



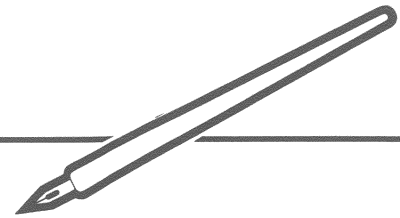
# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## A closed Lord's Supper Table is not proof of a sectarian spirit but shows ecclesiastical faithfulness

### The invisible church concept as basis for the rejection of the closed Table

In the article in the previous issue, we saw that there are three different ways of celebrating the Lord's Supper, the open Table, the restricted Table, and the closed Table. The question is: must we have a restricted or a closed Table. That question is urgent since maintaining a closed Table is called sectarian. This accusation of sectarianism is not only heard today. Professor H. Bouwman, we saw, says the same thing in his *Gerelieft Kerkrecht* (Reformed Church Polity), vol. II, p. 558. We read there that "unity in church life requires unity in confession and church organization. Otherwise cooperation is practically impossible. There is a higher unity, namely, the unity in Christ. A church in a certain region or country may never overlook this unity because otherwise she is in danger of becoming a sectarian circle."

When we analyze what Bouwman says, it is clear that the basis for his speaking of "a higher unity, namely, the unity in Christ," is the doctrine that there is an invisible church, to which all the true believers belong, all those who by a true faith are ingrafted into Christ. This doctrine speaks about the visible and the invisible church, about the church as institute and the church as organism as two different things.

Closely related with this view of the church as visible and invisible is the doctrine of the pluriformity of the church. The pluriformity concept is that the invisible Church of Christ reveals itself visibly on earth in many forms (pluri-form), namely, in the many different local and regional church institutes, that is, in many different denominations, which all have and emphasize their own special aspect of the truth of God. Hereby the one visible church form or denomination can be a little more pure than the other, but they are all branches of the one, worldwide, Church of Christ.

According to this concept, this line of thinking, the invisible church is the true body of Christ; it is the church as an organism, the worldwide, catholic church. In this body, according to this concept, all the true believers, all those who are born again and ingrafted into Christ, have automatically a place. They are its members. This is then the true Church of Christ. It is in this invisible church that we have the "higher unity in Christ."

In the reasoning of Bouwman, we have, on the one hand, a visible church organization. This visible, instituted, church needs a confession and a church organization (e.g. with a consistory and broader assemblies) for its proper functioning. With other words, such a confession and organization are essential for the *functioning* of the visible church, but they are not essential for the church as such. In this visible church the believers have, of course, also this higher unity in Christ, but they have a unity in confession and in organization as well. By implication, the latter is a unity of a lower level, because the "higher unity" is the unity in Christ. And this higher unity exists, then, also beyond the denominational church walls. It is the "higher unity" in the invisible church. For this higher unity in Christ unity in confession and organization is not essential. It would be nice, even desirable, but it is not really necessary.

It can be readily understood that within this concept of a pluriformity of the church and of an invisible church with its "higher unity in Christ" a closed Table does not fit and gets the label "sectarian." A closed Table, per logical consequence, must be seen in this line of thinking as a denial of that "higher unity in Christ."

### Is this invisible church concept with its "higher unity" the correct approach?

Through the Liberation, under the leadership of Professor K. Schilder and others, we learned that our confessions do not speak of an invisible church as the total number of the elect or the born again besides or over against the visible church institute. We learned that we should reject a thinking in terms of, and a working with, the distinctions of the church as organism and the church as institute, of an invisible church and a visible church, as two different entities. We learned that Scripture itself does not speak in these distinctions.

The Scriptures teach that the church on earth consists of living, visible, people who gather visibly together in visible gatherings. The Scriptures also distinguish between true and false prophecy, and herewith, between a church that abides by the truth as revealed and a church that follows false teachings. The Scriptures warn very strongly against false teachings and deviations. The Apostle Paul, inspired by the Spirit of Christ, speaks His "accursed" against those who preach a gospel that differs from his own (Gal. 1:8). He commands the believers in Rome to note and avoid "those who create dissensions and difficulties, in opposition to the doctrine which you have been taught" (Romans 16:17). These words of the apostle contain the inherent command of separation. Giving to deviations from the truth the same place and rights in the church as to the truth is clearly disobedience to the Lord of the church. The church is bound to the norms of Christ for the gathering and the preservation of the church.

This normative speaking of the Scriptures is followed in our Confession of Faith, Art. 28, 29. And it has been the gain of the Liberation in 1944 that this normative speaking of Scripture and confession was clearly seen again, in line with the Reformation in the 16th century and the Secession in 1834. We learned that church membership should not be a matter of taste but of faith, that is, of obedience in love to God's holy will; obedience in love to Christ's norms for the gathering of the church in truth. We learned that it is important to maintain that those who "draw away from the [visible, true] church or fail to join it act contrary to the ordinance of God" (Art. 28).

For those who followed the Reformation, or the Secession, or the Liberation, church membership was a matter of obedience to the Head of the Church. At the same time, it was for them a matter of obedience to the Second Commandment: serve and worship the LORD in accordance with His revealed will. This obedience of faith to God's requirement in His Second Commandment is background and aim in the Art. 28 and 29 of the Belgic Confession. A true church which "governs itself according to the pure Word of God, rejecting all things con-

trary to it and regarding Jesus Christ as the only Head," is a church that takes this requirement seriously. Not joining, or withdrawing from, the true church is acting contrary to the ordinance of God, especially as that is expressed in the same Second Word of the covenant.

It is clear, then, that our confession as it speaks in Art. 28 and 29 and as it is based on God's Word, has to be maintained and applied also in the matter of the Lord's Table and who can be admitted.

It is, therefore, such a heartwarming, joyful thing to read in the report of the brothers of the Blue Bell Church that they want to abide by this obedience to the Scriptures, in faithful adherence to the confession, also on the point of the celebration of the Lord's Supper, and therefore restrict the Table communion to "those who have professed this true Reformed religion, have made this profession credible in their lives, and are members in good and regular standing in the true church." Here the norms expressed in Art. 28 and 29 and based on, among others, the Second Commandment are taken seriously.

What Professor F. L. Rutgers wrote, and was quoted in our previous article, is fully in line with what we have stated above. Rutgers said that a Reformed consistory should not admit to the Table of the Lord a person who belongs to the Dutch Reformed (Hervormde) Church, when this person refuses to place himself under the oversight and discipline of the consistory by *joining the Reformed Church*. Acting otherwise leads to arbitrariness and disorder, according to Rutgers. The confession must be maintained that this person "acts contrary to the ordinance of God."

When we apply all this to our own situation, it can be clear that a **Reformed consistory which does not open, but closes, the Table of the Lord to Christians of other denominations in its area or country, acts in faithful adherence to its adopted confession, taking that confession seriously**. Obviously, working with what we confess in Art. 28 and 29 leads to different conclusions and practices than working with the concept of the pluriformity of the church and with that of an invisible church besides the visible congregation. But working with Art. 28 can certainly not be called sectarian, or Art. 28 itself must be a sectarian article.

### **We should act in an ecclesiastical manner, not in an individualistic and subjectivistic way**

The Blue Bell Reformation Church's report states that the Table of the Lord should be restricted by a Reformed consistory to those who made profession of the Reformed faith, live accordingly and are members of the true church. I can agree with that. But a very important question that now comes up is, who determines which church is a true church whose members can be admitted? Is that the minister of a local church? Is that the consistory of that local congregation? Are we not a federation of churches? And has the recognition of other churches as true churches of Christ not always been acknowledged to be a matter of the whole federation, not of individual persons or churches?

Professor D.P.D. Fabius, LL.D., who taught law at the Free University, wrote a brochure in 1918, which he gave the title, *Kerkelijk Leven*. I may refer here to the introductory article in the 1986 *Yearbook*. The good Reformed message in that brochure is that we must act ecclesiastically, and not individualistically, not following our own personal subjective feelings and views. The brochure was written as an objection to the individualistic act of a Rev. Netelenbos who took the freedom to preach as Reformed minister in a Dutch Reformed Church and defended this act as an act of confessing and practicing the "higher unity in Christ" beyond our human church walls.

I see an admitting of Christians of other denominations to the Table of the Lord when those denominations are not of-

ficially acknowledged by our federation of churches as true Churches of Christ in the same light: it is acting unecclesiastically, individualistically, going by one's own personal or consistorial opinion. And with Fabius, I have objections here. Acting unecclesiastically leads to arbitrariness and disorder. Also on this point we must act decently and with good ecclesiastical order (I Cor.14:40).

When so the federation of the churches has acknowledged an other church group as true Churches of Christ Jesus and a sister church relationship has been established according to that acknowledgment, the pulpit is open and so is the Table. As I see it, the restricted Table of the Blue Bell Congregation, and the closed Table as many of our Canadian Reformed Churches practice it, are basically the same.

### **But what about the "higher unity" in Christ?**

But do we, herewith, deny any unity in Christ with believers outside our own federation and the sister churches abroad? No we do not. I know quite a few true, faithful, sincere Christians, not belonging to one of our churches, who heartily love the Lord and seek to serve Him in obedience to His Word. And I am sad about the fact that we do not go to the same church and sit at the same Table of the Lord. As far as faith in Christ and love for Him is concerned, there is a strong bond. We are children of the same Father in heaven.

However, when "my" church federation cannot merge or have a sister relationship with their church groups for reasons of doctrine and/or church government, or rather for Biblical and confessional reasons, and when so Scripture and confession are the foundation upon which the separating church walls are built, do I, or does my consistory, have the right to act as if those separating church walls all of a sudden do not exist anymore when it comes to the Table of the Lord? Must we maintain church walls on the basis of Scripture and confession, when it comes to the church federation, but break those walls down when it comes to individual participation at the Table of the Lord? To me, that is being inconsistent, to say the least. To me, this is misusing that so-called higher unity.

We should not create a concept of a higher unity in Christ that can be placed over against the confessional and organizational unity in Christ and in the church. Such a concept tends to break down church walls built upon the foundation of Scripture and confession. It tends to undermine obedience to the Lord in matters of church membership, to diminish ecclesiastical faithfulness and sincerity. And it so easily brings confusion in the congregation. If separating church walls are a matter of obedience to God's Word and in accordance with the adopted confession of the church which is based on Scripture, it is the calling of the churches to maintain those walls both for the church federation and for individual members.

But is a closed/restricted (Blue Bell) Table not a denial of the catholic church and, herewith, a sectarian viewpoint? When a church has a confession that is fully based upon the Scriptures and faithfully adheres to that confession, in obedience to the Scriptures, that church acts in accordance with the catholic faith in a catholic manner. One may read here K. Schilder's speech *Your Ecumenical Task*, published by the ILPB in London, ON.

Our conclusion is: a Table that is opened to Christians of other denominations, especially in the same area or country, with which our churches have no relationship, undermines ecclesiastical faithfulness, dims the sharpness of ecclesiastical obedience, and works confusing. And the accusation that a closed/restricted Table is sectarian does the very same things. A closed/restricted Table as we have it should rather be seen as confessional sincerity and ecclesiastical fidelity, and it is being honest to fellow Christians with whom we long to sit at the same Table in the same true Church of Christ.

J. GEERTSEMA

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# The position of the elderly,

## 1. A forgotten group?

In previous articles we paid attention to special groups of people and different aspects of family life. We discussed questions about having children and raising children, the position of adopted children as well as handicapped ones. We also wrote about the circumstances of the unmarried members of the church. In this article we will focus our attention on another group, namely, the elderly members of the congregation. What is their position in our midst, and how do we deal with them? Do we show due respect to the elderly or do we only tolerate them? Do they still have a task and place in daily life, or have they become spectators, standing or sitting on the sidelines? How do we treat our elderly members and how do we take care of them? Is an old age home with nursing facilities the ideal situation or do we prefer to have them in a normal family setting? And what do they themselves prefer? In the past the older generation used to live with their children and grandchildren. Nowadays the situation is different. Is that an improvement or is it only for the convenience of an overly busy new generation? Such questions become even more pressing when we deal with demented persons.

We live in the era of the youth. In the past the younger generation had to learn a trade or skill from the older generation. In the Guilds the younger generation was painstakingly taught the secrets of the trade by the older members. Nowadays it is different. Modern technology has resulted in a rapidly changing society. Children play and grow up with the computer, and many students outsmart their teachers in computer literacy. Recently we heard, via the news media, that a group of high school students was able to "break" the security system of an important institution. They were invited to test the system and within seven minutes they managed to get through a security system which was considered to be "safe." While many older people have no idea what a computer is, the children grow up with it and it is part of their life, in their games as well as in their education. This development makes the elderly people feel even more alienated. Their experience, their skills and their

knowledge, which were such vital elements in the Guilds in the past, seem to be of no value any longer.

In order to put matters in the right perspective, we had better first listen to what the Bible says about the position of the elderly.

## 2. What does the Bible say?

The Bible very often speaks about the elders of the people. When this expression is used, especially in the Old Testament, it has a dual meaning. The "elders of the people" often refers to a certain group of officers who were in charge of ruling and governing the people. At the same time, the title "elders" indicates that for such an office, older and more experienced people were chosen. Age was considered very important, and the difference in age between two persons counted as a guideline to determine their position with respect to each other. In the book of Job we read about four friends of Job, who

came to comfort him and to admonish him. One of them, named Elihu, was apparently rather young, compared to the others. Therefore he waited and listened, until the others were finished. After the other three had spoken a few times, and after Job had answered them, finally he, the youngest one, spoke. In Job 32:6,7 we read, "And Elihu the son of Barachel the Buzite answered: 'I am young in years, and you are aged; therefore I was timid and afraid to declare my opinion to you. I said, "Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom.'" In this particular case wisdom was not synonymous with age. Elihu was disappointed with what his older friends had said. Therefore we read in the verses 8-10, "But it is the spirit in a man, the breath of the Almighty, that makes him understand. It is not the old that are wise, nor the aged that understand what is right. Therefore I say, 'Listen to me; let me also declare my opinion.'" Although in this particular situation the words of the young-



est friend of Job showed more wisdom than what was said by the three older men, it still shows us the respect for the aged. It also demonstrates that in general the opinion of the older people was considered to be very important.

The fifth commandment says that we have to honour our father and our mother and all those who are in authority over us. In I Timothy 4:12 the Apostle Paul encourages the (apparently rather young) preacher and office-bearer Timothy, saying, "Let no one despise your youth." This text shows us that an office-bearer does not necessarily have to be an older man. Still in general, age is considered to be important. Even today, in many local regulations for the election of office-bearers, we find the rule that in case of a tie vote the older of the two is considered to be chosen.

The Bible teaches us clearly that we have to respect and honour the older people because of their age. Real wisdom is often not a matter of study and academic knowledge, but rather experience in the school of life, in which many things have to be learned the hard way in the course of many years. The Bible also clearly teaches us that the elderly are responsible to give wise judgment, and that age is not a guarantee for being right, as the example of Job 32:6-10 shows.

These are the basic rules which we should keep in mind when we have a closer look at the position of the elderly people among us.

### 3. Remaining involved

One of the most important aspects of the position of the elderly is that they should remain involved in social and congregational life as much as possible. In most jobs and professions there is a mandatory retirement age. Retirement is a very important point in the life of elderly people. It often means a complete change in their pattern of life. Especially for people who have no hobbies or other activities which keep them busy, it can be a dangerous transition. All of a sudden they feel useless and put aside. In many instances we see that such people have problems with their health which they never had before. One's mental and physical condition are so closely related that such a drastic change reflects in the physical condition. It would be going too far to advocate doing away with all mandatory retirement, as some propagate. Although the one might very well be able to continue past this age, another might be happy that he can enjoy a well deserved rest, without being outrightly declared disabled. There is certainly a great difference in personal circumstances, and a mandatory retirement age can be useful. Without it some might not be willing to give up and continue even when they are physically not able to do so,

or while the quality of their work or their production goes down. Moreover, with the current high unemployment rate it may be advisable to give younger people a chance to find a job and meaningful employment.

The most important point in this respect is that retirement does not mean that someone becomes useless. On the contrary. Such a change in one's way of life has to be prepared for well in advance. Retirement means that someone is relieved from the regular duties and can spend time on other things. Older people should remain involved in everyday life, in social as well as congregational life, as much as possible. There is a lot of so-called "unpaid" work, that can be done. Such a transition cannot be made overnight, but requires careful preparation. It is remarkable to see how many people start having health problems shortly after they retire; those who have adapted to their new situation, are less prone to suffer such a "transition syndrome." It is certainly not true that older people cannot make an important contribution to community life. Not everyone can be active in the same way. That is why retirement opens the possibility to adjust to a person's own capabilities. There are cases where people at an older age start an important career. Some have become Head of State or President at an age that others retire. Recent examples can be found in the United States, France and Germany. Some have managed to obtain a doctor's degree after retirement. However, those are the exceptions. Most people have to slow down, but


can still be of great value while they are retired. The worst thing is to "give up" and sit idle. That is true in a lot of circumstances, but in a special way for the elderly. They should try to remain involved in everyday life and the younger generation should give them the opportunity to remain involved and stimulate them to be active within the limitations of their position. The younger generation can certainly gain a lot by using the experience and the wisdom of the older generation. Let us not ignore the Biblical guideline. Although it might seem to be outdated, the advice of Job 32:7 is still relevant. "Let days speak, and many years teach wisdom."

— To be continued  
W. POUWELSE

### Editorial Note:

After my wife had passed away I have received many cards and letters of sympathy, even from readers of our Magazine whom I had never met. It was a real comfort to experience the unity in faith in difficult circumstances. I like to express my sincere appreciation for all these tokens of sympathy. I use this opportunity also to inform the readers that my address has changed, because I moved to a smaller home.

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# The Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches

## Introduction

The February 18, 1985 issue of the *Banner*, a weekly of the Christian Reformed Church, showed on its cover a picture of two apples. One of them, a "golden delicious" had a tag attached to it reading: "The Christian Reformed Church," the other was a "red delicious" with the tag: "The Canadian Reformed Churches." The caption of that cover picture read: "The Canadian Reformed Churches and the Christian Reformed Church are fruits from the same tree. Today they are painfully apart."

We are now in the month of February 1986 and the number of apples has increased. This matter has not received much attention in the ecclesiastical press; hence this article about the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches.

It all started in Allendale, Michigan, where a public meeting was held on March 27, 1980, to "recall and an invitation to affirm the Biblical Christianity of the Reformed Confessions." After that meeting a group of people met for worship and in June 1980 the United Reformed Church (the name was later changed into Orthodox Christian Reformed Church) was organized. In 1981 a number of members of the CRC in the Mount Vernon/Burlington area, in Washington State, addressed their consistory requesting it to act upon the decisions of previous synods concerning the adoption of Report 44 (1972): "The Nature and Extent of Biblical Authority," and its subsequent effects with regard to "new homiletics," the pronouncements on "women in office" and other important issues.

When the consistory appeared to be unwilling to take any action and referred the appellants to the broader assemblies they "liberated" themselves from these decisions and pronouncements since it had become clear that many appeals submitted by individual members did not receive much attention at synods. By this act of liberation they separated from the CRC and organized (we would call it: instituted) the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church at Burlington, WA.

In my talks with members of this congregation the remark was made by them that the situation in 1980 had become

worse than the one in 1944 in the Netherlands. At that time there were some well-defined issues and dogmatic statements; in 1980 the authority of Holy Scripture was at stake.

Similar appeals were submitted to other consistories. These appeals all deal extensively with Report 44 and refute statements like: "Scripture is time- and culture-conditioned. Situations and circumstances affect what is said and how it is said" (*Acts Synod 1972*, p. 511). Some of these submissions show, very clearly, the effect and the implications of the adoption of this report in the revisions of the Heidelberg Catechism and the Belgic Confession.

## Documentation

For clarity's sake and to show the similarity with the "Liberation" of 1944 in the Netherlands I refer to several documents which were made available to me and which I feel free to use.

The first is a letter written by a number of Christian Reformed Ministers and addressed to their colleagues.

"For over a decade we have observed with anxiety the deviation in the denomination from the commitment to the historical Reformed Faith, . . . the time has come to speak out publicly . . . in a spirit of love as we try to call our denomination back to the historic position. We believe that it is the responsibility of each consistory to initiate such action as is necessary." "Drastic action is necessary in light of the movement toward liberalism within the Christian Reformed Churches."

From other documentation I quote the following:

"We have come — very reluctantly and with deep sorrow — to the conclusion that we should fail in our responsibility to our Lord, our families, and very especially to our children, if we remained members of the CRC."

"For some time now we have been faced with a situation in which heretics and infidels are cherished, protected and encouraged. The course of appeals and protests has been run to the bitter end and to no avail, . . . they even have been used contrary to their expressed purpose. We did not leave these churches.

In their haste to catch up with the world, these churches have left us."

Practically the statements issued by consistories of the OCR Churches speak a similar language. I would like to add a few more, because they may have significance for the relationship between churches that have the same desire to base itself on the full authority of Holy Writ and the Reformed Confessions.

"The members felt that their church was leaving them and was exchanging the authority of the Word of God for the humanistic desire of being relevant and trendy.

They were convinced that continued membership would be . . . a tacit approval of apostasy, and a false testimony.

Concerning our relations with other churches . . . we declare that we are willing to unite with any church that will join us to seek . . . the restoration of the Church of Christ."

## Further developments

In 1982 one of the ministers of the Bowmanville CRC requested his consistory to take a stand in the issues which bothered many of the concerned members of the congregation. This request was "received for information." Thereafter he read a letter from the pulpit and resigned, which was followed by his "deposition as a minister."

In the course of time other OCR Churches were instituted and the need for contact became urgent. Unofficial communications in writing led to a decision to meet as "Inter-Consistorial Conference where delegates from the churches would be able to join in the discussion of issues of common interest and future development in assisting each other in the upbuilding of ecclesiastical life.

The first such Conference was held in the home of the Rev. H. VanDyken at Bolton, ON. It was agreed that "the Conference . . . direct itself . . . to determine our relationship to one another."

At the next Conference five churches were represented; in 1984 there were six, while at the 1985 Conference seven churches were represented. They are (in alphabetical order): Allendale, MI; Bowmanville, ON; Burlington, WA; Cambridge,

ON; Listowel, ON; Ripon, CA and Toronto, ON.

## The Conferences

At the Conferences, which are held yearly, several issues had the attention of the delegates. Apart from reports on the Church Order (which was revised considerably by the CRC) and proposals concerning the C.O. of Dort and the text of the Liturgical Forms, the matter of "Fraternal Relations" was one of the first items of the agenda. The proposal was made to become acquainted with publications of the Canadian Reformed Churches (*Clarion*) and of the Free Reformed Church (*Messenger*). At the same time a warning was sounded that the OCR Churches "should keep their own identity." What was meant with that specific "identity" was not explained.

Another important question was submitted in 1983, namely: "What is the future of the Conference; what is our ultimate goal?" The suggestion was made that "if any consistory feels that the Conference should lead somewhere, then a submission should be made to the Conference." This would bring us to another heading. However, to be able to understand the situation and further developments it may be instructive to mention the following. At one of the early Conferences a decision was made to write a statement concerning the "coming into existence of the OCRC" out of concern of the CRC and its members. *Calvinist Contact* and *Outlook* were mentioned as possible vehicles. If the information which I received is correct, both magazines refused to publish such a statement or a "Short Report" of the Conferences. One of the important matters that would interest us is the strong aversion against the hierarchy which, according to the OCRC has made headway in the CRC.

At this point I would like to refer to what Rev. Geertsema wrote in the January 10 issue of *Clarion*:

"Hierarchy is always a strong weapon in the hands of liberal leadership in a church or church group, with which it can dominate and manipulate the membership at large. That explains the aversion to it. However, reaction against hierarchy as an instrument of liberalism can easily lead to an independentism that rejects a firm organization of local churches into a federation or covenant. It was the strength of the Doleantie that . . . it did not fall into the trap of reactionism and independentism, but returned to the Reformed system of church government as adopted in the Church Order of Dort."

I concur with his advice to the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches

"to study the church political thinking and practice of the Doleantie. Such a

study can prevent an identification of the truly Reformed system of government according to the C.O. of Dort with hierarchy, and make clear that these two are each other's opposite."

## From conference to classis?

Under the previous heading I mentioned the question which returned at almost every Conference: "What is the future of the Conference, what is our ultimate goal?" During the second Conference this question was submitted in the form of a motion to place a resolution on the agenda that a discussion would start on the possibility of forming a classis. After lengthy discussions the delegates agreed on the statement: ". . . we desire to enter into an agreement of mutual supervision, assistance, advise and cooperation as described hereunder."

At the 1985 Conference the Church at Toronto (appointed thereto by the previous Conference) submitted an official Form of Agreement, which states as basis for the Agreement: "the infallible, inerrant Word of God as confessed in our common Confessions (the Three Forms of Unity), and the Church Order of Dort, studied and revised at the Interconsistorial Conferences of 1981-1984."

During the discussion it became apparent that not all the churches were ready to sign this Agreement. A motion "to meet next year as classis" was defeated. The final result was a statement which I quote from the minutes: "It is the desire of this Interconsistorial Conference that from this day on we cease to meet as Conference; that when we come together again as churches it be as a Classis of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches."

This statement went back to the churches and the next Conference, which seems to be scheduled for the beginning of 1986, will hear the reaction of the churches (again) and hopefully reach a

final decision on this step towards Church Federation.

It is too early, and also incorrect to speculate on further developments. We can only express the true desire that these "liberated" churches will contact the Canadian Reformed Churches by way of the Committee for Contact. The feelings of the individual members of the churches appear to differ concerning the direction which has to be taken. If, and when the statement is maintained that they will seek contact with those who, with them, want to have the infallible Word of God, the Reformed Confessions and the Church Order of Dort as basis for ecclesiastical life, then we have great expectations for the future.

## Initial contact

During a visit to Ontario at the end of 1984 Prof. Faber approached me and told me that he had received a request from the OCRC at Ripon, CA. They inquired whether there would be a minister available to advise and assist them in the initial stages of their ecclesiastical life. He asked me whether I would be willing to visit Ripon and see what could be done. After returning to BC I received a phone call with an invitation to come over and talk with the consistory. My first visit was on a personal basis and we went there with another family from the Fraser Valley.

Before another visit was planned I reported to the Langley Consistory, explained the situation and was authorized to "administer the Word and the Sacraments" for a period of six months. During that period a few more visits were made and the Consistory at Ripon requested me to be present at the 1985 Conference as an observer.


In the meantime this church has now its own minister, the Rev. J. Levering who was installed in January of this year.

After the period of six months I submitted a report to the Consistory of the Church at Langley and it was decided not to make any further decisions in this matter, but to wait for the next Conference and see how matters will develop.

In conclusion I would like to state that in the churches which I visited (Ripon, CA and Burlington, WA) I found very sincere people who were not only concerned, but who were convinced that, as was stated earlier, the church had left them. Many members of churches in the Fraser Valley have been there and had the same experience.

We may express the hope and prayer that the Head of His Church may bring together those who are one in faith.

D. VANDERBOOM



### CHURCH NEWS

CALLED by the Church at  
Calgary, AB

REV. D.J.G. AGEMA  
of Hamilton, ON

\* \* \*

DECLINED to the Church at  
Guelph, ON

REV. G.H. VISSCHER  
of Ottawa, ON

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# The Doctrine of the Covenants and the Reformed Confessions<sup>3</sup>

## The Covenant of Grace

When we turn to the Covenant of Grace we are not so dependent on inference as we are, to a great extent, with the Covenant of Works. Here we are on the solid rock of explicit and frequent Scripture statements which clearly establish that the economy of redemption is of a covenantal nature. A “word study” of usage in the Old and New Testaments will not be undertaken here, it would be superfluous to our purpose. But it is necessary to state what is the basic sense of the Divine BERITH or DIATHEKE in redemptive revelation. Some scholars like Meredith Kline hold that the ground idea of the BERITH is a mutual pact, characterized indeed by divine initiative and sovereignty. From this he has concluded that it is eminently proper to treat the pre-redemptive Edenic revelation and also the “inter-trinatarian economy” covenantally. Others like J. Barton Payne urge that the primary meaning is Testament or Will. Geerhardus Vos in his “Hebrews the Epistle of the DIATHEKE” puts forward the view that a study of that epistle, which he calls “the last word in the development of the BERITH-DIATHEKE [Covenant, J.G.] idea,” establishes that there are two notions to the Covenant concept. First there is the idea that the Covenant is an institution established and set in operation for an ulterior end. Here the majesty of God and the Divine monergism in redemption shine through in its character as a Divine promissory dispensation. Secondly the Covenant is seen as an end in itself; the fulfillment of religion in a life of union and communion with God in Christ; epitomized in the covenantal formula “I shall be to them a God and they shall be to me a people.” This two-fold conception of the BERITH-DIATHEKE accords with the formulation of; and the perspectives on the Covenant by; the federal theologians, not only in respect of the Covenant of Grace but also in respect of the Covenant of Works. And without asserting that this is the last word in definition it should serve us adequately for the purpose of considering further the doctrine of the Covenant and the Reformed Confessions.

### A transitional statement

Louis Berkhof in his *Systematic Theo-*

logy takes up the question, “Is the Covenant of Works abrogated?” and he goes on to give the differing views among theologians on the matter. Arminians claim that it was wholly abrogated at the Fall. Reformed theologians are not unanimous in their views. Some hold that it has been wholly abrogated but others — and it would appear to be the majority view—that in some respects it has been abrogated while in another sense it has not. If we take man in his sinfulness and lostness we must remember that he is still unsevered from his original covenantal root and that he remains so unless and until he is united to Christ. This is the way that Thomas Boston in his celebrated “Four-fold State” treats the matter — a divine who gets far less attention than he deserves. This is a much more Biblical way of looking at things than to speak of man in his natural relationship to God and to rationalize from this premise. For the man in Christ “Old things have passed away all things have become new.” Even his relationship to the law as a moral imperative is different. Not a different law but a different relationship to it. This perspective is brought out with great felicity in the Heidelberg Catechism where consideration of the law is taken up under “Thankfulness.”

Does this mean then that there is no connection at all between the Covenant of Works and the Covenant of Grace? that the two Covenants are utterly diverse and disjointed? To say that this is so leaves both Covenants in a condition of unacceptable suspense. The answer to this is that the junction between the two Covenants is Christological. “God sent forth His Son born of a woman, made under the law — GENOMENON EK GUNAIKOS, GENOMENON UPO NOMON — to redeem — EXAGORASEE — them that are under the law.” In Christ the Covenant of Works is taken up and fulfilled. He is truly the Second Adam.

Biblical representation clearly establishes that there is such a link. The very first intimation of Covenant that we have in the Scriptures is in Genesis 6:18 and it embraces not only the salvation of Noah and his family but also of the world from prevailing wickedness. This is finely expressed by W.J. Dumbrell, “A Biblical doctrine of Covenant in the light of the

evidence adduced cannot be merely anthropologically related. The world and man are part of one total divine construct and we cannot entertain the salvation of man apart from the world which he has affected. The refusal to submit in Eden meant a disordered universe and thus the restoration of all things will put God, man and the world at harmony again.”<sup>23</sup> God’s Covenant of Grace looks back to the ruin of the Fall and far from conveying to us the idea that God has abandoned the Covenant of Works; so far as the sublimest sense of Covenant is concerned, of effecting a communion of life between Himself and His image-bearer; He has sworn that it is His purpose to effect this. But this time Covenant as means to this end will not rest in the faithfulness of mere man but in the unswerving obedience of the One who is God’s fellow. It is a Covenant that will not fail and one in which the law will be magnified and made honourable. The opinions of a large number of eminent theologians could be referred to as supporting this position. The following quote from R.L. Dabney puts it very plainly, “The Bible is always a practical book and does not wander from its aim: it concedes nothing to a merely useless curiosity. Now the object of God in giving to the Church of the latter ages this brief history of primeval man, was to furnish us only with the great facts, which are necessary to enable understandingly to connect the Covenants of Works and Grace, and to construe the spiritual history of our race.”<sup>24</sup> We would only add that all such understanding is in order that we may know God as our blessedness.

### Some additional historical remarks

In the progress of dogma the Covenant of Grace came before the Covenant of Works. Zwingli and Bullinger, brought forward their doctrine of the Covenant of Grace to repudiate the assertions of the Anabaptists. Bullinger particularly developed the covenantal concept in the sermons on the Ceremonial Law in the Decades and in other works produced by him. He limited the Covenant strictly to redemptive revelation and one can only speak of his covenantal theology as nascent federalism. It is Caspar Olevianus who is credited with the organizing of



redemptive revelation in a covenantal way in the more fully developed form. It is an honour that he must share with his colleague Ursinus; joint — author with him of the Heidelberg Catechism. This historical priority of the Covenant of Grace is reflected in the Reformed Confessions as we have already noted. The 16th century Confessions make no mention of a Covenant of Works. But in all the Confessions, with the exception of the Scotch Confession and the Gallican Confession, there are specific references to the Covenant of Grace, chiefly in their dicta on the sacrament of Baptism. But still the paucity of use of the term Covenant, or of the term “testament” even, in reference to the Covenant of Grace, is a matter of some surprise. This probably indicates that at that time the Covenant idea had not yet taken fast hold on the theological mind of the Reformed Churches, as it was later to do. The latter part of the 16th century and the first half of the 17th century was the age of the greatest development in federal theology. When these facts of history are taken into account they explain to a great extent the differences in confessional formulations.

#### Towards a further confessional evaluation

The progressive character of revelation by way of successive Covenants, particularly in the Pentateuch; but never being lost sight of in the subsequent eras of revelation right down to the close of the canon of Scripture; is the soil out of which federalism grew. Its Biblical origins are unquestionable and from the very beginning Covenant theology had what may quite legitimately be called a philosophy of revelation. It may be briefly expressed as the principle of Unity in the midst of Diversity. All the Reformed Confessions assert the unity of the Scriptures in respect of their revelation of God’s way of salvation, in the midst of the diversity of forms in which revelation came. This is not just assumed, it is explicitly affirmed in every one of our Confessions and in that respect they all correspond. But though they are univocal in that respect it will be seen that the unity is confessed from a slightly different perspective in the 16th century Creeds than in the 17th century ones, particularly in the “Westminster Standards.”

In the Creeds of the 16th century we shall find that the unity is confessed principally if not purely from a Christological perspective.

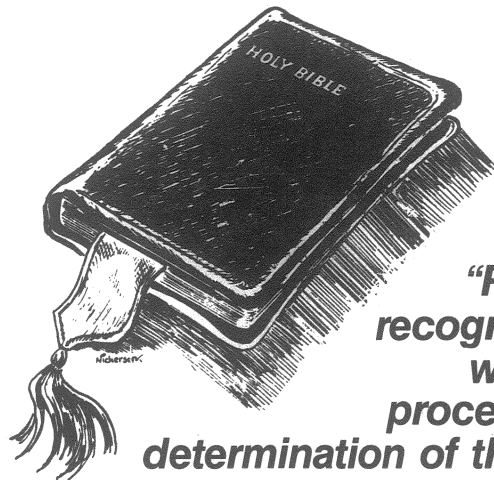
*The Scotch Confession*, Article IV referring to Genesis 3:15 says, “Which promise as it was repeated and made more clear from time to time, so was it embraced with joy, and most constantly, received of all the faithful from Adam to Noah, from Noah to Abraham, from Abra-

ham to David and so forth to the incarnation of Jesus Christ, all (we mean the faithful fathers under the law) did see the joyful day of Christ Jesus and did rejoice.”<sup>25</sup>

*The Thirty Nine Articles* says, “The Old Testament is not contrary to the New for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ who is the only mediator between God and man.”<sup>26</sup>

*The Gallican Confession* says, “We believe that the ordinances of the law

covenantally as well as Christologically. The Westminster Larger Catechism brings this out with considerable force, “The Covenant was differently administered in the time of the law and in the time of the gospel; under the law it was administered by promises, prophecies, sacrifices, circumcision, the paschal lamb and other types and ordinances delivered unto the people of the Jews and foreshadowing Christ to come.”<sup>30</sup> Other passages from the Westminster Standards could be ad-



**“Reformed Theology recognized in a profound way that redemption proceeded from the free determination of the Triune God. . . .”**

came to an end at the advent of Jesus Christ; but although the ceremonies are no more in use, yet their substance and truth remain in the person of him in whom they are fulfilled.”<sup>27</sup>

*The Second Helvetic Confession* says “Jesus Christ is the only Redeemer and Saviour of the world, the King and High Priest, the true and looked for Messiah, that holy and blessed one (I say) whom all the shadows of the law, and the prophecies of the prophets did prefigure and promise.”<sup>28</sup>

The same Christological emphasis as the unifying principle of revelation is asserted in the Belgic Confession in the Article on “The Catholic Christian Church.” It says, “This church has been from the beginning of the world and will be to the end thereof, which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal King, which, without subjects, he cannot be.”<sup>29</sup>

From these and numerous other passages that could be quoted it will be seen that the unity of revelation was Christologically perceived. But with the development of the Covenant concept it was perceived that the Christology of the Old Testament and the Covenant were interlocked. Numerous Scriptures brought this out very sharply like Isaiah 42:6, “I will give thee for a Covenant of the people.” Consequently in federal theology the Christological emphasis is taken up into the Covenant and the unity of revelation is expressed

duced to show that the Christological motif is not obscured as a result of this development but it is now locked into the covenantal perspective. And even a cursory acquaintance with Scripture is enough to convince one that this is of the nature of things in the unfolding of revelation concerning God’s so great salvation.

It was apparent from this twofold perspective of Christology and Covenant that the soteriological oneness of both Testaments was clearly established. There are few points on which greater emphasis is placed in the Reformed Creeds than that the fathers under the law (i.e. under the whole of the Old Testament economy) were saved through faith in the promised Saviour. The Second Helvetic Confession puts the matter very pointedly as follows: “Yet, notwithstanding, it is most certain that they who were before the law, and under the law, were not altogether destitute of the gospel.” The Heidelberg Catechism says concerning the knowledge of the Mediator, Question 19, “Whence knowest thou this? Answer: “From the Holy Gospel, which God Himself first revealed in Paradise, afterwards proclaimed by the Holy Patriarchs and Prophets and foreshadowed by the sacrifice and other services of the law, and finally fulfilled by this His well-beloved Son.” It has been frequently asserted that there was an improper spiritualizing of revelation involved with this emphasis. There is no

reason to deny that in many instances this was excessively done to the violation of the true meaning of the Scriptures but the Confessions do not lose sight of the multiplicity of forms in which revelation came but rather assert that. As is well-known this is one area of Biblical studies that is an ongoing task for the Church and developments have always to be taken account of. It is also now accepted that the covenantal perspective is one of the most helpful in grasping and elucidating the unity of essence with the diversity of forms that we have in revelation history. Federal theology is as true to the Grammatico-historic principles of interpretation as is any other approach to the systematizing of revelation.

One of the particular forms in which revelation came to the people of God under the Old Testament is of special interest at this point. Frequent reference is made in the Confessions to "Types." It is not necessary for us here to go into the matter of the definition of Types or into the elaborate and complex hermeneutical principles which must regulate Typology. The statement of the Larger Westminster Catechism that Types foreshadow Christ is all that is necessary for us to take up. They served not only to prefigure the Promised Christ but were also "shadows" of the reality that stood behind them (or back of them). Types were as the writer to the Hebrews says copies of the things of heaven (UPODEIGMATA TON EN TOIS OURANOIS) Hebrews 2:23. This fact of revelation has a great bearing on the way in which Covenant theology developed; in particular because it was apparent that a full understanding of Divine Revelation required not only spiritual perception of its eschatological character but also of the heavenliness of its origin and more particularly of its core content. This heavenly dimension is found not only in such truths as the Trinity but pervades the whole of Divine Revelation. Though it pervades all of revelation it is particularly accentuated in "TYPES." And as revelation progressed in fullness and pointedness so this element became more and more pronounced, so that when the Promised Saviour is "Exhibited" it becomes its dominant note. "The second man is the Lord from heaven." I Corinthians 15:47. This cannot be more finely put than in the following quote from Geerhardus Vos: "When therefore, the question is raised how the Old Covenant can be identical in substance with the New, what is the common essence that, notwithstanding the great progress from one to the other, makes them two coherent stages in the expression and conveyance of the same spiritual reality, the answer is immediately forthcoming: the same world of heavenly spiritual realities, which has now come

to light in the person and work of Christ, already existed during the course of the old Covenant, and in a provisional typical way through revelation reflected itself in, and through redemption projected itself into, the religious experience of the ancient people of God, so that they in their own partial manner and measure had access to and communion with and enjoyment of the higher world, which has now been let down and thrown open to our full knowledge and possession. In other words the bonds that link the Old and New Covenants together, is not a purely evolutionary one, inasmuch as the one has grown out of the other; it is, if we may call it, a transcendental bond. The New Covenant in its pre-existent heavenly state reaches back and stretches its eternal wings over the old and the Old Testament people of God were one with us in religious dignity and privilege; they were, to speak in a Pauline figure, sons of Jerusalem above, which is the mother of us all."<sup>31</sup> Federal theologians in seeking to come to grips with this heavenly reality that stood back of the historical disclosure but which yet permeated the historical, and viewing the matter from a covenantal perspective moved in the direction of taking up the PACTUM SALUTIS into its formulation of federalism. The movement came to full-orbed articulation with Cocceius and from then on it featured prominently in all the works on federal theology. Objections have been voiced even by federal theologians themselves, against the propriety of speaking of the inter-trinitarian economy in federal terms and these objections insofar as they are exegetically based have to be taken seriously. Criticism against some of the more ingeniously speculative schemes must be accepted as being validly made but excess of theological speculation by some exponents of the concept is not of itself grounds for the complete rejection of the idea. In dogmatics this aspect of federalism came to be called the Covenant of Redemption or as Cocceius himself preferred to call it, the Divine Testament.

An example of the way in which the pre-temporal and temporal are related to one another may be taken from Witsius. He says, "In order to understand more thoroughly the nature of the Covenant of Grace two things are above all to be dis-

tinctly considered. First, the Covenant which intervenes between God the Father and Christ the Mediator. Second, the Testamentary Disposition by which God bestows by an immutable Covenant eternal salvation and everything relative thereto upon the Elect. The former agreement is between God and the Mediator. The latter between God and the Elect. This last pre-supposes the first and is founded upon it."<sup>32</sup> Other theologians stated the matter differently but there is no need to multiply examples. Turretin, as is well-known, said that debate as to whether God made the Covenant with the Elect in Christ, or with Christ for the Elect, was futile. Regardless of different ways of expressing it all agreed that the manifestation in time rested upon the pre-temporal or eternal council of which it was the manifestation. There are two questions that demand consideration here. Firstly — Is this a way of stating things that accords with the Confession? Secondly — In what way do the confessions treat this fact of revelation?

The belief that God's redemptive acts in history proceed from an eternal purpose of God is not an exclusively covenantal way of construing things. Reformed Theology recognized in a profound way that redemption proceeded from the free determination of the Triune God, that is from the will of God's good pleasure and that this will of God's good pleasure was a communal act of the Trinity. Due place was also given to the fact that in the relations which the Triune God economically sustained to creation that the Son was the person "through whom all things were created," "the first-born of all creation," "the heir of all things" and that in the Council of the Triune God it was altogether appropriate that the Son consenting to become "Incarnate" should be the mediator between God and man. All the Confessions affirm the need for a Mediator due to the chasm that separates the Holy God from sinners. The Second Helvetic Confession says, "Moreover, we believe and teach that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was from all eternity predestinated and foreordained of the Father to be the Saviour of the world."<sup>33</sup> The substance of what is taught is stated in the Westminster Confession as follows, "It pleased God, in his eternal purpose, to choose and ordain the Lord Jesus, his only begotten Son, to be the Mediator between God and Man, the Prophet, Priest and King, the Head and Saviour of his church, the Heir of all things, and Judge of the world, unto whom he did from all eternity give a people to be his seed and to be by him in time redeemed, called, justified, sanctified and glorified."<sup>33</sup> Whilst there is no difference of substance between the Confessions on this point, as a compar-

## OUR COVER

Resting at  
Eastern Shore, NS

Photo courtesy:  
Government of Nova Scotia

ison of the two statements above clearly show, yet taking chapters VII and VIII of the Westminster Confession together and some of the statements made in these chapters singly the influence of the developments in federal theology on the Westminster formulation is apparent. Speaking of the mediatorial office it says, "Which office he took not unto himself, but was thereunto called by the Father, who put all power and judgment into his hand and gave him commandment to execute the same. This office the Lord Jesus Christ did most willingly undertake."<sup>34</sup> There are numerous important lessons here for us in regard to the way in which we should handle our Creeds. Like everything that is of man; in this case even of the Church; it is conditioned by the age of its production. Hence we must as a first exercise always distinguish between the

substance of the truth confessed and the form in which it is articulated. But we must not conclude from this that the Covenant is merely of the form of things, it is very much of their substance.

It is not necessary here to deal with other aspects of the mediatorship, such as the teaching of the Confessions on the theanthropic person, and the offices which He executes. But we may just mention in passing that there is a setting forth in clearer light of the two-fold character of the mediatorship — Godwards and Manwards — in the Covenant scheme. In Covenant theology the Suretyship of Christ comes into its due prominence. But whilst, as was said, the influences of the developments of federalism are observable in the way the Westminster Standards state things, it may not be claimed that they affirm a Covenant of Redemption nor on the other

hand do they deny it. The earlier confessional formulations clearly evince that they preceded that way of considering the inter-trinitarian council.

— *To be continued*  
JOHN N. MACLEOD

<sup>23</sup>W. J. Dumbrell. *Covenant and Creation* (The Pater-noster Press 1984).

<sup>24</sup>R. L. Dabney. *Lectures in Systematic Theology* p. 445 (Zondervan Publishing House)

<sup>25</sup>The Scotch Confession Art. IV

<sup>26</sup>The Thirty Nine Articles Art. VII

<sup>27</sup>The Gallican Confession Art. XXIII

<sup>28</sup>The Second Helvetic Confession Chapter XI para 17

<sup>29</sup>The Belgic Confession Art. XXVII

<sup>30</sup>The Westminster Larger Catechism. Question 34

<sup>31</sup>Geerhardus Vos. *Hebrews The Epistle of the DIATHEKE* (Presbyterian Reformed)

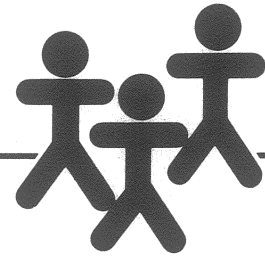
<sup>32</sup>Herman Witsius. *The Economy of the Covenant between God & Man* Book Chapter 11. 1

<sup>33</sup>The Second Helvetic Confession Chapter XI para. 1

<sup>34</sup>The Westminster Confession Chapter VIII para. 1

<sup>34</sup>Ibid Chapter VIII para 3-4

## SCHOOL CROSSING



## Parental perspective

The last time we dealt with the concept of "communication," an ongoing concern of teachers and usually seen from their perspective. This time we get an all-too-rare, and very insightful, parental perspective, on one aspect of this communication. If we all catch the message written between the lines, our next set of interviews may be more productive. The contribution comes from the school magazine of John Calvin, *Burlington*, and is signed simply, "A Parent":

### The parent-teacher interview One mother's perspective

Parent-teacher interviews will never be a success until the parent teacher combination realize that they are talking about two different people in the body of one child.

(I admit to some fault in this dilemma. The child I send to school in September, freshly scrubbed, combed, clothed, and shod bears no resemblance to the child I have at home in the summer.)

The teacher generally tends to start things off with a compliment. "Your son is very neat," she informs me. My son once made his breakfast of oatmeal, milk, sugar, and corn syrup on my kitchen floor. Without a bowl. I check my program to make sure the right players are on stage and smile vaguely.

"He does well in math and has a good grasp of the reality of the numbers he's using." I ponder the words "grasp of reality" and remember the funeral he had for the cat — complete with headstone, shovel and wilted, purple wild flowers. The cat was not dead. The cat, in fact, is still alive today.

Compliments having now been exhausted at two, the teacher gracefully carries on to her main points. "There appears," she says, "to be some difficulty in the introduction of new concepts." I wanted to take her home and introduce her to my neighbours — the ones who were somewhat appalled when my son introduced the concept of jumping his BMX over the ramp placed in front of their children's supine bodies. "You see," I would tell them, "the boy has trouble with new concepts. I'm sure he didn't think this up." Then I remember that we aren't talking about the same child.

The teacher pauses and chooses her words so I will understand that she is not being critical, but matter-of-fact. "His attention span is not all that it could be." Clearly I am in the wrong school. To remove our John from Saturday morning cartoons, it is first necessary to 1. Apply ropes to his ankles, 2. Muffle his screams of rage, 3. Explain to the child that if he watches He-Man for five more minutes

his muscles will atrophy and He Will Never Walk Again, 4. Apply pressure to ropes.

The interview is almost over now, and the teacher and I, by means of carefully careless questions, satisfy our curiosity. She learns that when John's school diary reads "My dad left home and my mom is sad," it actually translates to "Dad is on a business trip to Montreal." I learn that the teacher who went crazy and climbed on the roof of the school ("He was yelling too, Mom"), was actually retrieving a soccer ball and, rather understandably, had spoken in an uplifted tone of voice.

We smile in mutual relief, and the teacher throws in a few graceful notes in conclusion. She speaks of John's willingness to help, his cheerful attitude, and good rapport with his classmates. I nod in a self-deprecating fashion. I do not mention this child is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, and if scratched, will cause me to bleed. I say, "Oh, he's a good kid most of the time." And it was a good interview. But some day we will have a great interview. We will be discussing the same child.

A Parent

\* \* \* \* \*

We have all heard of the "illiterate high school graduate." The popular press,

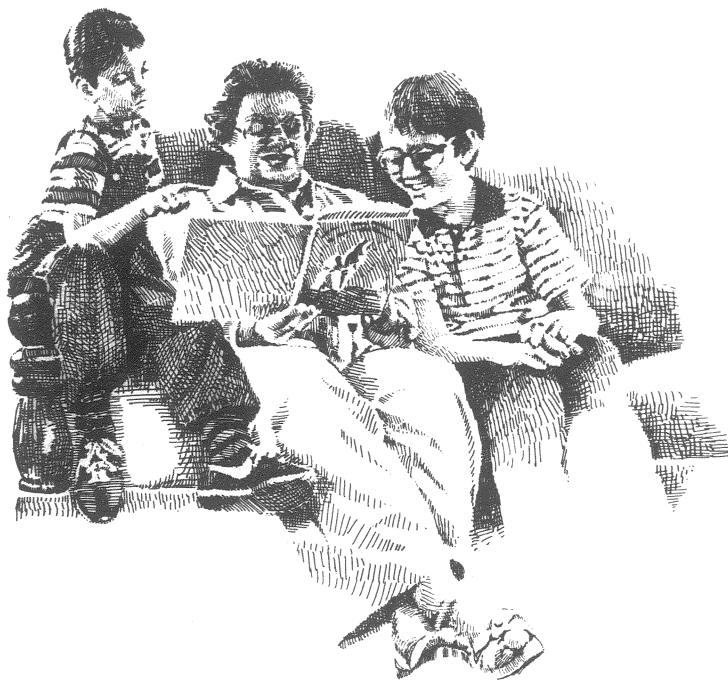
with its talent for sensationalism, would have us believe that this is a fairly common phenomenon. Although we should avoid that trap, there is many a parent, remembering his/her high school days of between 20 and 30 years ago, who is amazed at the small amount of homework the modern student is able to get away with. If this is mentioned, that parent's offspring will probably accuse him/her of indulging in the usual romanticizing of

"High School and Beyond," a study of sophomores and seniors begun in 1980; each was based on a nationally representative sample of 16,000 to 28,000 students.

December 1985

Although these are American statistics, past experience tells us that we may safely assume a close parallel with the Canadian situation.

A rather major area of research in



the past, that is to say, "When I was young . . . ." However, a very brief note in *The Education Digest*, an American magazine for educators, gives some empirical evidence to support that perception:

### Time spent on homework

High school students spent significantly less time on homework in 1980 than in 1972, according to studies by the National Center for Education Statistics. In 1972, 35 percent of seniors reported that they spent five hours or more per week on homework; by 1980, the figure was 25 percent, recovering to 29 percent in 1982. Among consistent differences among subsets of students, females were found to do considerably more homework than males, perhaps explaining generally higher achievement scores among females. In 1972, 44 percent of females and 26 percent of males spent five or more hours per week on homework; in 1982, the corresponding figures were 35 and 23 percent.

These estimates were derived from the "National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972" and from

education at the moment is the concept of "time-on-task," and its relation to performance. Early, tentative results indicate that there is indeed a direct link between the quality of performance and the time spent on acquiring a skill. Common sense, one might say. The trouble with common sense, however, is that it isn't all that common.

A recent PEANUTS comic strip is suggestive of the same theme. Comic page aficionados will no doubt have encountered it . . . a school room conversation between Peppermint Patty, the perpetual D- student, and her more scholarly friend, Marcie.

Patty: "That was a hard test . . . How'd you ever get an 'A'?"

Marcie: "I pass tests the old-fashioned way . . . I study."

Patty: "You're weird, Marcie." Put the two items together and one is led to wonder just how far the Peppermint Patty "philosophy" has infiltrated, also our, society.

\* \* \* \* \*

There is not a member in our church community, I feel fairly safe in saying,

who is not aware of the high costs of educating our children in schools which share the confession of home and church. How nice it would be if one could add, ". . . and who carries his/her fair share of the burden." Yet we have been spared, for the most part, the necessity of sending young mothers out into the work force. That this is a common occurrence in society-at-large we know not only from reading the newspapers but by direct experience insofar as many of our stay-at-home mothers do "day-care" for their working neighbours. No doubt much of the income so derived goes toward paying the increasingly steep costs of educating our own children. By mentioning these things it is not my intention to address the issue of the financing of our schools, but rather to suggest that we are blessed when our young mothers are largely able, and willing I presume, to stay home to raise their youngsters. These thoughts occurred when reading an article in the *Carman* school magazine. This article is in turn an extract from a book by Dr. James Dobson, *Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions*. Most readers will be familiar with the author's name largely through his well-known work, *Dare to Discipline*. (Did the implications of that title, for the kind of world we live in, ever occur to you?) The question asked and Dr. Dobson's response to it ought to give us some comfort and renewed respect for the position of *mother* and *homemaker*, a position so lightly esteemed in today's society, at least if we are to believe the media. As Dr. Dobson suggests, that message is easily countered by the Bible, so let's let *its* message continue to be heard among us and drown out that other, negative one.

### Dr. Dobson answers a question

**Q.** We have a 1-year-old daughter and we want to raise her well. I've heard that parents can increase the mental abilities of their children if they stimulate them properly during the early years. Is this accurate, and if so, how can I accomplish this with my baby?

**A.** Research indicates that it is possible for you to increase the intellectual capability of your child. This conclusion was one of the most important findings derived from a 10-year study of children between 8 and 18 months of age. This investigation, known as Harvard University's Preschool Project, was guided by Dr. Burton L. White and a team of 15 researchers between 1965 and 1975. They studied young children intensely during this period, hoping to discover which experiences in the early years of life contribute to the development of a healthy, intelligent human being. The conclusions from this exhaustive effort are summa-

rized below, as reported originally in the APA Monitor.

1. It is increasingly clear that the origins of human competence are to be found in a critical period of development between 8 and 18 months of age. The child's experience during these brief months do more to influence future intellectual competence than any time before or after.

2. The single most important environmental factor in the life of the child is his mother. "She is on the hook," said Dr. White, and carries more influence on her child's experiences than any other person or circumstance.

3. The amount of live language directed to a child (not to be confused with television, radio or overheard conversations) is vital to his development of fundamental linguistic, intellectual and social skills. The researchers concluded, "Providing a rich social life for a 12- to 15-month-old child is the best thing you can do to guarantee a good mind."

4. Those children who are given free access to living areas of their homes progressed much faster than those whose movements are restricted.

5. The nuclear family is the most important educational delivery system. If we are going to produce capable, healthy children, it will be by strengthening family units and by improving the interactions that occur within them.

6. The best parents were those who excelled at three key functions:

(1) They were superb designers and organizers of their children's environments.

(2) They permitted their children to interrupt them for brief 30-second episodes, during which personal consultation, comfort, information and enthusiasm were exchanged.

(3) "They were firm disciplinarians while simultaneously showing great affection for their children." (I couldn't have said it better myself.)

These six conclusions are exciting to me, for I find within them an affirmation and validation of the Scriptural concepts to which I have devoted my entire professional life: discipline with love; the dedication of mothers during the early years; the value of raising children; the stability of the family, etc. It is obvious that the Creator of the universe is best able to tell us how to raise children, and He has done just that through His Holy Word.

Do you want to help your children reach the maximum potential that lies within them? Then raise them according to the precepts and values given to us in the Scriptures.

\* \* \* \* \*

In the school magazine of John Cal-

vin, *Smithville*, I encountered an article entitled "Robbing" the school board. A provocative title, you will agree, and an interesting subject. Some school societies elect their boards in the Fall, many others in the Spring. Before the next round of elections, let's consider the issue raised herein, for whatever profit may be derived. The article, then, as it appeared:

### "Robbing" the school board

On Wednesday, October 9, we again elected new school board members. Some were needed to replace school-board members who had finished their term of office, but others had to be elected to replace board members who had been elected as office-bearers in the church. Some people will even misconstrue the issue by suggesting that the latter received a promotion. I guess that's a matter of opinion.

(More on that later on.)

From concerns expressed by people from other places, it appears that this problem is not only rooted in Smithville



and surroundings. The following article was taken (and translated) from *Nederlands Dagblad*, Friday September 27, 1985:

### Church and school

Church and school are related. But of course church is more important than school, and consequently, a school board member who has been chosen to the office of deacon or elder will choose to serve in the latter capacity. On the last-held "school-day" (official opening of classes at the Theological College) in Kampen, Dr. D. Veurink (chairman of the [Dutch] "League" of school societies, P.H.T.) challenged this train of thought.

He questioned whether or not the consistory is allowed to nominate brothers who are already members of the school board. In this manner school boards are unjustly "robbed" according to Mr. Veurink.

In the meantime, at a school society meeting in Ridderkerk, Rev. J.M.A. Groeneveld reacted to the remarks made by Mr. Veurink. Rev. Groeneveld is also dissatisfied with this "robbery" but he would like to choose a different approach to the problem.

Whenever someone has been nominated for office-bearer while he is still a school board member and, is subsequently elected, then instead of immediately resigning from the school board, or requesting relief of his office, consider the possibility of combining both functions. Such a combination could be very beneficial for the consistory in giving proper guidance to the teaching in school, in the context of Article 58 of the Church Order. "That does not mean," says Rev. Groeneveld, "that this combination should be a rule. But in the light of the aforementioned article, it could be advantageous to the consistory if one of its members is also a school board member. The consistory can profit from this. Nowadays it is certainly important that in the consistory the various educational developments are followed . . . ."

### Postscript

Many brothers who have served in either function also know that the demands each require more time than they can reasonably give, in view of the other functions they also have: husband and father, society life in the church, their daily calling, etc. And therefore Rev. Groeneveld's suggestion might be extremely difficult for most to follow. Personally I believe another approach is required.

When a brother is confronted with these multiple demands upon his time, talents and energy, then it is his personal task before the Lord to determine where his calling is. The place of this calling may depend on a number of variables: one's personal situation, one's talents, and last but not least, the need for the brother in each capacity.

A decision to accept the one or the other calling is a personal one which each brother will have to answer for to the Lord. But to simply jump to the conclusion that election to a church office supercedes any other function is in itself not valid.

In the last place, I believe that when a brother is chosen to a certain function, such as board member, his acceptance of such a position demands a *commitment* from him to complete his task or term if at all possible. If this was faithfully carried out then there would be a lot

more continuity in the school boards of our schools, and in other societies of which our brothers may be or become members.

P.H.T.

The author wrote a "postscript" to which I would like to add a "post-postscript." The reader will have determined his/her own stance with respect to the opinion offered. That it is a widespread problem is undoubtedly true, the more so in the smaller church communities where the same persons are repeatedly called upon to fulfill the various leadership functions. Implicit in this article, as in any discussion I've ever heard on the subject, is that the school board is necessarily a male preserve. Yes, there has been the odd exception, but generally speaking our school boards are male clubs. Some rethinking on that state of affairs might help alleviate the problem. The vital role of women in child rearing has already been referred to earlier, the majority of the people staffing our schools are women, several former teachers are now themselves mothers and home-

makers and therefore in possession of some "inside" knowledge of the operations and needs of a school, many other young mothers have had substantial training and experience in the business world, and are therefore not strangers to budgets and decision making. Taken together, it appears to me, there is lots of interest and experience there that our schools would do well to tap into. At the same time, it would help to alleviate the problem addressed in the article. Something to think about the next time the school board requests your help in making up a slate of prospective board members.

\* \* \* \* \*

Language is a wonderful thing, but subject to abuse and misuse, and just inappropriate use. Those familiar with broadcaster Howard Cosell will know what I mean. Danny Gallivan, the Montreal hockey broadcaster, is another example, with his talk of "negotiating the puck"! Cosell, though, was the expert in making the simplest expression totally

obscure. Just for fun, see if you can unravel these common expressions rendered in Cosell-style English: (gleaned from *ElectroRent:Connections*, a trade paper)

—Members of an avian species of identical plumage tend to congregate.

—It is fruitless to become lacrymose over precipitately departed lacteal fluid.

—Likewise, it is fruitless to attempt to indoctrinate a super-annuated canine with innovative maneuvers.

—A plethora of individuals with expertise in culinary techniques vitiate the potable concoction produced by steeping certain comestibles.

—Freedom from encrustations of grime is contiguous to rectitude.

—The stylus is more potent than the claymore.

—Eschew the implement of correction and vitiate the scion.

Have fun!

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

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor,

In the recent issue of January 24, 1986, a letter of Br. Hans Boersma makes the claim that the Congregation at Blue Bell, formerly known as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church at Blue Bell, PA, has in its act of separation from the OPC, not adhered to the Form of Government (FOG) of the OPC. The letter asserts the following: "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 . . . was a schismatic act."

The paper entitled "The Controversy at Blue Bell OPC," drawn up by the Consistory at Blue Bell, denies such a charge, justifying the separation from the OPC as being no less than within the provisions of the FOG of the OPC.

The FOG (Chapter XVI, 6) provides for the possibility that a "congregation" may withdraw from the OPC. Without detailing the specific, which are available for perusal in the above mentioned paper, the necessary ecclesiastical action in order to undertake this withdraw, was affected. The FOG lists this provision in effect as a *possibility*, without mention of such action being characterized as schismatic. Nor is mention made that such a

congregation (for whatever reasons) should seek redress with the higher judicatories.

Furthermore, the FOG (Chapter XII, 2) states: "These assemblies [i.e. Session, Presbytery, and General Assembly] are not separate and independent, but they have a mutual relation, and every act of jurisdiction is the act of the whole church performed by it through the appropriate body." With regard to the action taken by the Interim Session, and Presbytery, the Congregation at Blue Bell was made aware that the action taken was in effect the action of the OPC as a whole, and therefore was final.

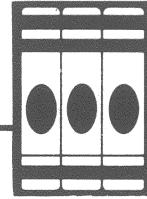
For several months, the congregation at Blue Bell was denied the right to live under elders nominated and duly elected by the congregation. The congregation was furthermore forced to submit to a preaching ministry, the central aim of which was to purge the congregation of those "distinctive" and Reformed doctrines on the basis of which Blue Bell sought affiliation with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Given the fact that the congregation's complaints against the action of the Interim Session and Presbytery were denied (without grounds) by the Interim Ses-

sion, and essentially denied by the Presbytery of Philadelphia, and the fact that withdrawal from the OPC is considered in the FOG as a legitimate possibility, the congregation felt that further attempt to appeal the decision would not have been wise for the sake of the preservation of the church.

We must not allow the decision of Synod Cloverdale describing the OPC as a true church to lull us to sleep. Ecclesiastical polity among sister churches, one would naturally suppose, should be similar, if not identical. Nevertheless, the controversy at Blue Bell, as well as the Hofford case, has exposed a prevailing tendency towards hierarchicalism, and pluriformity and its consequent denominationalism in the FOG of the OPC. Because the OPC is considered to be a true church by our churches, it is always a temptation to superimpose Reformed church polity into the FOG of the OPC. OPC history, however, tells a different story. It is essential that careful study be made of OPC ecclesiastical polity, both as defined in their standards, and to put to work in the decisions of their governing judicatories.

In Christ,  
WAYNE CHASE



## Response to Your Baptism, by Dr. K. Deddens, Reviewed by the editor.

The subtitle of this little book of sixteen short chapters tells us that it is "A word to ponder for all those who are going to celebrate the Lord's Supper." This subtitle is somewhat beside the point, because on page 1 we read, "In this book we address young people who 'make profession of faith.'" The book offers a discussion of the Form for the Public Profession of Faith and it also gives an explanation of that profession of faith. This act of publicly professing one's faith before many witnesses is connected with the two sacraments, baptism and the Lord's Supper. It is also connected with election. When we keep in mind that this booklet is addressing those who profess their faith, we can wholeheartedly agree. A true faith is God's gift, the work of the Holy Spirit, and the fruit of election. By connecting profession of faith with election, Dr. Deddens wants to show that those who come to the public profession of their faith must give thanks to God, since their deed is not first of all their own choice, but God's grace. At the same time it is an act of obedience to the LORD.

Chapters 3-5 discuss the first question of the Form, concerning "the doctrine of the Word of God, summarized in the confessions and taught here in this Christian Church." Dr. Deddens says many good, Reformed things about the doctrine of God's Word and how we have to see the summary of this doctrine as confessed by the churches. He points out, for example, referring to Q. & A. 22 of the Heidelberg Catechism, that in the confessions the churches have summarized the promises of the gospel. Or, to say it somewhat differently, in their creeds and confessions the churches publicly confess: this is how our triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, gives Himself to us as our God in Jesus Christ; this is how rich we are in Him. Dr. Deddens also stresses that there is no contrast between the Christian doctrine and Christ Himself. The doctrine is the teaching of the gospel, the instruction of God concerning Christ as our Saviour.

Chapters 6-9 explain the second question. Emphasis is placed on the connection with the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Attention is paid to the words, "Do you truly detest and humble yourself before God because of your sins?" The writer points to Romans 7, where Paul

writes, "Wretched man that I am." Quite a number of scholars no longer believe that Paul wrote these words regarding himself *after* his conversion, but think that Paul wrote them about himself when he was still under the law, thus before he was converted. In my opinion, Dr. Deddens is correct when he uses this word of Paul as referring to himself after he was regenerated. In connection with the words, "Do you . . . seek your life outside yourself in Jesus Christ?" the author points to John 15, where Christ speaks about the vine and the branches. In my opinion, this point could and should have received more attention because it is such an important key point.

The next two chapters, 10 and 11, deal with the third question: "Do you declare that you love the Lord God, and that it is your heartfelt desire to serve Him according to His Word, to forsake the world, and to crucify your old nature?" In connection with this last point, I may also refer the reader to John Murray, *Principles of Conduct* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids), ch. IX, "The Dynamic of Biblical Ethic."

Chapter 12 speaks about the promise in the fourth question with which those who profess their faith place themselves under the oversight and discipline of the consistory. Here discipline is connected with love. Chapter 13 says that the "I do" response to the questions has the power of an oath, while Chapter 14 speaks about the meaning of God's blessing, Chapter 15 about the doxology, and Chapter 16 about the word "Amen."

While a very simple booklet, it is clear in its message and thoroughly Reformed. I can heartily recommend it as a gift for those who make public profession of faith, although one can say: it should be read by the candidates before they publicly profess their faith. Reading this booklet of only 90 pages with quite large, easy-to-read print, can help in understanding and realizing the riches and also the obligations of that public act before God and His congregation.

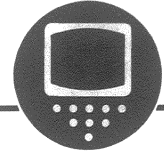
I would also like to make some remarks concerning possible improvement. Sacrifices may be necessary for the sake of simpleness and shortness. Earlier I expressed the wish for more attention to the words that we must seek our life outside ourselves in Christ. Another wish is that the writer make more clear that being born in the church and being baptized as

an infant does not automatically mean being elected, and that no one can conclude in an easy way: I am baptized, therefore I am also elected. As stated above, I agree fully that those who sincerely make profession of their faith are to thank God for this gift seeing the connection of their faith with election. True faith is the fruit of election.

Another wish is that the book receive a thorough examination as far as the translation and the English is concerned. In my opinion, the translation from the Dutch is too literal here and there. On page 2, in the second paragraph, a word is omitted ("acknowledges Me and [speaks?] of his faith in Me"). I also think that the construction, "I am totally free to decide *if* I am making profession or not" is a modern way of speaking but is not correct. Should "if" not be changed to "whether"? Although I could continue to mention quite a number of words and sentences, I refrain from doing so because it would be boring. However, there is one matter I would like to mention here yet. On page 12 we read, "But, in saying this, an antithesis is created which in reality is not there." This statement is made in connection with the slogan that sometimes can be heard: "Not doctrine, but the Lord." I would rather use the word *contrast* in this case; or the word *dilemma*, reserving the word *antithesis* for the contrast between faith and unbelief, church and world, seed of the woman and seed of the serpent.

My conclusion is: we have here a simple, short, yet instructive booklet that is certainly worth buying and reading. That I am not the only one who thinks this way can be clear from the fact that the booklet already saw two reprints in The Netherlands and was also translated into Hungarian. So, take and read.





## “Anchor” Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, Feb. 14, 1986

The meeting is opened in the customary Christian manner.

The minutes are accepted as presented. Br. Kooiman, the administrator, gives a report on the initial days of the Home. The Home appears to be running smoothly and the residents are settling in.

Some contracts between the city of Burlington and the Home for the Aged and “Anchor” are received to be signed.

A resignation letter is received from one of the board members. This resignation is accepted. A letter of appreciation for the work done will be sent.

The Property Committee reports on a rezoning meeting held in Lincoln about the property in Tinturn. This was the first of three public meetings.

The Public Relation Committee recommends the publishing of a bi-monthly newsletter. A sample is circulated. The board approves this recommendation.

The dates for Summer Camp have been changed. Camp will be held, D.V., from June 30 — July 11, 1986.

The “Criteria for Admission” is accepted, after a minor adjustment as proposed by the Advisory Committee.

Br. Lodder is advised to buy an eight passenger van which appears suitable for the needs of “Anchor.”

The treasurer gives a financial report and circulates a statement of revenue and expenditures for the year 1985.

A Management Committee is appointed. The press release is read and accepted.

Question period follows.

The meeting is closed with prayer after the singing of Psalm 130:4

E.J. DE JONG

## Classis Ontario North, March 6, 1986.

1. a. After Christian *opening*, the credentials are examined and found in good order.

Classis is constituted with the Rev. C. Stam as chairman, Rev. G. Nederveen as clerk and Rev. J. Mulder, vice-chairman.

b. The chairman welcomes the brothers and guests, especially the two visitors elder H.J. Moes and elder F. Stefani of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church of Canada in Sackville, Nova Scotia.

He mentions the call extended by the Church at Guelph to Rev. G.H. Visscher of Ottawa and he wishes Rev. Visscher wisdom in deciding on this call.

c. The agenda is established.

### 2. Reports

a. The Church at Toronto has audited the books of the treasurer of classis and found them in good order. He is discharged of his responsibility for 1984 and 1985.

b. The Church at Orangeville reports that the books of the Fund for Needy Churches have been audited and found in good order.

### 3. Question Period according to Article 44 C.O.

The Church at Ottawa has a request for advice concerning their contact with the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church at Sackville, N.S. Will be dealt with later.

### 4. Correspondence received

The Church at Orangeville asks classis to revise the decisions of Classis Ontario North of December 12, 1985, Acts Article 8 “c” and “d” re “early retirement of the Rev. C. Olij.”

Classis judges these requests inadmissible since they are in fact appeals and as such should be addressed to Regional Synod.

5. The letter of the Church at Ottawa re its contact with the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church at Sackville, N.S. is read and dealt with.

In a letter to Classis Ontario North, Classis Ontario South of March 5, 1986 recommends that Classis North agree to continue the contacts with the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church at Sackville, N.S. via the Church at Ottawa. After discussion this recommendation is adopted.

### 6. Ottawa also asks classis

a. to take note of the fact that two elders of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church are present as visitors;

b. to give these brothers the privilege of the floor to address the delegates and to take part in the discussions pertaining to the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church.

Both requests are granted.

7. The elders H.J. Moes and F. Stefani address classis, giving a review of the history and life of this Church which separated from the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). They also express their gratitude for the contacts with the Canadian Reformed Churches and the way they are now conducted by the Church at Ottawa.

Some members of classis make use

of the opportunity to ask questions, which are answered by the two visitors.

8. The Church at Ottawa asks the advice of classis according to Article 44 C.O. how to go on with the contact with this church.

The advice given by classis reads:

Classis cannot at this time advise the Church at Ottawa regarding the differing viewpoints with respect to eldership, but can only point to the adopted Church Order.

Whether certain exceptions can be made, must be determined at each individual request for admission to the federation.

9. The classical treasurer submits and explains his financial report over 1984 and 1985. This report is taken note of.

The churches are requested to send \$4.50 per communicant member to the treasurer, Mr. H. DenBroeder, Willowdale, ON.

10. The letter of Brother and Sister H.J. Endeman, Orangeville, is read and discussed. They appeal the decision of the consistory of Orangeville to ask classis to revise the decision of Classis Ontario North of December 12, 1985 re “early retirement of Rev. C. Olij.” They ask classis to declare this request inadmissible.

Classis decides to answer them that this classis has already declared Orangeville’s request inadmissible be it partially on different grounds. Classis need not to confirm the decision of a previous classis since the decision stands for itself and the Church at Orangeville should execute it in the proper manner according to the Church Order.

11. A letter of Brother J. Kottelenberg, Brampton, expressing concerns re a decision of Classis Ontario North of December 12, 1985 with respect to the Rev. C. Olij, is read and discussed.

Classis takes note of this letter but cannot respond to it since these concerns have been dealt with by a previous classis and should therefore be directed to the Regional Synod.

### 12. Preparation next Classis.

Convening Church: the Church at Brampton. Suggested officers: Rev. G.H. Visscher, chairman; Rev. C. Stam, clerk; Rev. G. Nederveen, vice-chairman.

Date: Thursday, June 12, 1986 at 9:00 a.m.

13. Church visitation according to Article 44 C.O.



Church visitation is arranged according to the following schedule: the Church at Brampton, the Revs. J. DeJong and J. Mulder; Burlington-East, C. Stam and G.H. Visscher; Burlington-South, D. DeJong and C. Stam; Burlington-West, D. DeJong and M. Werkman; Fergus, R.N. Gleason and J. Mulder; Guelph, C. Stam and M. Werkman; Orangeville, J. DeJong and J. Mulder; Ottawa, J. DeJong and R.N. Gleason; Toronto, D. DeJong and G.H. Visscher.

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

15. *Closing*

Acts are read and adopted; the press release is read and approved. The chairman requests the singing of Psalm 65: 2,3 and closes classis with prayer and thanksgiving.

On behalf of Classis Ontario North,  
J. MULDER  
vice-chairman, e.t.

**Consulaat-Generaal  
Der Nederlanden  
CONSULATE GENERAL  
OF THE NETHERLANDS**

One Dundas Street West  
Box 2, Suite 2106  
Toronto, Ontario M5G 1Z3  
Phone: (416) 598-2520

**OPSPORING ADRESSEN:**

VAN DER AA-geboren Aalst, A.M. geboren op 18 juli 1906, laatstbekende adres in Canada: 142 Jane St., West Lorne, ON, N0L 2P0.

GROENEVELD, Herman en familie, geboren op 9 januari 1876 te Aarlanderveen, naar Canada vertrokken in 1907.

JANSEN, Johan Coenraad, geboren op 3 januari 1915 te Tjimahi, Ned. Indie, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Eng. van Pijlweertstraat 11B, 3513 GC Utrecht, naar Canada vertrokken op 3 mei 1985.

ROOS, Felicitas Lilly, geboren op 30 maart 1921 te Amsterdam, naar Canada vertrokken op 4 september 1939 met bestemming Montreal.

SCHUNGEL, Dirk J., geboren op 6 december 1943 te Dunoon (U.K.), naar Canada vertrokken met zijn moeder Dorothy May GALE, geboren op 3 mei 1922 te Dunoon (U.K.), in 1955. Moeder is wederom gehuwd, maar naam van haar echtgenoot is onbekend. Bestemming in Canada was Toronto.

STAM, H.W. en STAM - Faltin, Gisela Martha, geboortedatum van mevrouw Stam, 7 september 1938 te Mulheim a/d Ruhr, W. Duitsland. Laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Utrechtseweg 355, Amsterdam. Betrokkenen hadden een reisbureau in Vancouver genaamd "Fasta Travel Services."

De Consul-Generaal  
voor deze:-  
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER  
Fgd. KANSELIER

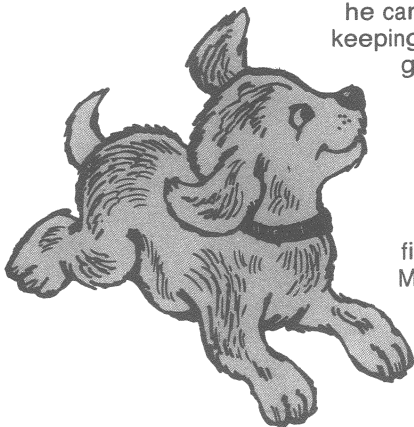
**OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE**



**Hello Busy Beavers,**

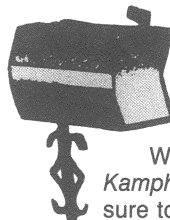
Busy Beaver *Elaine Bosscher* has a story for you today. I think you will like it.

"... we just got a puppy and he's getting bigger already. So far he's bitten all of us . . . and when he first came he couldn't go up the stairs, but now he can go up and down. We're only keeping him for a year and then he's going back to the place we got him to be trained to be a guide dog for blind people. But if he doesn't make it we get to keep him. He already goes on a leash pretty well. But the first time he didn't really like it. My opa said that only about six out of a hundred make it because they have to go in restaurants and on buses, and the first thing they teach them is to heel, and the last thing is down."



If you have a story or a poem for us remember my address

*Aunt Betty*  
*clo Clarion*  
Premier Printing Ltd.  
1249 Plessis Road  
Winnipeg, MB R2C 3L9



**From the Mailbox**

Welcome to the Busy Beavers Club *Jocelyn Kamphuis*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure to join us in all our Busy Beaver activities, Jocelyn. Write again soon!

Welcome to the Club, *Steven Leyenhorst*. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already! Keep up the good work. Will you write and tell us about your family and your hobbies, Steven?

Welcome to the busy Beaver Club *Annette Jonker*. Thank you for the puzzle. You say one of your best subjects is Art. Will you send us one of your pictures sometime, Annette?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Shauna De Haas*. I see you are keeping very busy, Shauna! What do you like to play best on the piano?

Thanks for your story-in-a-letter, *Elaine Bosscher*. It was nice to hear from you again. What is your puppy called? Be sure to tell us how he is doing!

Sounds like your birthday party was an extra fun one, *Linda Van Sydenborgh*! And how was your friend's birthday party? Thanks for your letter and the riddles, too, Linda. Bye for now.

Hello, *Cristie Bultje*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for your spring poem. Did your sister bring you a souvenir of her trip, Cristie?

Are you all better now, *Joanne Visscher*? Sounds to me as if you had lots of winter fun. How is your calf doing? Did you look for signs of spring, Joanne?

Yes, we would love to see a sample of your calligraphy, *Krista Ellens*. Yes, you really did have a good birthday, didn't you?! Have you learned to do the puzzle yet? Bye for now. Write again soon.

# MAY

“Happy Birthday” and “Many Happy Returns of the Day” to all the Busy Beavers celebrating a May birthday. May the Lord bless and keep you all in the year ahead. Here’s hoping you all have a thankful and happy day celebrating with your family and friends!

|                    |    |                   |    |
|--------------------|----|-------------------|----|
| Melanie Veenendaal | 1  | Kimberly Kamphuis | 20 |
| Hilda Buitenhuis   | 4  | Tracy Bos         | 21 |
| Felicia Viersen    | 5  | Jason Wierenga    | 22 |
| Jacoba Harlaar     | 6  | Becky Heemskerk   | 25 |
| Donna Pieffers     | 7  | Loren Van Assen   | 25 |
| Geraldine Schenkel | 7  | Wendy Vander Veen | 26 |
| Timothy Van Popta  | 9  | Sylvia Admiraal   | 28 |
| Mariet Nap         | 16 | Michelle De Haas  | 28 |
| Karen Jonker       | 18 | Donald Woltjer    | 29 |
| Jennifer Siebenga  | 18 | Bryan Bos         | 31 |

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it. His praise endures forever!*  
Psalm 111:10

Calligraphy by Busy Beaver Karin Vanderveen

## Quiz Time!

### NICKNAMES

- What name did the Lord Jesus give to James and John?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What nickname was given to Thomas?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What name was given to John the disciple?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What name was given to Abraham? \_\_\_\_\_
- By what name was Luke known? \_\_\_\_\_
- What name was given to Abraham (covering the world?)  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What was Jeremiah called? \_\_\_\_\_
- What title was given to Stephen? \_\_\_\_\_
- What was the nickname of Priscilla? \_\_\_\_\_
- What is another name for Satan besides Devil?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What name was given to John the Baptist because of his preaching in the wilderness? \_\_\_\_\_
- What name was given to Hosea? \_\_\_\_\_

### RIDDLE FUN FOR YOU!

from Busy Beavers Jennifer Siebenga, Alice Van Woudenberg, Linda Van Sydenborgh, and Christie Bultje.

- What comes up when the rain comes down?
- Why do goats wear bells?
- What comes all the way to the door but never comes in?
- Why couldn't the lion see his tail?
- What is black and white and read all over?
- Why is a baseball park cool?
- Ten men were in a boat. They all fell out. None of them got their hair wet. Why?
- If you have 2 hamburgers and I have 2 hamburgers, what do we have?
- Ten cats in a boat. One fell out. How many left?
- Who's the first person you meet in school?

(Answers below)

### SPRING WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver Helena Hopman

|                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| M T G O P L B N T O G C T L B | Look for:  |
| A D A N D B D E O N S T U A A | baseball   |
| Y H R R Q I P W I X V U L Z S | tulip      |
| A T D E D R Y H S E E C I B E | bird       |
| P N E I K D S L O R V P P A B | blossom    |
| P I N U B I N M T U R W X L A | dandelion  |
| L C I T F L O W E R Y Z K I L | flower     |
| E A N S R R Q S U L P O N D L | gardening  |
| Y Y G C A O H S J P K N M O U | robin (2x) |
| G H B G S E B D S E E D S F G | seeds      |
| R O B I N W X I K O L Q R F V | may apple  |
| F J C D E F A B N Z M B O A J | hyacinth   |
| D A N D E L I O N Y T O S D N | daffodil   |
|                               | fishing    |

### SPRING FLOWER SCRAMBLE

by Busy Beaver Hannah Harlaar

- soer \_\_\_\_\_
- psutcbртеu \_\_\_\_\_
- sullbeebl \_\_\_\_\_
- yill \_\_\_\_\_
- fidfadlo \_\_\_\_\_
- asyid \_\_\_\_\_
- riniannadit pubsh (3 words)
- ignlmorgoryn \_\_\_\_\_

Answers:

Spring Flower

Scramble: 1. rose 2. butterfly 3. bluebells 4. lily 5. daffodil 6. daisy 7. Indian paint brush 8. morning glory.

Nicknames: 1. Lucifer 11. voice 12. prophet of love 7. the weeping prophet 8. the first Christian martyr 9. Prisca 4. friend of God 5. the beloved Physician 6. father of nations 1. sons of thunder 2. the doubter 3. the beloved disciple

Riddle Fun: 1. umbrellas 2. Their horns don't work 3. the steps 4. He was sitting on it 5. the newspaper 6. It has lots of fans. 7. They were all bald! 8. lunch! 9. none. They were all copycats! 10. All! who? Alphabet!

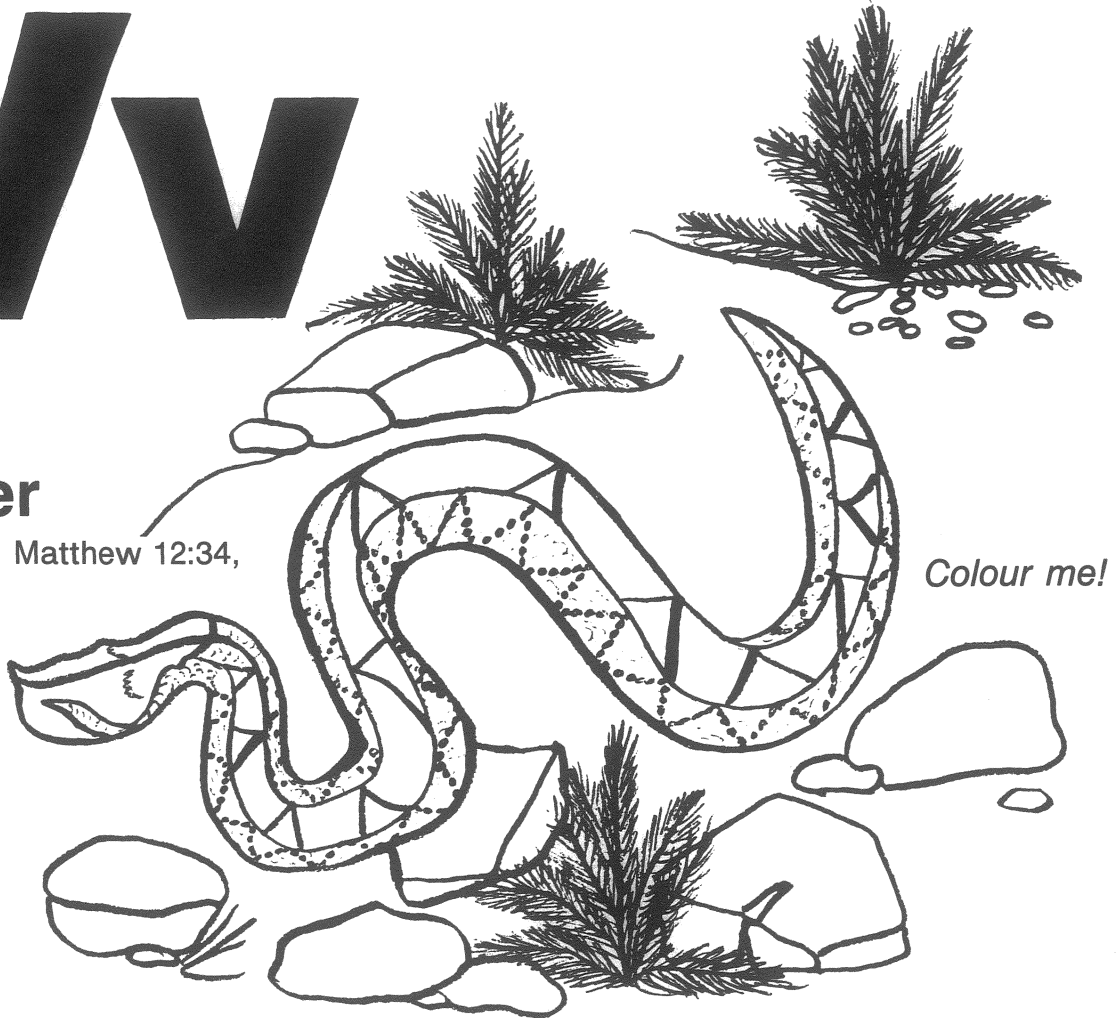
How did you do on the Bible quiz and the others? You got them all? Great! Keep up the good work! Bye for now, Busy Beavers. With love from your Aunt Betty

# ABC BIBLE COLLECTION - by Mrs. John Roza

# V v

## V-viper

(Isaiah 30:6, Matthew 12:34,  
Luke 3:7)



## Quiz Questions

1. When Jesus was nailed to the cross, some people gave Him a sponge of liquid to drink. What was the drink? \_\_\_\_\_ (Mark 15:36)
2. What do grapes grow in? \_\_\_\_\_
3. Several prophets in the Bible either dreamed or saw a special occurrence that often told a message from God. What are these special messages or dreams called?  
\_\_\_\_\_ (Genesis 28:10, Daniel 10:7)

## Answers for the letter "U"

1. Unleavened
2. Uncle
3. Unclean