follow in order to fulfill its mandate given by Classis ON South, September 11, 12 and October 2, 1985.

Classis adopts the following procedure: a) Classis address the presbytery of Philadelphia directly with its findings and concerns, overturing the presbytery to correspond with us about the concerns

and issues raised in our correspondence.

b) Classis sends copies of its reports and correspondence to our Committee for Contact with the OPC, since this committee has the mandate to follow the new developments within the OPC, and since this committee is also reporting to the General Synod about the controversy at Blue Bell as it related to the issue of fencing the Lord's Table. c) Classis sends copies of its correspondence to the General Synod to keep the churches informed. If correspondence from the presbytery is forthcoming, some of this might well be worthwhile for the General Synod. An evaluation of the theological issues which arose from the controversy could then be better prepared for the General Synod.

2) Classis approves the letter to be sent to the Presbytery of Philadelphia dealing with the doctrinal issues that were involved in the controversy with Blue Bell. (cf. 6A(1) a above)

B. Report on the church group in Sackville, Nova Scotia.

Rev. Huizinga gives an oral report on behalf of the Church at Hamilton. He reports with thankfulness that there is progress in the contact with this Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church.

C. Report of the Committee for revision of the guidelines for Questions in Use for Church Visits.

Classis requests the committee appointed for the revision of the guidelines for church visits to revise the regulations not only in accordance with the numbers of the articles of the C.O. but according to the contents as well.

D. Report on Regulations for Classis Ontario-South.

After several amendments, Classis adopts the proposed regulations for Classis Ontario-South. The committee for revising the regulations will propose an additional article dealing with the fund for needy churches at the next classis.

### 7. Instructions

Instructions from the Church at Hamilton and Grand Rapids concerning the brothers and sisters in Palmetto, FL is dealt with. Classis decides to continue the mandate given to the Church at Grand Rapids (Acts Dec. 14, 1983) regarding the brothers and sisters in Palmetto FL. Classis also requests the Church at Grand Rapids to submit further proposals to the next classis. Costs incurred are to be requested from the brothers and sisters in Palmetto FL.

### 8. Appointments

The following appointments are made for the church visits: Ancaster — Revs. C. Wieske, W. Huizinga; Attercliffe — R. Aasman, C. Bosch; Blue Bell — P. Kingma, J. VanRietschoten; Chatham — P. Kingma, J. Moesker; Grand Rapids — J. VanRietschoten, M.H. VanLuik; Hamilton — R. Aasman, M.H. VanLuik; Lincoln — W. Huizinga, C. Bosch; London — P. Kingma, C. Wieske; Smithville — R. Aasman, W. Huizinga; Watford — J. VanRietschoten, J. Moesker.

### 9. Personal Question Period

a) Classis decides to raise the Classical assessment from 4 dollars to 6 dollars for the year 1986.

b) The method by which classical expenses are reimbursed are discussed. The method to be followed is left up to the discretion of the treasurer.

10. *Next Classis* will be convened on March 12, 1986. The Church at Blue Bell will be the convening church. The proposed officers are: chairman — Rev. R. Aasman, vice-chairman — Rev. C. Bosch, clerk — Rev. P. Kingma.

11. *Acts* are adopted.

12. *Press release* is approved.

13. *Censure* according to Article 44 C.O. is not necessary.

14. *Closing.* The chairman requests the singing of Psalm 132:6,8,10 and closes with thanksgiving and prayer. Thanks is also expressed for the work of the ladies who served us so well on this day.

For the classis,  
M.H. VANLUIK, vice-chairman

## Classis Ontario North, Thursday, December 12, 1985

1. *Opening* by Rev. G.H. Visscher on behalf of the Church at Ottawa, in a Christian manner.

2. The Church at Orangeville has examined the credentials and reports that all churches are duly represented.

3. *Classis* is constituted.

4. The following officers are appointed: Rev. G. Nederveen, chairman; Rev. J. Mulder, clerk and elder P. van der Schaaf, assessor.

The chairman mentions the memorabilia: the vacancy of the Church at Guelph, the arrival of Rev. Cl. Stam in classis, the twenty-fifth wedding anniversary of Rev. and Mrs. D. DeJong and the thirtieth

## REMINDER

DID YOU MAIL  
YOUR  
SUBSCRIPTION  
RENEWAL  
NOTICE  
ALREADY?

wedding anniversary of Rev. and Mrs. J. Mulder and the sickness of Mrs. M. Werkman.

5. The *agenda* is adopted.

6. *Reports*:

a. A report for auditing the books of the treasurer is not presented. The Church at Toronto will have to report on the unaudited period ending September, 1985.

The following reports are accepted as presented:

b. Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry.

c. Church for auditing Fund Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry.

d. Committee for Needy Churches.

e. The church for auditing Fund for Needy Churches reports verbally that books and records are in good order. The reporting church (Orangeville) will send its report in writing to the clerk of this classis.

f. The report from the Church at Brampton for checking the classical archives is accepted as presented.

7. A church asks and receives advice in a matter of discipline (in closed session).

8. There are no proposals or further instructions from the churches.

9. *Correspondence* received:

a. A copy of a report by the Church at Hamilton sent to Classis Ontario South re a visit to the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church in Sackville, NS on June 20-21, 1985 is received for information.

b. A notification by the Church at Orangeville of its decision re the Rev. C. Olij, taken September 16, 1985, comes as yet not into discussion, considering that appeals against this decision have

been submitted. Classis decides to first deal with these appeals.

c. The appeal by Br. B.L. Kottelenberg against the decision referred to above is granted. Classis gives its grounds.

d. The appeal by Br. A.R. Endeman against same decision is granted, with same grounds as stated to Br. B.L. Kottelenberg.

e. The appeal by Br. and Sr. H.J. Endeman against the same decision is granted, with same grounds as stated by Br. B.L. Kottelenberg. A request in the second part of the letter is denied according to Article 33 Church Order.

f. On the basis of a letter received from Sr. J. Van Ommen classis decides to request the consistory of the Church at Orangeville to look into the possibility of granting Rev. C. Olij earlier retirement and to come with a judgment to this effect according to Article 13 Church Order to the next classis.

g. A letter from the Church at Orangeville re a discrepancy between the Acts and Press release of June 20, 1985 classis is read. Request is denied.

h. A report of church visitation brought to the Church at Burlington West is read and thankfully taken note of.

10. The following *appointments* are made: Convening church for next classis: Toronto. Suggested officers for next classis: chairman, Rev. Cl. Stam; clerk, Rev. G. Nederveen; assessor, Rev. J. Mulder.

Committees or Deputies:

a. Committee for Examinations:

1. Coordinator:

Rev. J. Mulder

2. Exegesis Old

Testament:

Rev. G.H. Visscher

3. Exegesis New Testament:

Rev. D. de Jong

4. Doctrine and Creeds:

Rev. J. Mulder

5. Knowledge of Scripture:

Rev. M. Werkman

6. Church History:

Rev. M. Werkman

7. Ethics:

Rev. R.N. Gleason

8. Church Polity:

Rev. G. Nederveen

9. Diaconiology:

Rev. Cl. Stam.

b. Church visitors: the ministers

c. Church for taking care of the archives: Toronto

d. Church to inspect the archives: Brampton

e. Treasurer: Br. H. DenBroeder

f. Church for auditing the books of Classical Treasurer: Toronto

g. Church for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry: Guelph

h. Church for auditing the books of Fund Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry: Fergus

i. Committee for Needy Churches: Brs. G. Lodder, J. Kottelenberg and J. VanBodegom

j. Church for auditing the books of the Fund Needy Churches: Orangeville.

11. *Question period* is made use of. Rev. Cl. Stam states his agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by undersigning the Form of Subscription.

12. *Censure* according to Article 44 Church Order is not necessary.

13. The *acts* are read and adopted. The press release is read and approved.

14. *Classis* ceases to exist after prayer of thanksgiving by Rev. G. Nederveen.

On behalf of classis,  
P. Van der Schaaf, assessor

## OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



### Hello Busy Beavers,

Remember our Fall Contest?

Well, some of our Busy Beavers wrote very nice poems!

Thank you very much.

Keep up the good work!

But in a contest you have to pick a winner, right?

The winner in our Fall Contest is

Busy Beaver *Betty Bergsma!*

Congratulations, Betty. You wrote a very nice poem!

Maybe you will treat us to some of your other poems, too, sometime?

### RIDDLE FUN!

from Busy Beaver *Wayne Penninga*

Try them on your family and friends! Have fun! They're tricky!

1. Which word is always misspelled?

2. What can you put in a barrel of oil to make it lighter?

3. What do the neighbours of a saxophone player do that his fingers do, too?

4. Who isn't your brother, isn't your sister, but is still a child of your father and mother?

5. How much dirt is in a hole 5 m deep and 10 m in diameter?

6. What did the puppy do when he entered the flea circus?

7. How many letters are in the alphabet?

8. Ten copy cats are in a boat. One jumped out. How many are left?

(Answers next page)



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Anne Van Laar*. Thank you for your pretty letter. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already. Keep up the good work! How did you enjoy your holidays, Anne?

Hello *Corinne Schulenberg*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you've been very busy, too. Good for you! Did you have fun skating during your holidays, Corinne?

Thanks for your good wishes, *Michelle Oostdyk*. I'm glad you enjoyed your holidays. But you didn't tell me about your Christmas concert! Bye for now, Michelle.

I'm glad you like your new school, *Jane DeVos*, and that you had such a nice Christmas concert. Did you have fun in all that deep snow, Jane?

You've been a real Busy Beaver, I see, *Pauline De Ruiter*. Thank you very much for your letter, and everything in it. It sure smelled sweet! Congratulations on a good report, Pauline. Write again soon.

Hello *Shelley Vanderhorst*. It was nice to hear from you again. I see you had time to write too, during the holidays. Too bad you didn't tell what you liked best during the holidays, Shelley!

How did you like your new book, *Alida Knol*? And how did you like staying away from home? Be sure to write and tell us, too, what you learned about Venezuela, all right Alida?

# Quiz Time!

### NAME PLEASE!

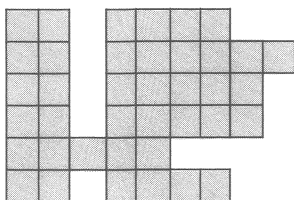
- In his home Peter stayed during his visit to Joppa.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- She gave God everything she possessed.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- He heard the Lord Jesus' voice from heaven (an apostle).  
\_\_\_\_\_
- She came a great distance to see Solomon.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- He was commanded to take off his shoes.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- This young man approved of Stephen's death.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- This evangelist rode in a chariot. \_\_\_\_\_
- He was mighty in physical strength but weak in resisting temptation. \_\_\_\_\_
- Here the ark of Noah came to rest. \_\_\_\_\_
- Jesus called him the first martyr. \_\_\_\_\_
- He served as Moses' mouthpiece. \_\_\_\_\_
- The woman who hid Joshua's spies. \_\_\_\_\_

### WORDS IN FRENCH

Watch out!!? The clue is spaces for the letters??!!

By Busy Beaver *Erica Veenendaal*

- the bench
- the pencil
- the pen
- the eraser
- thank-you
- you're welcome



## TWO PART WORDSEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Pauline De Ruiter*

Code for  
wordsearch title

L-2  
S-16  
B-4  
T-8  
O-14  
J-5  
C-3  
H-7  
E-9  
U-1

Look for:

Science	Biology
Social	Health
Bible	History
Church History	French
Current Events	Spelling
Grammar	Math
Composition	Art
Literature	Music

16 3 7 14 14 2      16 1 4 5 9 3 8 10



Answers:

*Riddle Fun:* 1. Incorrectly. You can't spell it correctly. 2. a hole  
3. They move as quickly as they can. 4. yourself 5. none 6.  
He stole the show. 7. There used to be 26, but E.T. went home.  
8. none  
*Name Please!* 1. Simon the tanner 2. The widow in the temple  
3. Paul 4. The Queen of Sheba 5. Moses 6. Paul 7. Phillip 8.  
Samson 9. Ararat 10. Abel 11. Aaron 12. Rahab  
*Words in French:* le banc, le crayon, le stylo, la gomme, mer-  
ci, de rien

How did you do on the quiz and the puzzle?

Did you enjoy them?

That's great.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Keep busy!

Love from your  
Aunt Betty

*Aunt Betty*  
c/o *Clarion*

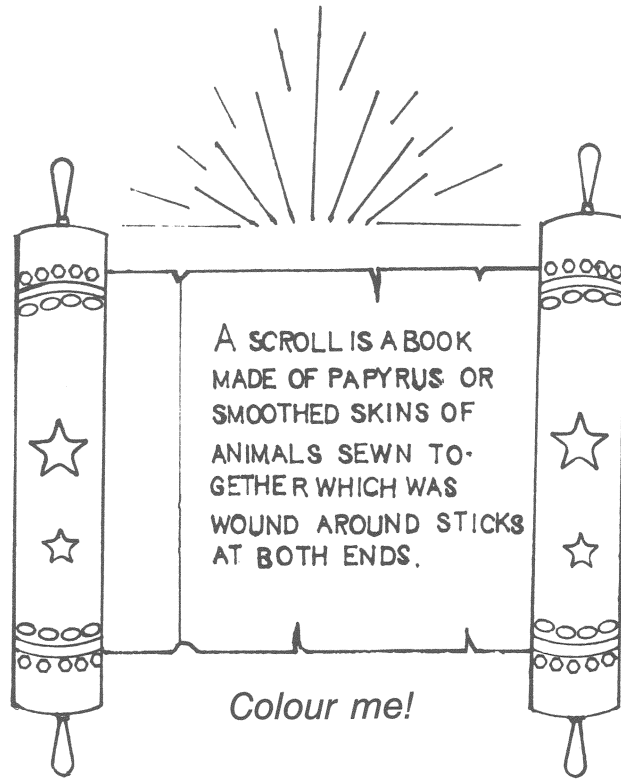
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# ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza

# Ss

**S-scroll** (Jeremiah 36:2)



## Quiz Questions

1. Gomorrah was destroyed by brimstone and fire. What is the name of the other city that was destroyed at that time? \_\_\_\_\_(Genesis 19)
2. She sent her maid Hagar and Ishmael into the wilderness when she bore a son for Abraham named Isaac. Who is she? \_\_\_\_\_(Genesis 21)
3. Ananias and his wife were both struck dead for lying to Peter about some money they were giving to the church. What is Ananias' wife's name? \_\_\_\_\_(Acts 5:1-11)
4. Who was the old man that held the baby Jesus in his arms, blessed God and praised Him with a song? \_\_\_\_\_(Luke 2:21-35)
5. What creature in the Garden of Eden tempted Eve with the fruit of the Forbidden Tree? \_\_\_\_\_(Genesis 3)

## Answers for the letter "R"

1. Rebekah
2. Rahab
3. Ruth
4. Rome
5. Resurrection
6. Rachel