



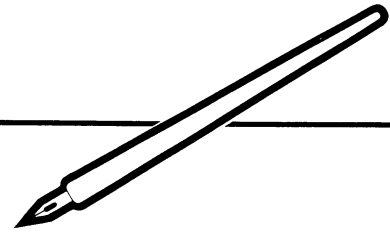
# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## Sunday and Sabbath

### A world-wide question

We begin this 1987 volume of *Clarion* by paying attention to the Sunday and its relation to the Sabbath.

Some time ago I received a copy of *Horizon*, the paper of the Women's Societies in Ontario, with an article on the Sunday written by sr. J. Helder. She speaks about the Sunday in such a way that it comes across very clearly that this day of worship is a gift of God and, therefore, a day of rejoicing to be enjoyed by God's people. It is good to reflect on what she says.

Further, I also kept in store for this occasion two articles on the same topic in *The Monthly Record of the Free Church of Scotland* of September and October of last year. In them the author, the Rev. John L. Mackay, deals with the question whether the Sabbath as a day of rest is a creation ordinance. This question does not receive attention in the essay of sr. Helder, but it is important. The Rev. Mackay says that this matter has been a controversy within the Reformed and Presbyterian Churches throughout the centuries. This controversy can be summarized in the question: Is the "sabbatarian theory" the one we have to follow or should we adhere to the "dominical theory?" Since we have permission to publish any article from *The Monthly Record*, we will use these articles to show that this matter is discussed not only among us, but also in other parts of the world, in other Reformed/Presbyterian Churches.

It will be clear that the "dominical theory" views the Sunday as just the day of the Lord (Dominus) on which the believers meet for worship, because on this first day of the week the Lord rose from the dead and on this day the New Testament congregation met for worship. In this view there is no real connection between the Sunday and the Old Testament Sabbath. It says that Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament Sabbath, as He is the fulfillment of the Old Testament animal sacrifices, and therefore, again like those animal sacrifices, it is, and must be, abolished as the Old Testament day of rest, of no work. This means that, according to this view, the Fourth Commandment as such no longer has any bearing on the New Testament church.

It is evident that the "sabbatarian theory" claims that the Fourth Commandment, speaking of the Sabbath as the day not only of worship but also of rest, is still in force for the New Testament church, although the difference in dispensation must be taken into account.

### Modern destruction of the day of rest and worship

The background of the articles in the magazine of the Free Church of Scotland is the fact that Christians in Scotland are engaged in a battle to keep the Sunday as the day of rest in their modern society. There are business people who are work-

ing hard for Sunday shopping. The same battle is being fought in our Canadian society. Especially in Ontario and Manitoba, as well as in British Columbia and other parts of the country, this issue is at the center of attention at the moment.

In this battle not all Christians are united. Many do not see the need for this struggle. They have no principle objections to open stores and working on Sundays, because they do not see the connection between the Fourth Commandment and Sunday observance. Although also among those who adhere to the "dominical theory" there are people who will fight for maintaining the Sunday as a day of rest and worship, nevertheless, this theory easily undermines the force of the struggle against the destruction of the Sunday as the day of rest, and against further secularization of our society.

### The big question

In the whole debate the big question is: Does the Fourth Commandment have its foundation and root in God's covenant with Israel, made at Mount Sinai, or in His creation work as well? Is the gift and commandment of the one day of rest in the cycle of seven days a temporary, ceremonial ordinance for ancient Israel only, or is it also a creation ordinance which holds a gift and calling for all times? The Rev. Mackay argues for the latter.

Those following the "dominical theory" base their argumentation on texts in the New Testament like Colossians 2:16 and 17, where the Apostle Paul writes that the Sabbath is "only a shadow of what is to come," while "the substance belongs to Christ." The Rev. Mackay also mentions Galatians 4:9-11 and Romans 14:5,6. My view is more in line with that of the Scottish minister. And I do not think that this view is "one step away from some heresy or sectarian thought," as the Rev. VanDooren writes. Of course, we have to watch for legalism, also in this matter. That, if I understand him well, is what the Rev. VanDooren also wants to warn against. Salvation is in Christ only, and not in anyone or anything else, also not in keeping certain manners of acting on the day of rest, nor in keeping the day of rest in itself.

However, when I read that the Sabbath is "only a shadow," I took my Greek New Testament and discovered that the word does not occur there. It is added in the translation and can lead to wrong conclusions. Fact is that it can and must be said that the Sabbath day as the one day of rest in the seven-day week is a creation institution, which cannot be said of the other institutions mentioned in Colossians 2:17: (annual) festivals and the monthly returning new moon days.

This is a significant matter. When the LORD commanded Israel to keep the Sabbath, He placed the observance of this day in the whole body of Old Testament laws and commandments for Israel's life in the covenant, in the promised land.

The Sabbath commandment now received an aspect that stressed the fact that these commandments were given to ensure Israel's holiness to the LORD. The Sabbath was now surrounded with a number of typically Israelite and ceremonial regulations.

We can also mention some other laws. Israel was not to eat unclean animals. They became unclean when touching a dead body. It was: do not touch, do not eat, as ways to remain ceremonially holy. God gave these and other commandments to remind His people in many ways and all the time: I am holy; therefore, you must be holy. Paul shows that commandments and a keeping of commandments does not make or keep us holy. Forgiveness of sins and a life of holiness to the LORD is only possible through a living faith that connects with Christ. Christ, with His blood and Spirit, is the substance, the body, the real thing. The Old Testament commandments which Israel received on Mount Sinai are a shadow pointing to Christ. Thus, what is typically Israelite is shadow. In its place Christ came as Saviour. In Christ the believers are holy, and all days of the week are holy to the LORD.

But this does not take away the fact that there remains the aspect of the day of rest as a creation institution. It does not mean that with Christ that one day of rest in the week, in principle, has been abolished. Christ is Lord of the Sabbath. He can do with it what He wants. He rules it.

### **The change from Sabbath to Sunday**

The change from Sabbath to Sunday started with the resurrection of Christ and His appearing in the midst of His disciples with His blessing on the first day of the week. It continued with His appearing again in their midst, now with Thomas also present, on the first day of the following week. It continued further with the custom of the early churches to meet for worship in the very same first day of the week.

Nevertheless, as far as is known, the early church in Palestine continued to keep the seventh day as the Sabbath, at least until the fall of Jerusalem, while the early church in the Roman empire met on the first day of the week for worship early in the morning, before work, but did not have that day as a day of rest.

We can see here the providential care of the LORD. Had the early Palestinian church immediately abolished the seventh day as her Sabbath day, she would have put up a big obstacle on the way of the gospel to the old covenant people. Abolishing the seventh day would have turned the Jewish people against the gospel and against the church. Reaching the Jewish people with the gospel was, at that time of transition, of more weight than the change from the seventh to the first day as day of worship and rest. God does not want His people to act as revolutionaries. He does not work that way Himself either. Christ is and was Lord of the Sabbath. The Sabbath has to serve Him and His ongoing church-gathering work.

The Gentile churches had many slaves and servants in their midst. Taking off from work on the first day of every week would have been revolution in the eyes of the unbelieving masters, while one of the things that is stressed so strongly, also to the Gentile churches, is that even the least impression of revolution must be avoided, in order that the opponents of the gospel may not have a reason to put a blame on the church of Christ.

Nevertheless, there came a time of rest and freedom for the Christian church when the Roman emperor, Constantine, became a Christian in the beginning of the fourth century. From then on the Sunday, as the Day of the Lord, more and more became the day of worship and of rest again. God's creation gift came back through His providential care, to be a blessing for mankind again. Christ showed Himself Lord of the Sabbath which was given to man at creation, maintained in specific Old

Testament garment to Israel, and granted also to the Christian Church and its surrounding to be a blessing for them.

Indeed, there had been the change from the seventh to the first day of the week, because it was the day of the resurrection of Christ. Life on earth, including the gift of the day of rest, is no longer only rooted in, and based upon, God's work of creation. It is now rooted in, and based upon the work of salvation of Christ, His death and resurrection. This new life comes now from Him and through Him, who obtained it at the cross and revealed it in His resurrection from the dead. But

## **Remember the Sabbath... to keep it Holy**

it is still that same life that God created in the beginning, in paradise. Christ's redemption work is work of restoration. That is why a restored creation institution is still a blessing for mankind.

### **What is our calling?**

Our Western world is throwing God and Christ out. Modern man wants to be "free" again, not realizing that this "freedom" is slavery to the greatest slave-driver of all: Satan. Satan wants to destroy that Christian, God-given day of rest with his deceit, because he wants to destroy God's work. He wants to destroy the church as pillar of the truth and light in this world. And he wants to bring the world more and more under his rebellious rule, whereby even the remnants of what God gave are to disappear.

Two things should lead us, Christians, in this situation: care for the church and compassion with the world.

Also in our midst there is a trend slowly to take things easier on the Sunday. We are becoming less strict. We allow more today than we did before. Is filling the tank of our car at a gas station, when it is empty on a Sunday, becoming just a normal thing? Is going to the store on Sunday to buy something that one just needs(?) and does not have, not so bad anymore? Are young people using the Sunday, of course after the services, to do their homework for school or college or university, especially in busy times?

Is it so that in these and many other so-called little things, the Sunday is becoming more like the other days of the week, while it was different before? What we should realize is that all these little shifts in our behaviour are even so many little points with which world conformity so easily enters our lives and, with it, the churches of Christ for which He gave His life on the cross. We take a little more freedom here and allow ourselves a little more there. And the reason is, basically, in most cases, our own selfish convenience, or pleasure, or need as we see it. We do not deny ourselves the little things. We seek ourselves. And we call it our Christian freedom!

Sure, we have our Christian freedom. But is that a freedom to serve ourselves and our convenience and likes? Or do we have that freedom to serve the Lord and preserve and build His church with Him and for Him in holy commitment?

We are bombarded from all sides with the attitude of modern man who lives for himself. And we take that attitude over before we realize it, since we have a sinful heart that is inclined to selfishness.

Care for the congregation of Christ, her holiness to the

Lord, her preservation as bearer of the light of Christ — that must determine all our behaviour, also as it regards the way in which we have our day of worship and rest. Therefore we are called to resist and fight world conformity in all its forms, also on the point of our “Sunday observance.” “All things are lawful, but not all things build up,” writes the Apostle Paul (I Corinthians 10:23). And he adds: “Let no one seek his own good, but the good of his neighbour.” Paul’s behaviour is ruled by this device: Put no stumbling block before a Jew, nor before a Gentile, nor in the church. And you know that a stumbling block is anything that can lead to sin.

In the second place, compassion with the world should lead us. We believe that without knowing and serving God according to His Word, without worshipping God, without faith in Christ, there is no salvation, no hope, nothing. We know that putting the commandments of God to the side brings chaos and destruction. A society that seeks renewal through revolution chokes itself in its own blood. A society that allows murder and killing destroys itself. A society that is built upon unfaithfulness in marriage, in family, and in society, breaks itself down.

A society that seeks to grow from stealing leads itself to bankruptcy. A society that lives from lying and deceiving ruins itself. A society that is ruled by selfish envy and jealousy and strife devours itself.

I just mentioned six of the Ten Commandments. It is simply impossible to transgress God’s commandments without evil consequences. The same is true with respect to the first four of the Ten Words. A world without a day of rest and worship runs to perdition, because it is and wants to be a world without God. And a world without God is a world in darkness. Compassion with that world should urge the church to keep her light of the gospel bright and pure by living out of Christ, by the gospel, in newness of life, for God, through the Holy Spirit. This is living by the will of God, of which the Ten, all Ten, Commandments are still the basic revelation. Showing this light with word and deed in dark surroundings, therefore struggling to keep the church obedient in faith to her Saviour and Lord, that is showing compassion to a world which is lost in its enslaving, ruinous “freedom.”

J. GEERTSEMA

## Aging and health<sub>2</sub>

### 5. Causes of death

A quick look at the three leading causes of death in Canada in 1982 shows us of what a dramatic nature the problem of heart disease and cancer is. In 1982, 80,321 people in Canada died because of heart disease and 41,946 because of cancer. These numbers far outweigh the number of casualties caused by accidents, which is the third leading cause of death in Canada. A total of 9,389 people were killed in accidents. When we consider these figures there is certainly a good reason for concern. There is a good reason to question what may cause this high and still increasing number of deaths by these two diseases.

The first thing we have to do in order to come to grips with this matter is to look at the breakdown of these figures according to age groups. That gives us a surprising and remarkable picture. Let me first give a breakdown of the figures according to different age groups in absolute numbers, and then the relative figures per 100,000 population in that particular age group.

(see chart)

A few comments have to be made about these statistics. As a comparison I have mentioned the figures for suicide

in three of the age groups, and for pneumonia in the oldest group, because in these groups they are also leading causes of death.

The first thing that strikes us is that both heart disease and cancer are rather insignificant in the youngest age group, 5-19 years. The total number of deaths caused by accidents and suicide is five times higher than the deaths caused by cancer and heart diseases together.

Deaths caused by heart diseases are very rare in this age group and, although cancer is a leading cause, it is still lower than the suicide rate.

In the next age group, 20-44 years, there is an increase in both heart disease and cancer. Per 100,000 population the increase is 13 times and 4.4 times respectively. Still both figures are of the same order as the suicide rate in that age group and together they are considerably less



### Leading causes of death in Canada, by age group, 1982

	All ages	5-19 yrs.	20-44 yrs.	45-64 yrs.	65 yrs. and over
Heart disease	80,321	78	1,662	13,859	64,677
Cancer	41,946	289	2,107	13,313	26,158
Accidents	9,389	1,490	3,315	1,715	2,542
(Suicide)	—	310	1,840	978	—
(Pneumonia)	—	—	—	—	4,550

### Leading causes of death in Canada, by age group, 1982, per 100,000 population

	All ages	5-19 yrs.	20-44 yrs.	45-64 yrs.	65 yrs. and over
Heart disease	326.1	1.3	17.0	294.3	2,660.7
Cancer	170.3	4.9	21.5	282.7	1,076.1
Accidents	38.1	25.2	33.9	36.4	104.6
(Suicide)	—	5.2	18.8	20.8	—
(Pneumonia)	—	—	—	—	187.2

than the deaths caused by accidents and suicide together.

In the 45-64 years age group there is a dramatic change. The cases of death caused by heart diseases and cancer are 17 and 13 times higher respectively than in the 20-44 years age group, and also considerably higher than the accident and suicide rate. There is really a turning point in this respect.

In the group of 65 years and over it is really alarming. The number of deaths caused by heart diseases is 9 times higher per 100,000 population than in the 45-64 years group and 156 times higher than in the 5-19 years group. Also deaths caused by cancer are 50 times more frequent than in the 20-44 years age group.

This shows us an alarming development. There certainly is a good reason to ask what is causing this trend. This has never been the case before and there must be a reason behind it. We will try to answer this pressing question in the last section.

## 6. Conclusions

In the previous section we have provided some statistics. So far we have not drawn many conclusions, except in section three, dealing with infant mortality. We have seen that the improved health care has brought down the infant mortality, which is something to be thankful for. At the same time we have noticed the side effect that also weaker and more vulnerable people stay alive, and that the survivors need more and intensified medical care. However, this in itself does not sufficiently explain the sharp increase in deaths caused by heart diseases and cancer. Now, after all the statistics we

have discussed, we are able to draw more meaningful conclusions.

It is perfectly clear that heart failure is a disease related to age. It is a typical cause of death for middle-aged and older people. There is a sharp increase by age. Although younger people who have bad eating habits, too little exercise, and too much stress, might be a high risk group, the main reason, according to statistics, is age.

Cancer appears to be also age related, although less so than heart diseases.

In the younger age groups it occurs three times more frequently than heart diseases, while among senior citizens the mortality rate because of cancer is less than half of that caused by heart diseases. Still, there is a sharp increase with age: among seniors 50 times more frequently than in the 20-44 years age group. What is the reason, not in the first place of this increase with age, but rather of the changing pattern during the last few decades? That is the question which concerns and sometimes scares people.



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After the statistics we have provided so far, and by the way in which we have provided these figures, the attentive and somewhat mathematically trained readers may already have an inkling.

Most casualties caused by cancer and heart failure occur among seniors and late middle-aged people. The average age and the life expectancy of the population is increasing constantly. Many diseases can be cured or even prevented by

who die because of heart failure are 65 and over, while 62% of all deaths caused by cancer are in the 65 years and over age brackets. This brings us to a remarkable and important conclusion. According to statistics, in 1950 the life expectancy at birth was about 65 years. That means that, generally speaking, we can say that 80% of the people who nowadays die because of a heart failure and 62% of those who suffer cancer, would have died be-

two, finally everyone would die because of one of these two remaining diseases.

From these statistical figures it becomes clear that the increase in the number of casualties because of heart diseases and cancer is not in the first place the result of environmental circumstances or increased stress conditions. It is primarily the consequence of better medical care and an increased life expectancy in general, combined with relative slow progress in finding possibilities to cure or prevent these two illnesses. The fact that heart diseases are very strongly age related and that cancer is a disease which oftentimes takes many years to develop to a diagnosable stage, aggravate this effect.

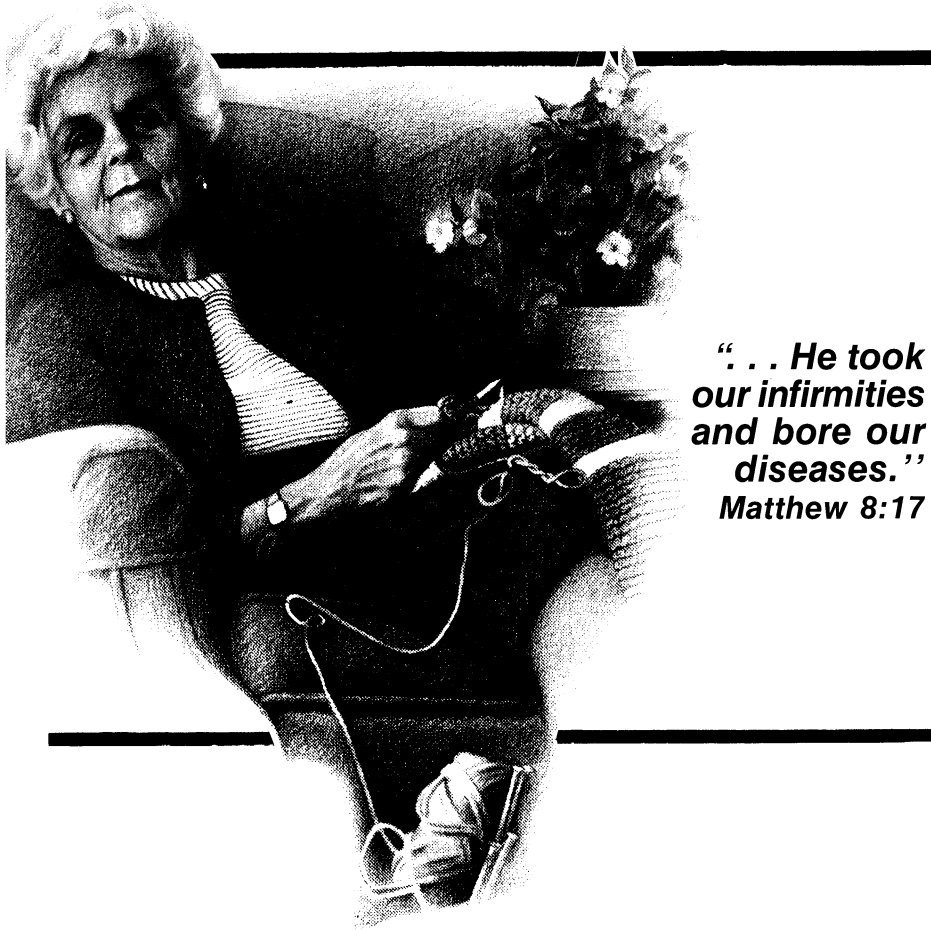
I hope that this article, which is a rather statistical and mathematical esposé about a medical issue, has answered some questions.

Instead of being scared and concerned about a possible hidden cause of certain illnesses, we should be thankful that the Lord has made available to mankind so many means to cure all kinds of illnesses. The decrease in infant mortality, and also the possibility to cure or prevent those illnesses which in the past killed many people at an early age, is a real blessing. We are allowed to use all these means and we have to give thanks to the Lord for these blessings.

At the same time we realize that we depend on the Lord and that He is the Giver of all life. Our life and our health are in His hand. Doctors can only do so much. The Lord gives life and He takes it away. Many illnesses can be cured, but death will not be taken away before our Lord Jesus Christ comes back on the clouds of heaven. Then, according to Revelation 21:4, death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore.

It is still hard to see beloved ones suffer and taken away. We are allowed to use all available means to cure illnesses, but at the same time we have to accept the hand of our heavenly Father. He rules and governs all things, and He will turn to our benefit whatever He brings about in the life of His children.

What a comfort it is to know that we do not depend on the progress made in the medical field; our Lord Jesus Christ has taken all our infirmities and has borne all our diseases (Matthew 8:17). Then we do not panic if, because of a changing pattern of the causes of death, a certain disease becomes more significant while others can be cured. We trust in our heavenly Father, who finally will wipe away all tears from our eyes, and who will make all things new (Revelation 21:4,5).



***“... He took  
our infirmities  
and bore our  
diseases.”  
Matthew 8:17***

proper medical care. However, in the field of cancer and heart diseases the percentage of people that can be cured is still relatively low compared with other illnesses. There certainly is progress, also in this field, but not to the same extent as with other diseases.

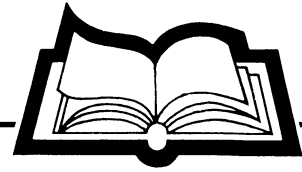
We have seen that better medical care, especially pre- and postnatal care, has eliminated a process of natural selection by which only the strongest survive. The better medical care in general has added to this effect.

According to statistics provided by Statistics Canada, 80% of all the people

cause of another illness if they had lived 35 years ago. They would never have developed either cancer or a heart disease.

This is a fundamental conclusion. To a certain extent we can say that the increase in the number of casualties because of cancer and heart diseases is caused by an increased life expectancy and better health care. The more illnesses can be cured and overcome, the more likely it is that people finally will develop one of the diseases for which no adequate cure has been found. To put it in an extreme way: if the doctors, humanly speaking, were able to cure all diseases except

W. POWELSE



“While we were still weak, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly.” Romans 5:6

“. . . a word in season, how good it is!” Proverbs 15:23b

## Perfect Timing

Paul’s words never cease to find difficulty entering the doubting hearts of Christ’s true believers. We normally do not perceive ourselves as weak and ungodly, and therefore cannot really perceive the fullness of Christ’s work for us, much less consider how God also chose the perfect time for this work. Yet it is precisely the force of the words “weak” and “ungodly” which bring out to us the sovereign *prae* or “beforehand” in Christ’s work, through which we are transferred outside of ourselves from darkness into His light.

But what do these words signify, and how do they connect to our daily experience? Paul wants to be concrete, but does require of us some simple abstraction — the abstraction of faith! He asks us to think of ourselves outside of our baptism, or outside of Christ; that is, the Lord asks us to think of ourselves as we were in our past, or as we were abstracted from His call and guiding hand. What were we? We were weak and ungodly, enemies of God’s truth and absolutely powerless to change our lot. Weakness and ungodliness mark everyone’s beginning in life.

Yet the sovereign *prae* of the gospel has gone over us! God was and remains first in our lives! Even before we were born or experienced anything concerning our own sinfulness and powerlessness, Christ died for us. At a certain fixed point in history, long before our birth, God sent His Son to die on the cross, and no man can erase this dramatic and earth-rending event and its implications from our history. For Christ did not die only to decide at a later date who might benefit from His death. Rather, before He died, He knew those for whom He died. We were *chosen* in Him, and set apart to live even though the sentence of death lay upon us. A perfect substitution has taken place in Him. He stood in our stead, and paid for the sins of His own. And in proclaiming the definite reality of this substitutionary payment, Paul announces the love of God for His church. For Christ has died for us at the right time! He gave Himself for us at a point when it was clear that we could not in any way save ourselves. He was there at that point where death had fully engulfed us.

And so deep is the wisdom of God that the right time for us turns out to be the right time for every believer. Our experience of God’s *prae* is complemented by the reality of it for the whole church. When Jesus came on earth, no one recognized Him, or honoured Him according to His origin and deeds. The light had entered the darkness, but the darkness did not understand it. He was the Emmanuel,

God with us! Yet both Jews and Gentile put Him to death. Jerusalem did not recognize the day of her visitation, cf. Luke 19:44. All were lost in weakness and ungodliness. Our guilt comes to its apex in the murder of Jesus Christ. What greater crime can we commit against God? And who would dare deny his share in this crime? Here the weakness and ungodliness of us all is clearly portrayed.

Yet the marvel of God’s love is that this event did not take place in order to bring us into condemnation. Rather, the death of Christ proclaims amnesty both to the Jew as well as the Greek! That is the glorious and unexpected reversal coming over the world in the death of Christ. Rather than act according to the deed perpetrated, God institutes the time of delay! Just at that point where all men clearly stand under condemnation, the LORD God proclaims release from judgment, and forgiveness of sins in the Son. He chooses the right time. For the death which confirms and proves man’s guilt is at the same time the death which forms the perfect and acceptable sacrifice to God. So He announces salvation to all who believe in Him!

Yet if the number is fixed before hand, how can we be sure we share God’s love? How do we really know that this text speaks to us? Paul later states that God *commends* His love to us in the fact that Christ dies for the ungodly. The announcement of the perfect work of the Son includes the appeal to all who hear of it, the appeal to repentance and faith. He was there at the right time, for you and for us all! The fixed number of those for whom Christ died includes and incorporates the apostolic mission, and the open proclamation of the gospel today.

For the LORD has always been there at the right time. He is always first in our life, so that we can only say: “The Word in season, how good it is!” He came first at baptism, and He has always proven Himself first in His wondrous deeds of salvation in the lives of His children. He delivers His own just when they come to realize that they have no other helper. He answers the cry of those who acknowledge their distress, and have no where else to turn. So He shows His sovereign *prae*, and evokes in us all the doxology of praise to the God who loved us at the right time, the God who acted and delivered us through grace at the right time. For He came to us while we were yet sinners. That is our confidence for years to come!

J. DE JONG



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# The New Testament Sabbath

This article is trying to provide information to help answer two related questions: Whatever happened to the Sabbath in the New Testament church? and, Is there such a thing as the New Testament Sabbath? Over the centuries questions such as these have given rise to considerable discussion, because they have been variously answered. My present concern is not, however, to rehearse the details of past controversies, but rather to provide a basis for dealing satisfactorily with what people are thinking and saying now.

Recent months have seen the matter of Lord's Day observance brought to the attention of the general public. Churches whose attitude towards the Lord's Day had been somewhat ambivalent in recent years have been stirred to action on the matter. There has been shown to be a substantial number of people in the country prepared to take a stand by writing to the press or their M.P.s. Both within and outwith Christian circles people are probing the matter, and asking questions. Why is it that you take the stand you do? Is it just sentimental attachment to a past tradition? Is Sunday legislation little more than a Listed Building Order to try to ensure the preservation of some edifice of historical significance? On what basis? For what reason? By what authority do you seek to impose a particular sort of Sunday on a whole nation? We need to be able to go beyond sentiment to give a satisfactory answer to that. We need to know the authority which provides the basis for our behaviour. As Christians, that means we must be able to show the Scriptural basis for what we say and do, and this article outlines how that may be done.

## Our Lord and the Sabbath

The evidence of the gospels show clearly that Jesus Christ was a defender of the Sabbath. That was not, of course, the view of the Pharisees. They accused him of being a Sabbath violator. It would seem that many people still adopt that opinion. They endorse the Pharisees' assessment of Jesus and consider him to have annulled the Sabbath and to have swept away the requirements that were then current by his healing miracles on the Sabbath and by his teaching.

But when we look more closely at the gospels, we see that what our Lord was sweeping away was not the Sabbath commandment, but the many restrictions on the Sabbath that had been humanly devised and imposed on the Sabbath ordinance. We need to discriminate between the Mosaic Sabbath as ordained at Sinai, and the Judaistic Sabbath that was supported by Jewish teachers, particularly by the school of the Pharisees that was influential in our Lord's day, the followers of Shammai. Later Jewish scholars were to observe about the restrictions current in Jesus' time that "the rules about the sabbath are as mountains hanging by a hair, for Scripture is scanty and the rules many." Our Lord was concerned to rescue the Sabbath from these Jewish rules and to place it in its proper Scriptural place, for He had not come to destroy the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them.

We must notice that for our Lord that proper Scriptural place was not just to be found in the Mosaic legislation. In Mark 2:27-28 — "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath" — we have one of our Lord's most significant statements regarding the Sabbath. Here He goes back beyond the Sabbath as established in the Mosaic Law. He speaks of the Sabbath as made for man in general — not just Israel, or God's people. It is its role for mankind as a whole that is emphasized. In this, our Lord points back beyond Sinai, to Eden. But we shall develop that emphasis later.

At present, we shall observe the major part which controversies about the Sabbath and teaching about the Sabbath had in our Lord's ministry. Undoubtedly that reflected the Palestinian environment of His ministry. But equally the gospel writers, led by the Holy Spirit, felt it important to show to the church of subsequent generations and of other backgrounds what our Lord's attitude to the Sabbath had been. He had not spoken of it as something of no importance, as something destined shortly to pass into oblivion. It was something for which He was passionately concerned, for He as Son of Man was Lord of the Sabbath. He did not rescind the Sabbath, but spoke of it as one of the unchanging ordinances for mankind's good.

## The early church

What then happened to the Sabbath after our Lord's death? How did the New Testament church observe it? Now it has to be recognized that we do not have a detailed account of this in Scripture. If we had, the differences of viewpoint that do exist would probably not have arisen. There is evidence, but it is of a scattered, incidental nature — and it has to be assessed correctly. I want first of all to set out my reconstruction of the matter, and then present my reasons for it, and consider objections to it.

We are told by Luke and John how after His resurrection our Lord met with His disciples on the first day of the week in the upper room. John emphasizes the fact "the same day at evening, being the first day of the week" (John 20:19), and also that a week later our Lord again appeared there to the disciples. Equally, it seems certain that the day of Pentecost, when we find the disciples all with one accord in one place, fell on the first day of the week. By the action of our Lord and by the coming of the promised Spirit the first day of the week is being constituted a special day, a day set apart in terms of the new age and of the coming of the blessings of the new covenant. This is not to say that there was an express command given at that time as regards the cessation of the Old Testament Sabbath and the start of the Christian Sabbath on the first day of the week. There is no evidence for such a command. What is recorded are those constitutive divine actions that marked the first day of the week as something distinctive in a Christian context.

When we examine the Jerusalem church, they do not seem to have drawn back immediately from the Old Testament Sabbath. We know how they continued to frequent the temple daily, and respected Mosaic law. Against the background of the controversies that our Lord had with the Pharisees over the Sabbath, it is significant that Acts has no record of any clash with the Jewish authorities as regards Sabbath observance. There would have inevitably been clashes had the Jerusalem church entirely done away with the Old Testament Sabbath.

But we must not think of them as regarding it any longer in the way in which



their Jewish contemporaries did. For one thing, they were followers of Jesus: for another, they were filled with the Holy Spirit and living with an intense awareness that they were followers of the Risen One. Whatever respect they had for the Old Testament Sabbath and its observances, there had to be more. They were the children of the new age, followers of the risen Lord whom they worshipped. It is back there in the Jerusalem church that I feel we must place the beginning of the association of the first day of the week with distinctively Christian worship. It was then that the Church found its own particular identity in the first day — and that, remember, is an essentially Jewish mode of thought, contrasting with the preceding Sabbath, but still accepting the weekly cycle of seven days. There was not an immediate transference. It was the beginning of a process, a maturing Christian identity in which the first day of the week played an ever clearer part.

Perhaps the best analogy is in the matter of circumcision and baptism. Both the old way and the new way existed side by side in the Jerusalem church, and this was not a cause for concern providing circumcision was seen as a thing now no longer required by God, but as something merely Jewish. What had been superseded and become obsolete could be left as a national custom, to fade away as it should do. So too with the seventh-day Sabbath. Its time had passed. It was now no longer what God required. The last true Old Testament Sabbath had been when our Lord's body lay in the darkness of the tomb. The seventh-day was not a fitting memorial of the joy of the followers of the risen Jesus. What was left could be observed merely as a national custom, without religious significance and not binding on the conscience. The new had come, and would grow into completely taking the place of the old in the Christian community.

Obviously this would happen more easily in a Gentile context, and especially when the emerging church grew to contain those directly converted from paganism as well as those who had initially been proselytes to Judaism. Thus it is in Troas in Asia Minor that we find the church coming together on the first day of the week to break bread (Acts 20:7). Paul had arrived there on the previous Monday, and had waited for an opportunity to address them all together. Also we find Paul in I Corinthians 16:1, 2 telling us that both in Galatia and in Corinth, the church on the first day of the week was to lay in store in connection with the collection he was making. Elsewhere, he calls this collection "a service" (II Corinthians 9:12), and the word used indicates a religious activity, and the choice of day

fits in with the picture of the first day of the week as having a special religious significance for the church. This is further strengthened by the last canonical reference in Revelation 1:10 where John speaks of the Lord's Day and employs a term which the subsequent usage of the word in the second-century church shows as pointing to the first day of the week.

The Lord's Day, the first day of the week, was universally accepted as the day of Christian worship throughout the early church. Whatever the background of the congregation, whatever its history, whoever was responsible for founding it — all agree on this. This unambiguously points back to the origin of the Lord's Day in the early Jerusalem church, and taken by those who went from there throughout the world with the message of the gospel. The Lord's Day did not come from Rome in the second century, or Corinth in the early fifties of the first century, as some argue. We have to go back to the resurrection when our Lord himself decisively set apart the first day of the week. The break with the Old Testament Sabbath was not immediate. It worked itself out through the period of apostolic superintendence, being more easily established in the Gentile church. Though the Jerusalem church was aware of the significance of the first day of the week and used it for Christian worship, they continued to respect the Sabbath as observed by the Jews — until the fall of the city in A.D. 70.

This seems to me to be the most satisfactory way of bringing together the evidence that we have.

### But was it the Sabbath?

Although we have brought together the evidence regarding the inauguration of the Lord's Day, we have not yet fully answered the question of what happened to the Sabbath in the New Testament church. We have seen that the Old Testament Sabbath, the observance of the last day of the week, was done away, and that the church observed the first day, the Lord's Day. Now the natural inference — and I think the correct inference from that — is that the one came in the place of the other. The view that the Lord's Day is the New Testament Sabbath is known as the *sabbatarian theory* of the Lord's Day. Many dispute it. What is often called the *dominical theory* of the Lord's Day contends that while we have a day of worship in the Christian church on the first day of the week, this is not a lineal descendant, a successor to the Old Testament Sabbath, which was a day of rest and worship. Rather it is a replacement. There is no basis for talking about a New Testament Sabbath, because the Sabbath is over and done with, having been decisively fulfilled by Christ.

Now there is Scriptural evidence that is adduced to support this argument. Principally it focuses on three passages in the Pauline epistles where Paul is said to be decisively loosing the children of the new age from the inappropriate, if not corrupting, influences of the past.

"But now that you know God — or rather are known by God — how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you" (Galatians 4:9-11).

"One man esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Let every one be fully convinced in his own mind. He who regards one day as special, does so to the Lord" (Romans 14:5, 6a).

"Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration, or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ" (Colossians 2:16, 17).

Surely, it is argued, if the Sabbath had been of lasting significance in any form in the church, Paul could not have written in this way.

There are, however, a number of factors that such an argument does not do justice to. We may firstly notice that



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Paul does not use his apostolic authority to abrogate these observances. He does not forbid them to the Church in Colosse. He merely says, "Do not let anyone judge you" — he makes them optional with Jews as with Gentiles. If the Jews wished to keep the holy days they had been accustomed to under Mosaic enactment, Paul will not force them to stop, provided they are not taken as having anything to do with salvation.

But they are matters of individual preference. He has no time for those who would make them of the essence of salvation, or of a person's standing before God. He tells them they should not let any one judge their standing as Christians by those outmoded practices from the past. They were irrelevant for that purpose.

### Judaizing opponents

We must not, however, jump too quickly into saying that any observance of a day is thereby done away with. In Colossians 2, what applies to the religious festivals, the New Moon celebrations, and Sabbath days applies also to eating and drinking. If we applied the same sort of argumentation to eating and drinking, we might advance the proposition that if acts

of eating and drinking had been of lasting significance in any form in the church, then Paul could not have written in this way. But that would produce the unresolved contradiction of the Lord's Supper as an abiding element of Christian worship. What we have of course to do is to take these passages in context. It is the significance which his Judaizing opponents attached to these matters of dietary laws and observances of days as essential to salvation that Paul stoutly condemns. Where, as in Rome, this does not seem to have been a significant factor, Paul's discussion is irenic. It may well be, as some have suggested, that he is speaking about a situation where some in the church (slaves, or wives of unconverted husbands) were unable to keep the day special as they would have done had they been free to do so. Each stands or falls before his own master. Let every one in that situation be fully convinced in his own mind.

Now Paul is distancing Christianity from the Judaistic Sabbath, entrammelled by Pharisaic regulations. He is also distancing Christian practice from the typical aspect of holy day observance. There was a time when these things were right

and proper. Paul as a true follower of Jesus accepted the divine institution of the Mosaic Sabbath, but God had given it as a shadow of things that were to come. We can see that aspect of the situation quite clearly in the case of the sacrifices which were the focus of the annual festivals, the monthly New Moons, and the weekly Sabbaths. The typical (that is, the foreshadowing) provisions of the Mosaic law required a double offering of lamb on the Sabbath, and this like the other animal sacrifices directed the worshippers to the coming Lamb of God whose blood alone could wash away sin. The pious worshipper of old was being directed toward the ultimate sacrifice that was to come. But Paul now argues that the reality, the consummating reality of the finished atoning work of Christ, has already been accomplished, and the shadows have vanished away before it.

But the typical aspect of the Mosaic Sabbath does not exhaust the significance of the Old Testament Sabbath, and to conclude from Paul's argument that the Old Testament Sabbath has no counterpart in New Testament times fails to take account of three arguments. We shall look at these next month.

JOHN L. MACKAY

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## Observing the Sunday

Much has been said about the Lord's Day and several questions have been posed. Is it necessary to go to church twice? What is wrong with working occasionally on Sunday? In what way are we bound to the fourth word of the Decalogue? Is there continuity between the Sabbath and the Sunday? In this essay, I will attempt to show what the Bible and the Catechism have to say about this matter, what has been practised through the centuries and what our perspective should be on the Lord's Day.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shall you labour and do all your work but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. In it you shall not do any work." Thus the Lord told His people.

For the Israelite the Sabbath was two things: A solemn rest and a holy convocation (compare Leviticus 23:3; II Kings 4:23). The Sabbath with its ordinances was not an end in itself. If that were the case, man would have been a slave to it. The Sabbath was a blessing for the Israelite. The Lord blessed the Sabbath day

and gave it as a happy day of rest to His people, a day on which they could refresh themselves, gather new strength physically and spiritually and enjoy the fruits of their labour, as the Lord had done on the completion of His creation work. The rest on the seventh day was a privilege which the heathen nations did not have. But there was much more to it. The Sabbath day rest was also a shadow and a prophecy of the true rest which the Lord would grant and of which Israel already had a foretaste in the liberation from the bondage of Egypt. True rest was the deliverance from bondage to sin and Satan. The Sabbath served as a sign between the Lord and His people of the coming Eternal Rest.

For the people who did not fear the Lord and failed to see the grace behind the Sabbath demand, the Sabbath became a day which deprived them of the opportunity to do business (see Amos 8:5). The day became a burden, a day of do's and don'ts. The rabbis who saw the day as an end in itself heaped rule upon rule on the day instead of seeing it as a means to direct their hope in the Messiah.

The Pharisees, who charged Jesus and the disciples with breaking the law by helping themselves to grain on the Sabbath, were shown the true character of the day. The Lord reminded them of what David had done in taking the showbread which was forbidden. The Lord showed the Pharisees that the law was not given to make life unbearable for the people of God, but rather to direct them in the life of hope and gratitude. Hence his remark in Mark 2:27 "Man was not made for the Sabbath, but the Sabbath for man" — that is to say: The Sabbath was made to be of service to him, to assist him, to make his life rich and full, to better fulfill the purpose for which man was made, namely, the service and glorification of God.

For the true people of God, therefore, the keeping of the Sabbath could not be anything but a delight. On this day they were given the opportunity to come together in worship, to praise the Lord for the blessings He had given to them. It was a remembrance day of God's wonderful acts, His acts of creation and redemption set in the light of the coming Christ.

You need only turn to the Psalms to see the joyful character of the Jewish Sabbath. With Christ's coming, the Lord of the Sabbath brought the dispensation of shadows to completion and consummation. With the fulfillment of the ceremonial aspects of the Sabbath, the day as such was rendered of no effect by Christ. The teachings of Paul clearly show this. The change brought about by the coming of Christ, His death and resurrection is not that our day of rest is now on Sunday instead of Saturday; no, the change is that the Old Testament Sabbath was brought to its fulfillment and replaced by the beginning of the *eternal Sabbath*. This is the rest from sin and Satan. Therefore Christ is able to say: "Come to me all you who are heavily laden and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:22).

We may live out of that rest which Christ has gained for us and we may do that every day of our lives. How we do this is answered beautifully in the catechism; "that all the days of my life I rest from my evil works, let the Lord work in me through His Holy Spirit and so begin in this life the eternal sabbath." The Sunday is not holier than any other day. The call of God in Christ comes to me every day. Each day I may be a child of His Sabbath, partake of God's rest in Christ. In Christ I possess the freedom to lay aside my work for the purpose of worshipping God, for meditating on His works along with my fellow believers and to gain physical respite.

That the day of worship has changed is an undeniable fact. The early church under the leadership of the apostles, abandoned the Jewish Sabbath day. The keeping of that day did not fit the Christian era. With the abandoning of the Jewish Sabbath, however, the young church initiated the custom of observing the first day of the week in honor of her risen Lord. On that day Christ arose from the dead; on that day He appeared to His disciples (Luke 24:36; John 20:19, 26); on that day the Holy Spirit was given (Acts 2) and on that day Christians began to hold their worship services (Acts 20:7; I Corinthians 16:2). Though relinquishing the Sabbath command, the early church still honoured the spirit of this commandment when it eventually introduced the custom of resting as well as worshipping on the first day of each week.

Let's go through history for a moment and see how the Lord's Day has developed. From Scripture we learn that the early Christians came together on the first day of the week to commemorate Christ's resurrection by preaching the gospel, partaking of the Lord's Supper and giving to those in need. (Compare with Lord's Day 38 and Corinthians 11, 14, 16) Second century Christians, in accordance with apostolic teachings, ob-

served the Lord's Day as a festival period. Yet many Christians were compelled to work every day. Therefore they met before sunrise and gathered again in the evening. Although they were not privileged to have a day of rest, they still lived in the eternal Sabbath period. Thus Sunday as we know it, simply did not exist. Through the next few centuries, the idea was developed to also rest on the first day of the week. In 321, Constantine, the first Christian Roman Emperor, commanded his subjects to rest on Sunday. Christians in the fourth century rested on that day because they understood the Sunday to be the Lord's Day, a day to commemorate Christ's resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. For them Sunday was a day of joy and thanksgiving spent in prayer, praise and communion.

During the Middle Ages (500-1500) the church came under the ban of legalism. While the early Christians rested on the first day because they had the freedom to do so, in the Middle Ages the Sabbath rest was strictly enforced by both church and state. In this way the joy and thankfulness which had marked the early Christians' celebration of the Lord's Day was smothered by casuistry.

During the time of the Reformation the focus shifted again — from the strict observance of stifling laws on the Lord's Day to the freedom which had characterized the Lord's Day observance. The Christians had to learn again that they lived through grace not works. The Reformers observed the Sunday as a day of rest in the light of the freedom given by Christ, though there were differences of opinion as to how the day was to be spent. Luther felt that church services once a Sunday was enough, though he did maintain that resting one day out of seven and worshipping on that particular day was not restricted to Sunday since all days of the week are holy. For practical reasons, however, the Sunday was designated for worship and relaxation. Calvin had the people come together twice a day, for worship in the morning and for religious instruction in the afternoon as did John Knox. These two educated the people not to spend the rest day idly. The Reformers did agree that recreation had a place on the Sunday. I would like to point out that Sunday was the only day that could be used for recreation in those times.

At the end of the 1600's we hear a different tune and the fourth commandment was applied literally. All sorts of regulations were made with which one could recognize the "violaters of the Lord's Day." We see the vacillation from one extreme to the other; from the literal application of the fourth commandment to the abuse of Christian liberty. The

proper concept of the Israelite's Sabbath and our Lord's Day was often misunderstood.

What should be our perspective on the Lord's Day? About working or engaging in recreation the Catechism has nothing to say. We are Sabbath-children aren't we? We may live in the freedom which Christ has obtained for us. From what we have learned about the character of the Sabbath and in light of history we may consider ourselves very privileged that the Lord has directed events that we may exercise our freedom and take our rest on the Sunday and may worship in that freedom. When we consider all this, Sunday is not a boring day at all but a day in which to celebrate. What better way is there to spend our rest days than to open God's Word (not only on Sunday) and to meet with His people in honour of the Lord? What better way to observe the Lord's Day than to rest on it and to rejoice in the restoration of the eternal Sabbath that was already there in creation? Then Sunday is a special day, a feast day, and there isn't a problem of whether I may do this or that or when does the Sunday begin and end. Will we spoil the Lord's Day with taboos for the day or will we abuse our freedom to do whatever we wish? Let us remember that each Sunday brings us closer to our eternal Sabbath which is at the same time our eternal labour in service to God!

J. HELDER

Sources:

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## BY THY LIFE I LIVE

I love, my God, but with no love of mine,  
For I have none to give;

I love Thee, Lord, but all the love is Thine,  
For by Thy life I live.

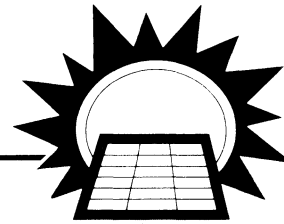
I am as nothing, and rejoice to be  
Emptied and lost and swallowed up in Thee.

Thou, Lord, alone art all Thy children need,  
And there is none beside;

From Thee the streams of blessedness proceed;  
In Thee the blessed abide.

Fountain of life, and all abounding grace,  
Our source, our centre, and our dwelling place!

JEANNE MARIE GUYON



"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect weakness."  
II Corinthians 12:9

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Apostle Paul was suffering from a serious handicap, which hindered him in his work. He himself called it a "thorn in the flesh." What exactly the trouble was, we do not know. But it is clear that Paul regarded it as having come from Satan (vs. 7), the great adversary, who is always out to interfere with and to obstruct the spreading of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

At the same time Paul realized that the Lord had permitted this "thorn" to enter his life. Satan's work was used by the Lord to keep Paul from becoming overly selfconfident, from depending on his own power and abilities in his work as apostle of the Lord.

Therefore his repeated prayers to be delivered from this "harassment" were not answered the way he wished. The Lord who always hears and responds to the prayers of His children said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

It was through Paul's weakness that the power of God manifested itself in its full glory. It was through God's unmerited grace that Paul, the one time persecutor of the Church of Christ, was called to "carry the Lord's Name before Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel." It is also God's grace, which enables Paul to continue his task in God's Kingdom, even though he also continues to be "harassed" by a messenger of Satan. He has in His work as apostle to bear this cross in order that God's grace may stand out as all sufficient!

You remember that Jesus said, "If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it," (Mark 8:34,35).

It is Christ's grace and His sustaining power which enables His children to perform their God given task and continue in His service, whether they are healthy or sick, strong or weak, young or old. Depending on Him and trusting in Him, we will be able to finish perfectly, what He for us has undertaken. For His works, in mercy wrought, will never come to nought or be forsaken, Psalm 138:4.

## Our birthday calendar for February

February 12

**CONNIE VANAMERONGEN**

Russ Road, RR 1  
Grimbsy, ON

Conny will celebrate her 22nd birthday on February 12. She is physically handicapped but she loves reading. I hope you will receive lots of mail to read on your birthday, Conny!

February 12

**ALBERT DORGELOOS**

199 Westwood Road, Unit 16  
Guelph, ON N1H 7S1

Albert will be 18 on February 12, Deo Volente. He shares a townhouse with two others and works in a packing house. He loves bowling! Congratulations, Albert!

February 18

**CORA SCHOONHOVEN**

700 D'Arcy Street  
Cobourg, ON K6A 4I5

Cora's birthday is on February 18th. She will be 36 years old. Also congratulations to you, Cora, and I hope you will have an enjoyable day!

Though tempted and sadly discouraged,  
My heart to this refuge will flee,  
And rest in the blessed assurance:  
"My grace is sufficient for thee."

O LORD, I will press on with courage,  
Though rugged the pathway may be,  
Sustained and upheld by Thy promise:  
"My grace is sufficient for thee."

Soon, soon will the warfare be over,  
My Lord face to face I will see,  
And prove, as I dwell in His presence:  
"His grace was sufficient for me."

(Anonymous)

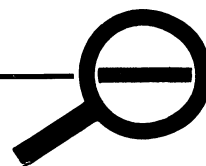
Brothers and sisters, remember those who are lonely and sick. A little attention or a small token that they are remembered, may help them to go on in good trust.

If you know someone who needs some special attention, please, send your request with some additional information to me.

Greetings from

**MRS. J. MULDER**

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



## Press reactions to “The Christian Heritage Party”

In previous issues our readers could be informed about the Christian Heritage Party which was recently formed to be a true Christian alternative to the existing political parties in our country. This party has in the meantime presented itself to the public at large via the press and other media. Often the reactions are not so favourable. I read in the *Toronto Star* a very tendentious report which accused the Heritage Party of gross discrimination and almost of neo-Nazism.

It is therefore comforting when some “good” press is found. The weekly magazine, *Calvinist Contact*, of November 14, 1986 contained the following report.

### Christian party wants to run in next election

HAMILTON, Ont. — The Christian Heritage Party is steadily increasing its membership and hopes to register 50 candidates in the next federal election, according to Interim Leader Ed Vanwoudenberg.

He made the statement while on a promotional tour through southern Ontario. More than 100 new members signed up at a Hamilton meeting in McNab High School, bringing the total to just under 500.

**Alternative to existing parties.** At this gathering, Vanwoudenberg said that today’s political parties operate by polls and consensus politics instead of by principles and moral absolutes. He used the same argument on a CBC phone-in program to answer the question why a Christian political party should be established. (The majority of callers, many of them Christians, said they would not vote for the Christian Heritage Party.)

Christians working within the existing parties have not been able to make the parties “more Bible obedient,” said Vanwoudenberg. Instead they have become more secular themselves.

Vanwoudenberg also spoke at the Reformed Christian Businessmen and Professional Association meeting. There too he hammered home the point that existing political parties have rejected the Judeo-Christian ethics and instead adhere to the philosophy of secular humanism. He pointed to “such fundamental issues as the sanctity of life, the recognition of the traditional family, the restora-

tion of the Lord’s Day” as needing the support of a Christian party.

**Dislikes radical image.** Vanwoudenberg tries hard to avoid the impression that the Christian Heritage Party is just another radical, right-wing, Moral Majority kind of party. He feels pushed into a corner by the secular media. He does admit to having made confusing statements — like saying that Canada is a Christian nation. “It never was and never will be,” he now says. “But Canada’s laws were based on Christian ethics and a Christian heritage.”

Nor does he claim anymore that morality can be legislated. “We are learning as we go along,” he says.

In the meantime the party has big plans. There will be a founding convention held in the fall of 1987. By that time the party hopes to have candidates ready in 50 riding associations. In addition, 32 committees will be asked to develop policies for every area of federal government responsibility. Policy papers will be circulated for grassroots input.

Among the 500 members attracted so far are those who have experience working for political parties. The list also includes a broad range of professions and trades.

In a special editorial, Bert Witvoet deals elaborately with the Christian Heritage Party under the title, “The new Christian party needs our support.” He makes the following comments.

We don’t like the name “Christian Heritage Party,” as if the past holds the key to what Christians must do in modern-day politics, and we groan when we hear Ed Vanwoudenberg slip into a reductionist version of Christian politics, but we find it difficult to withhold support from the new Christian party. Our Christian conscience binds us.

It’s too easy to simply stand on the sidelines and let other Christians

struggle along in a political morass that calls out for a strong assertion that God through Jesus Christ has given us means to keep a society healthy.

We appreciate that the Christian Heritage Party is trying to avoid being labelled a right-wing, Moral Majority kind of party. At the same time, we notice that it does not succeed all that well.

**Confusing talk.** Vanwoudenberg says the secular media misrepresents him and tries to paint him into a corner. But the label seems to stick partly because his message is confusing.

“We cannot legislate morality,” says Vanwoudenberg on a CBC phone-in program. But in the next breath he is talking about the state bringing criminals (he seems to lump thieves and adulterers together here) to “repentance,” something which is the task of the church, not the state.

He does not like the fact that the Canadian Charter forbids discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. He tells David Schatsky, host of the CBC program, that the Charter gives special status to homosexuals. But Schatsky rightly points out that it’s not a matter of special status, but of extending the same rights to all people, regardless of sexual orientation.

To Schatsky’s question of why a Hindu would want to attribute his morals to Christianity, Vanwoudenberg gives a paternalistic answer. Since Christian morality is good for everyone, Hindus will benefit from supporting a party that wants to establish Christian morals.

As long as the Christian Heritage Party does not remove some of these confusing and contradictory statements from its speeches and programs, it will continue to be accused of being a Moral Majority kind of party and of wanting to ram Christianity down people’s throats.

**Think before you leap.** Several Reformed leaders we spoke to want to be supportive of the Christian Heritage Party. But they are wary of the speed with which the party is moving into declaring 50 candidates for the next election and the thinness of the theoretical underpinnings.

Vanwoudenberg speaks of “free enterprise under God.” Why not use the term “responsible enterprise under God” someone wanted to know. Then at least you do not take along all the secular gar-

### OUR COVER

Theological College at  
Hamilton, Ontario

bage that a concept like "free enterprise" carries with it.

And why this talk about absolute policies and biblical morality? Policies are never absolute; not even principles are, since we are the ones that formulate them. And biblical normativity would be a better way of speaking. If you say "biblical morality," do you mean that we can just lift a government program for ethics out of the Bible? If so, do you want to go by Old Testament or New Testament rules?

Should a Christian party be so narrow as to insist on a specific brand of pro-capital punishment and anti-abortion? Why this narrow, black and white approach. Isn't that characteristic of the dividing line that runs through all kinds of groups, Christian and otherwise — between hard-nosed and soft-nosed people, liberals and conservatives? There is nothing particularly Christian about being either liberal or conservative.

The Christian Heritage Party has to come to greater clarity on what the roles are of the state, the church, school and family, if it wants to attract support from a broad range of thoughtful Christians.

**Constructive, co-operative criticism.** At the same time, we, members

of the Reformed community who support the idea of principled politics, do well to be patient and sympathetic. Think back to the time we started Christian schools in the fifties. Did we really know what we were getting into? Those of us who were intimately involved in the running of those schools have to smile when we think back to our stumbling efforts. Few of us were professional teachers and boardmembers. And look at how professional the Christian school movement has become today.

It's not enough to be critical of these early efforts by the Christian Heritage Party. Let's take out a \$20 membership for three years and work alongside others to develop principles and policies for the party. At the same time, Vanwoudenberg and his organization should not neglect to tap the considerable resources that are available in the Christian community today. To be truthful, we had expected a bit more Reformed savvy from an active member of the Canadian Reformed Church like Ed Vanwoudenberg.

On second thought, let's hold on to the name Christian Heritage Party until the bugs have been worked out. Then let's proceed with newly-gained skill and

insight under the name of the Christian Democratic Party of Canada.

I must agree on most points with the remarks made by Bert Witvoet. Greater clarity is needed on some essential policies and careful, precise formulations must be found to avoid lasting misunderstandings. That is why such a party should have proper study programs in place and committees which propose policies for the national platform. It is still too much "sloganic" and therefore somewhat superficial.

This particular problem may nag the Christian Heritage Party for a long time because of its broad base and lack of a well-defined Reformed political program. Study is required in terms of what Reformed politics has done e.g. in the Netherlands. There is some excellent Dutch material available which can be applied also to our Canadian situation.

I am particularly interested in the reason(s) Witvoet may have for suggesting the name "Christian Democratic Party of Canada." His tantalizing suggestion should have been served up with more explanation.

CL. STAM



## NEWS MEDLEY

A happy and prosperous new year to all of you.

We are thankful for the fact that we may continue our bi-weekly chats. Although they may not appear with the regularity to which you were accustomed a few years ago, yet it is a reason for gratitude that we can meet in our magazine.

In many countries the press is not free and those who do write have to watch their every word, whereas we can write whatever we want to write, though as Christians we are bound also in this activity by what the Lord has revealed to us in His Word.

This time our medley will deal mainly with expansion and growth. It is not the first time that we may do so, and our readers will remember that in the recent past we also paid quite some attention to the increase in membership and the need to either enlarge church buildings or institute new Churches.

We mentioned Cloverdale and the discussions which are being held there. Also this time we may tell you something about it.

"At the moment all options are open and they include various possibilities: a larger building for Cloverdale, a split with a new congregation being established between Cloverdale and Langley, an institution between Cloverdale and Langley of members from both congregations, etc."

The following conclusions were reached.

"1. to strike a committee consisting of two members from each Consistory which is to study growth and development of the combined area and to uncover solutions mutually acceptable. This committee will report back by the end of the year.

"2. To proceed slowly, preferably with double services for a long time, to properly assess the direction of growth in the

Valley, particularly in view of the new school in Langley.

"3. To proceed with the same spirit of cooperation and fellowship that was prevalent the last time."

It is especially the "spirit of cooperation and fellowship" for which we are grateful.

In this connection we also mention what was decided in Kelmscott, our Western Australian sister Church.

There it was decided, among other things,

"3. that a semi-two-ward system be introduced as from the first Sunday in March 1987. This means, among other things, that there will be dual worship services in the morning services only.

"4. that the above arrangement will terminate on Dec. 31, 1987, after which a new congregation will be instituted, the Lord willing.

"7. that a committee be appointed to commence preparations for the calling of an additional minister, later to serve the new congregation."

In the meantime, it was decided to have two more elders elected in order to serve the growing number of families.

Staying in Australia for a while, we mention that the Church at Byford has to start all over again with its work of calling a minister. The Rev. C. van den Berg of Assen, the Netherlands, who had accepted the call to Byford, cannot get permission to immigrate. Apparently, because two of the children are hemophiliacs, the application was rejected by the Australian embassy in the Netherlands, and an appeal in Australia does not seem to have had the desired result. We are sorry for the brothers and sisters in this youngest Australian congregation, and they may be assured of our sincere desire that the Lord



may guide the steps of a shepherd and teacher towards them to occupy the newly built parsonage and to proclaim the Word of God in the as-yet-to-be-dedicated church building.

A last item from that region south of the equator is more joyful. "A music training program for 26 students has now commenced and in the not too distant future we hope to let you hear them play in a band formation."

Speaking of immigration problems, the Rev. Van Delden had them in Lynden, WA, as well. One Sunday he was not allowed to preach, since his work-permit had expired, and neither he nor the Consistory wished to endanger the application for immigrant-status. Due to immigration rules, he was not allowed to cross the border into Canada, for this would have meant a closed border if he sought to return to his family and to the congregation. He now has received "labour-certification," but in January new measures and permits will have to follow.

In the above-quoted conclusions of Cloverdale, a new school in Langley was mentioned.

Yes, due to growth and due to the over-crowding of the William of Orange School in Cloverdale, it became necessary to build what, for the time being, will be a satellite school in Langley. From personal observation I can testify that the building is almost completed and that many volunteers work many hours to have it ready for occupancy well before the new year.

Of another new school we hear from Burlington-West.

"As a consequence of the decision to proceed with the second school in Flamborough, we now need to consider how the John Calvin School Society should continue to operate. Is it going to be one society, one board; one society, two boards; two societies, one board, etc. etc."

A committee was appointed consisting of two members from each of the three Burlington congregations.

In Burlington-East it was decided "to return to one morning-service as of Nov. 16, 1986, at 10:00 a.m."

In Attercliffe, the Consistory welcomed the Organ Committee at its meeting. "The Committee proposed to purchase a 16-rank organ for \$55,000.00 installed or a 14-rank organ for \$50,000.00 installed. Some extra copper worked in for appearance at \$500 - \$1,000 is recommended. It is noted that we have an organ-fund of \$13,000. The Consistory decides to take over the proposal of the committee with the understanding that the difference in ranks will be discussed at the congregational meeting."

What I was surprised at is the fact that the committee succeeded in having such a price quoted for a 16 rank organ! For the \$5,000 difference, I would certainly choose the larger one.

Speaking of congregational meetings, I found the character of a congregational meeting expressed most correctly in a decision by Burlington-West's Consistory.

"It was also decided that at our next council meeting of Nov. 25, the congregation is invited. The Rev. J. Mulder shall (will, VO) present the topic 'How Do We Sing Our Psalms?' " Has the minister demonstrated by giving examples?

Fergus, too, had something to communicate about an organ. They had their dedication evening on November 8. Most likely we shall get an enthusiastic report for our magazine, and it would serve no purpose if I quoted from the program for the evening. We shall wait and see.

In Toronto "the Building Committee presents a written report to Council detailing the amounts raised for the church addition. Received: \$23,000 pledges: \$34,000; total: \$57,000. A letter from the church treasurer is also read, indicating that he has reviewed the pledges and that Council can reliably expect to receive \$52,000 from the congregation. Some members are supporting the project in the form of free labour. Currently, the Town of Vaughan is reviewing the building plans in order to issue a building permit. When the plans are finalized, a written quote on the building costs will be forwarded to Council."

And then a last item about expansion: The Surrey Consistory report contains the information that "The Church at Winnipeg requests further clarification with regard to the possibility of Winnipeg becoming the sending Church of a possible third missionary in Brazil. Further information will be given."

Turning our attention to further news, we learn that the Toronto Home Mission Committee reports on "the possibility of distributing the magazine *Evangel* in hospitals and other institutions like nursing homes. . . . Plans are being made to have a continuation of the Vacation Bible School held on Friday evenings or Saturday mornings once every two weeks."

It would be nice if the Vacation Bible School could be continued and become a year-long activity in one form or another. Now contact with the children that attend during the summer holidays and then only for a few weeks is difficult to maintain during the rest of the year. We'll keep you posted.

A last item from Toronto: "For quite some years now we have become accustomed to repeat announcements twice or three consecutive weeks in our bulletin. This we would like to see changed. Announcements that need a reminder will be put under the heading REMINDERS. Only the most pertinent information will be given as well as a referral to the first complete announcement with the proper date. In order for this to work effectively, please keep your bulletins in a handy place for three or four weeks."

In my thirty-two years as "bulletin-typer" I found it often-times frustrating when I was asked to repeat a message two or three times, sometimes accompanied by a long list of references. It should be borne in mind that the space in bulletins is limited and that, if the members are really interested in what is going on, they will save the bulletin in which the necessary information is given. We should not burden the typists unnecessarily nor should we cause the Church to find it necessary to spend more money on stencils, paper, and ink than is absolutely necessary. For this reason or for these reasons I express the wish that all members may follow the course shown here by Toronto.

In three of the four classes it is custom that the classes are held in the same place all the time. Until recently in Classis Pacific it was different. There a classis was held — NOTE; NOT: "classis met"!! — in the place where the convening Church is located.

Some time ago it was decided that classes were to be held in one central location all the time. Mind you, "central location" is a relative concept in this connection, because if it really would be in a central location, all delegates should travel to somewhere in the Cariboo country, and this would not be all that convenient, we have to say.

It was decided that classes were to be held in the Fraser Valley, and specifically in Langley. There are six Churches here within a radius of some sixty kilometers, and it was felt that it is more economical to have the four delegates from the Bulkley Valley travel to the Fraser Valley than twelve delegates from the latter to the former, even though this would be only two out of eight times.

Understandably, the brothers and sisters in the Bulkley Valley are not all that happy with it. We are not surprised, when reading in the Smithers Consistory report "The decision by classis Pacific of April 9, 1986, to meet only in Langley, BC, in the future is discussed. An appeal will be sent to the upcoming Classis. . . ."

The excellent expression "classis Pacific of April 9, 1986" — one should always put a date with a classis — is undone again by the use of the word "meet." How can Classis Pacific of April 9, 1986 ever "meet" in Langley? That Classis does not exist any more.

And then the fact that it is decided that "an appeal will be sent to the upcoming Classis!"

Since when do we send appeals to the next classis?



Please, please! What the Consistory intends to do is send a proposal to decide differently and to rescind the decision of Classis of April 9, 1986. Appeals are to be sent to the next broader or major assembly. Let's keep things in the proper course.

Something different now.

In Grand Rapids the Consistory reports that "A letter from the Rev. B.R. Hofford of the Tri-County Reformed Church at Laurel, Maryland, was received and read. The Rev. Hofford expresses the need for the presence of Rev. Kingma to instruct his congregation in the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of our Churches. They are eagerly making strides to affiliate with the Canadian/American Reformed Churches. Classis assigned the Church at Grand Rapids to educate the Church at Laurel in order to come to a full understanding of the Standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches."

What I don't like is the word "assigned." A classis has nothing to "assign." As for the rest, we can only be thankful for the contacts which have been made and are maintained and expanded. The Rev. VanDooren informed the three Burlington Churches of his stay in Sackville, NS, speaking of "A Reformed Outpost in the Maritimes." Perhaps we'll hear something about it in our magazine as well.

In various bulletins attention was paid to the Remembrance Day celebrations. Actually, it is strange to speak of "celebrations" when referring to Remembrance Day. Some bulletin editors expressed fear that the observance of Remembrance Day might mean little to the younger generation. Also for this reason is it good that attention was paid to it in the bulletins and — no doubt — in the worship services.

The Rev. Stam writes about it in the Fergus bulletin.

"Various grades of our Maranatha School will be partaking in the memorial at the Fergus Cenotaph. I have been asked to speak a few words as well, and will do so. I was invited to speak on behalf of the 'Dutch people,' but I said that by far the majority of our church members are native Canadians or Canadian citizens so that, at most, I could speak on behalf of citizens with a Dutch background."

Some time ago Rev. Stam sent a letter to the relevant of-

ficials in which he expressed disappointment at the fact that so many activities in this area of remembering are scheduled for the Sundays, by which our people are prevented from participating in them. Now there was an opportunity to show that we wish to be involved in whatever activity we can participate in with a good conscience.

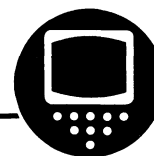
One of these areas in which participation is certainly required is the election of local, provincial and federal representatives. In Smithers the Consistory received a letter from the mayor in which the latter expressed his concern at the fact that hardly anyone was willing to present himself as a candidate for the town council so that vacancies were mostly filled by acclamation whereby simply the ones that were in council are continued in office. This is not a healthy situation and it is gratifying when we read that in other places members of the Churches do make themselves available for these positions. At the local level we may be able to achieve what we are not able to achieve at the provincial or national level, at least not yet. But we should not go by what is attainable at the moment according to our calculations. If we should do that, we will never get anywhere and in the meantime forsake our duty and shirk our obligations.

It is about time that we come to a close. I am thankful for the fact that from some Churches from which I did not hear anything for a long time, bulletins were again received. Meanwhile I commend myself into your constant attention and care as far as the sending of bulletins goes.

From one family here in the Church at Abbotsford I received some bulletins of a Church where the Consistory decided that the bulletins should be sent to me, but where they failed to ask someone to do so, with the result that I never got them. Thanks to this family I learned that I was not the only one who had to remind a couple from the pulpit that "The Church is no lover's lane." How else would I have discovered that "You see couples behaving in Church as if they had not seen each other the whole week. And it is nice that you care for each other, and that you love each other, but the Church and Church service is not for that purpose?"

VO

## PRESS RELEASES



### "Anchor" Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, November 21, 1986

The acting chairman br. Peter Feenstra opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer.

After the adoption of the minutes the director of the Anchor Home, Daryl Kooiman presented his report which described extensively the activities and progress at the Anchor Home. A third resident may be admitted to the home in January. The director also showed some slides of the local ARC Industry, showing some of the work and teaching being done there. The new address of the Anchor Home on 30 Rd. is: RR 2, Beamsville, ON, L0R 1B0; and the new telephone number is: 563-8641.

The treasurer gave a very positive report, stating that over eighty new members

joined the Anchor Association and that several large donations were received. He also gratefully reported that the organizers of the next mass choir concert, to be held in Hamilton next May, offered to give the proceeds of the concert to "Anchor."

The Advisory Committee reported that Rene Beijes, the staff counsellor, will be starting a Bible study course for the residents of "Anchor" Home and for any other local handicapped people that may be interested.

The meeting was closed with the singing of a psalm and prayer.

K.J. SPITHOFF,  
Correspondence Secretary

### Classis Ontario North, December 11, 1986

1. *Opening*: On behalf of the convening Church at Burlington (South) the Rev.

J. de Jong calls the meeting to order. He requests the delegates to sing Hymn 15:1, 2, 4, reads Isaiah 9:1-7, and leads in prayer. In prayer especially Cand. G. Peet and sr. M. Werkman, who are ill, are remembered.

All the brethren are heartily welcomed; a special welcome is extended to br. H. Moes who is present on behalf of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church of Sackville, Nova Scotia.

2. *Examination of Credentials*: All the churches are properly represented. There are no instructions.

3. *Constitution*: Classis is constituted. The following executive takes place: Chairman: the Rev. D. DeJong; Clerk: the Rev. M. Werkman; Assessor: the Rev. Cl. Stam.

4. *Agenda*: Because of the illness of Cand. G. Peet, the peremptory examination scheduled for this meeting will not

take place. It is noted that a report of the audit of the books of the treasurer is not available. A few items are added to the agenda, which is then adopted.

5. Reports:

a. Report of the church visitation at Brampton by the Rev. J. de Jong and the Rev. J. Mulder (Dec. 8, 1986) is read and received.

b. Report of the church visitation at Burlington (East) by the Rev. G. Nederveen and the Rev. Cl. Stam (Nov. 6, 1986) is read and received.

c. Report of the church visitation at Burlington (South) by the Rev. D. DeJong and the Rev. Cl. Stam (Oct. 2, 1986) is read and received.

d. Report of the church visitation at Toronto by the Rev. D. DeJong and the Rev. G. Nederveen (Nov. 21, 1986) is read and received.

e. Report of the Committee on Needy Churches (including a financial statement). This committee proposes that the Church at Ottawa receive \$10,000.00 annually when Cand. G. Peet is installed and that the churches pay \$6.50 per com-

municant member (beginning January 1, 1987). The Church at Ottawa also requests some additional arrangements seeing the health of Cand. Peet. At this time also a letter of br. G. Peet is read in which he expresses the hope that he may be examined, the Lord willing, at a future Classis.

It is decided to grant the requests of \$10,000.00 annually when Cand. Peet is installed and to ask \$6.50 per communicant member (per January 1, 1987). The other suggestions of the committee will be dealt with, if necessary, when the call of Cand. Peet is approved.

f. Report of the Church at Orangeville re the support of the Rev. C. Olij family. Classis takes note of this report and urges the churches to provide proper information on the cheque sent to Orangeville (e.g. number of communicant members and the time period covered by the cheque).

g. Report on the auditing of the Fund for Needy Students by the Church at Fergus. All is found in good order. Classis gratefully takes note of this report.

6. Question Period, Art. 44 C.O.: The Church at Burlington (South) seeks advice in a matter of discipline. Classis enters into closed session to deal with this matter. Advice is given. Closed session is terminated.

7. Correspondence:

a. Letter of Cand. G. Peet (see above). A letter of encouragement and comfort will be sent to this brother.

b. Letter of br. A.R. Endeman requesting Classis to let the churches know what the status is of the Rev. C. Olij and whether he is still tied to the Church at Orangeville. Classis decides that this letter is inadmissible because a) the letter of br. E. is not an appeal to a decision of a minor assembly and b) it is not in the province of Classis to make general statements on the basis of decisions of other assemblies.

c. Request of the Church at Burlington (South) for revision of the Acts (Art. 9 d, b) of Classis Ontario North of June 26, 1986. The Church at Burlington (South) questions the manner in which the support of the C. Olij family is implemented.

— continued on page 18

## 1962 — Rev. Johannes Dirk Wielenga — 1987

In this month of January 1987 there is reason for joy and thankfulness in the midst of the Church at Coaldale. The congregation will together with their minister and his family remember that 25 years earlier, on Sunday, January 21, 1962, the at that time candidate J.D. Wielenga was ordained as minister in Veenendaal, the Netherlands, by his father, the Rev. D.K. Wielenga JDzn.

But that's not the only joyful fact to be remembered. I still have in my possession the wedding-card which announces that on Thursday, January 4, 1962, at 2:20 p.m., the marriage of Johannes Dirk Wielenga, and Ida Schenk will be solemnized at city hall in Rotterdam.

I hope that I may speak on behalf of all the members of our churches when I congratulate Rev. and Mrs. Wielenga and their children with their double anniversary, their wedding-anniversary on January 4, and the pastor's anniversary as a Minister of the Divine Word on January 21.

A Minister of the Divine Word, that's indeed what Rev. Wielenga is, and for that reason especially is also the congregation at Coaldale to be congratulated. Rev. Wielenga spends much time in his study, and on Sundays this can be noticed. His sermons are well-studied and exegetically sound, showing his scholarly approach. At the same time they are

very clear and can well be understood. If sometimes there is asked for more application in our concrete situation, the fault is with the hearer who asks this question. It is all in the sermons, but must be applied by the hearers themselves.

I may say that my colleague has his manner of preaching learned and, in a way, inherited, from someone else; for I had for many years the privilege together with him to listen to the preaching of his father, a way of preaching which certainly influenced both of us.

When Rev. Wielenga was just 18 years old he became already a theological student at the "Hogeschool" in Kampen, where we were of the same study-years. In Rotterdam we lived only a few blocks away from each other, which promoted our contacts. When Rev. Wielenga was in his first congregation, and I had accepted the call to Brampton in Canada, we visited him and his wife in Veenendaal to say farewell. It was then that I noticed also his faithfulness as a pastor. He had to go to someone in need of a visit, and therefore he took only a few minutes to receive us. The work was to be number one; and it has stayed that way, as I know from the testimony of congregation-members in Coaldale.

It was when Rev. Wielenga came to Coaldale that we became something like

neighbours again. Like in Rotterdam a few blocks of houses were in between; except that a stretch of about 150 miles of highway between Calgary and Coaldale was added. Yet this was better than the distance that Albany in West Australia is away from here. After four years in Veenendaal Rev. Wielenga served the Church at Albany for twelve-and-a-half years, and since November 1978, for more than eight years already, he is Coaldale's pastor and teacher.

Also the churches in general have profited from his confessional and pastoral faithfulness and his scholarly carefulness, both at Classes in Alberta, and at General Synod 1980 in Smithville. I express the wish that both the Church at Coaldale and all our churches may keep availing themselves of what the Lord has also given to them in this minister of the Word.

Again, Rev. and Mrs. Wielenga, and the congregation of Coaldale, our congratulations. When from the prairies you lift up your eyes to the mountains; from whence does your help come? Your help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. He will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and for evermore.

D. DEJONG

Classis decides not to grant this request for revision since it should be clear from the decision of the June, 1986 Classis that not the Church at Orangeville but Classis annually determines the measure the support which the churches will be asked to pay to the Church at Orangeville for the support of the Rev. C. Olij family.

d. Request of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church of Lower Sackville (Nova Scotia) to be admitted to the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches. Classis expresses its deep gratitude for this request and decides to appoint a committee ad hoc with the following mandate:

(i) to investigate this request and any matters related to this request which need resolution and to report to the

churches four weeks prior to the next Classis;

(ii) to make proposals to the next Classis regarding the admission of the Covenant Orthodox Reformed Church to the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

(iii) to request the Deputies of the Regional Synod Ontario to attend the next Classis in order to give advice in this matter.

Appointed to this committee ad hoc are elder J. Jager (Ottawa), Rev. D. DeJong and Rev. Cl. Stam. The churches are requested to send possible advice/suggestions to this committee which will keep contact with the CORC.

8. *Appointments:* Convening church

for next Classis is the Church at Burlington (West).

Date is: March 12, 1987, at 9.00 p.m., Toronto.

Suggested officers: Rev. J. de Jong, chairman; Rev. D. DeJong, clerk; Rev. M. Werkman, assessor.

9. *Personal Question Period:* is held.

10. *Censure ad Art. 44 C.O.:* need not be exercised.

11. The Acts are adopted and the Press Release is approved.

12. *Closing:* The chairman, Rev. D. DeJong, requests the members to sing Hymn 40:1, 2, and leads in thanksgiving. Classis is closed.

On behalf of Classis,  
CL. STAM, assessor e.t.

## OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



### Hello Busy Beavers,

First of all let's wish each other a hearty "Happy New Year" in the Lord's service.

And then we are ready for a "story" from one of our Busy Beavers. It is called:

### Why?

When we flip the calendar over to the next year, do we really think about it?

Sure . . . we know we are flipping it over. But do we know what it means?

Now, here is a question for you:

Every December 31 we all sit down and enjoy ourselves, and drink and wait until the clock dings 12 o'clock. But . . . every January 1 the next year, we don't do a thing. Why?

Here is the answer: On January 1 we should look back to 1986 and find out how faithful and understanding the Lord is. We should thank Him for His greatness and steadfastness toward us, and ask Him to continue to bless us.

So . . . now that we discussed it, I don't only hope that you understand and do it, but also that the Lord will show His faithfulness continually and bless us in 1987 and the years to come.

Psalms 100:4

Love from Busy Beaver  
Debbie Jagt

## FEBRUARY

Adrian Bartels	1	*Nora Ellen Boersema	14
Joyce Wiegers	1	Wendy Jansen	17
Shanna Bartels	2	Lucy 't Hart	17
Henrietta de Witt	3	Michelle Oostdyk	20
Linda Van Sydenborgh	3	David Van Raalte	20
Michelle Bartels	4	Laura Breukelman	22
Elizabeth Barendregt	6	Roland Klos	24
Patricia Hoeksema	8	Linda Stam	26
Jodi Brouwer	10	Shawn Werkman	26
Cheryl Boeve	11	Sylvia Leffers	27
Judy Bysterveld	11	Carolyn Van Andel	28

We all join in wishing you a very happy birthday and many happy returns of the day! May the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead. Here's hoping you have a very good day celebrating with your family and friends!

\*Busy Beavers, Nora Ellen lives far, far away from all you other Busy Beavers and her aunts and uncles and cousins. Don't you think it would be a great idea to surprise her with lots of cards from our Club members? Send one soon! The address is:

*Nora Ellen Boersema*  
Avenida João Francisco de Melo; S/N  
São José da Coroa Grande, PE  
55567, Brazil

And while we are talking about birthdays, let me tell you about 2 *other* Busy Beavers who live far away on the mission field. They would love to hear from Busy Beavers in Canada on their birthday!

Busy Beaver *Corinne Versteeg* has a birthday on March 3, and Busy Beaver *Emily Vegter* on April 11.

Their address is the same:

*The Reformed International School*  
Box 239 Sentani  
Irian Jaya, Indonesia

I'm sure they would like a surprise just as much as you do!



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Mark Alkema*. We are very happy to have you join us. You are lucky to have such a special sister, Mark. Do you like to read to her? Bye for now. Write again soon.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Chris Spoelstra*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! Thank you for your letter and the riddles.

Welcome to the Club *Kerri-Ann Spoelstra*. We are happy to have you join us. Be sure to join in all our Busy Beaver activities. How is your dog doing, Kerri-Ann?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Jim Spoelstra*. Thank you for your letter and the picture, Jim. What do you play now when you can't play soccer, Jim?

Welcome to the Club, *Sara Vanderpol*. We are very happy to have you join us. Thanks for your letter and the riddles, Sara. Be sure to write us your good news right away!

Welcome to the Club, *Bryan Eelhart*. What a big letter you wrote! I hope you will really like joining in all our Busy Beaver activities.

Hello, *Kerrie Eelhart*. Thank you very much for your picture and puzzle. Write again soon, sometime! Bye for now.

Thank you for your poems *Lucy 't Hart*. I'm glad you're enjoying your holidays, but it does seem a little strange because we're in the middle of winter!

Hello, *Geraldine Feenstra*. Thank you very much for making that puzzle for our junior members and their little brothers and sisters. That was thoughtful of you. Bye for now.

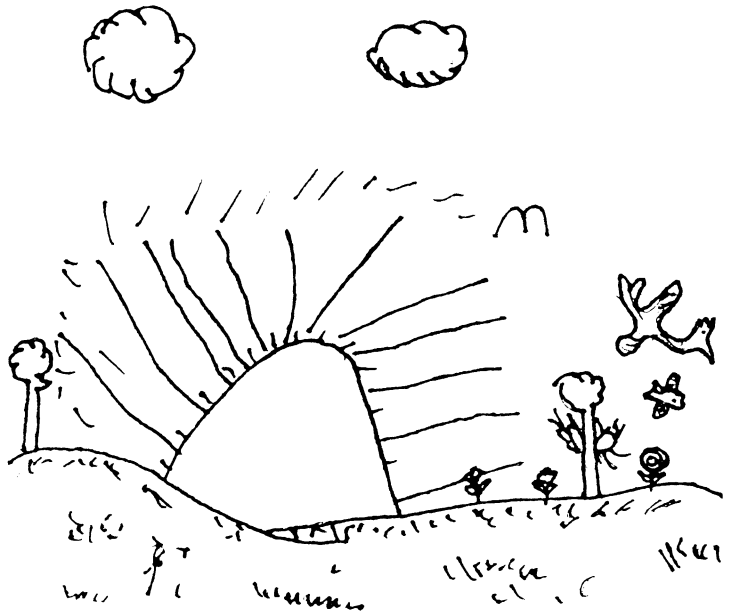
Thank you for a very interesting letter, *Marjorie Barendregt*. You have been very busy, I see. How did you enjoy the school holidays, Marjorie?

Hello, *Karen Heres*. It was nice to hear from you again. How are you doing — you didn't say. Thank you very much for the puzzle. Write again soon!

Busy Beavers we need a pen pal (9 or 10 years old) for:

*Lucy 't Hart*  
50 Leonora Street  
Albany 6330, Western Australia

(Lucy likes Canadian views.)



Here is a picture for you by Busy Beaver *Kerrie Eelhart*

### Riddle Fun

by Busy Beavers *Sara Vanderpol* and *Chris Spoelstra*

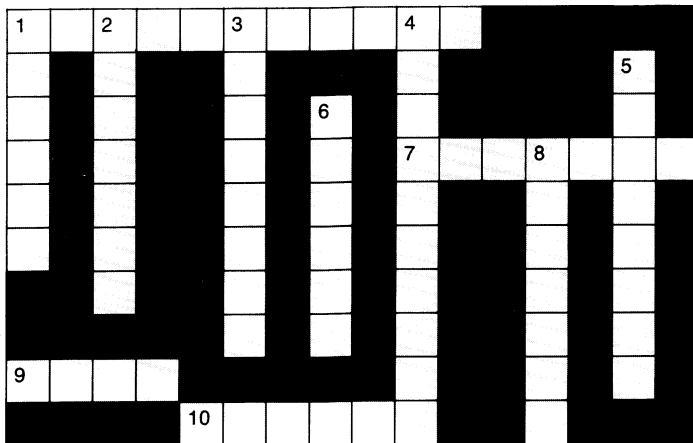
1. What has teeth but cannot bite?
2. What has an eye but cannot see?
3. What is the strongest animal of all?
4. What is it that is made dirty by washing?
5. Which is faster, heat or cold?
6. When is a store like a boat?
7. What's hot even in the refrigerator?
8. What keeps the moon in its place?
9. What bridge do you never cross?
10. What's green and pecks on trees?

(answers next page)

# Quiz Time!

## SPORTS CROSS WORD

by Busy Beaver *Peter John Sikkema*



### ACROSS

1. A game to be played with paddles and a table
7. Casting is one of the most popular methods of this sport
9. A sport, played in a field, to get a ball in a hole
10. A sport in which two fighters battle each other with their fists

### DOWN

1. A game in which the opposing players use rackets to hit a ball back and forth over a net
2. A sport in which a ball knocks over pins to give a player points
3. The capture or killing of wild animals with traps
4. A water sport up north
5. A sport in which a rubber ball is hit against a wall with the players hands
6. A sport played on ice with a stick
8. The capture or killing of wild animals

(answers next page)