



Isaiah 9:6,7

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government will be upon His shoulder,
and His name will be called
"Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."
Of the increase of His government
and of peace there will be no end,
upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom,
to establish it, and to uphold it
with justice and with righteousness
from this time forth and for evermore.
The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.*

Christ — the fulfilment of Israel

Is Matthew literature?

In this article we shall pay attention to the first two chapters of the gospel according to Matthew as they narrate the story about the “genesis” of Jesus Christ, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Son of God. Matthew’s gospel is a narrative, a story. It forms a unity. It has a beginning and an end that are connected with each other. In the beginning we read the promise of “Immanuel,” God (is) with us. In the end the risen Christ, the Son of God, promises that He will be with His apostles and church to the end of the age.

Modern New Testament scholarship stresses the gospels as complete narratives which must be studied as a whole and not be cut into pieces. Let me, in this first part, give some information about modern New Testament scholarship. Those readers who are not interested can ignore what follows now and go straight to the next heading.

During the last two centuries New Testament scholarship has worked with different methods to investigate and interpret the books of the New Testament. I follow these methods in a chronological order. One method after another was developed, while the previously used ones were not abandoned. It began in the eighteenth century with the historical-critical method. In it the question is asked: what can be historically true in the Bible, and, thus, also in the gospels? The norm for determining what can be true is human reason. What the liberal scholar thought not to be in conflict with (his) human reasoning he was willing to accept. It is understandable that much in the gospels was declared mythical. The miracles were declared to be myths, and so was the conception of the Lord Jesus by the Holy Spirit and His birth from the virgin Mary. Many declared that also the bodily resurrection was a myth.

In the beginning of this century Source Criticism came up. With this method of investigation scholars try to figure out what the sources were from which our four gospels have been composed. Why are the three first gospels so often in strong agreement with each other? Do the three synoptic gospels go back to the same sources? (“Synoptic” is composed of two Greek words, “syn” and “optic” meaning “together” and “viewing;” the word “synoptic” means approximately: having the same view.) Was Mark written first and did Matthew and Luke copy Mark to a large extent? And did they use one or more other sources besides Mark? This is one theory. Or was Matthew written first, while Luke used Matthew, and Mark used both Matthew and Luke? This is another theory.

Then there is Form Criticism. The theory is that the stories, as we have them in the gospels, were formed by the early church around their “hero,” their Saviour, just as in other cultures old folks tales and myths were formed around heroes

or to explain aspects of life. It is suggested that the church needed such stories, because it had to have material for preaching and for proclaiming the greatness of Christ. In this way stories about words and deeds (miracles) of Christ were made up by the early church, and gospel tradition material came into existence. Having assumed (made up!) this theory first, Form Criticism, then, tries to reconstruct the different oral and/or literary stages which that tradition material, according to this hypothesis, went through, before it received the final form as we have it in our gospels.

This Form Criticism said further: we should not keep ourselves busy with the question what is historically true about Jesus of Nazareth; we cannot know that anyway, since the largest part of the gospels is made up by the early church for its preaching; we must not ask what we can know about the historical Jesus; we must ask what we should believe about the Christ as He was believed in, and proclaimed by, the church. As Reformed believers we reject such liberal reasoning and respond: If our faith is not based on facts it is vain, as the apostle Paul writes in I Corinthians 15 regarding the resurrection: If the resurrection of the body cannot be factual, then Christ was not raised from the dead, and our faith is in vain.

To Form Criticism was added Redaction Criticism. The gospel writers (according to many scholars not necessarily Matthew, Mark, Luke and John themselves) were not really the authors; they were more the redactors of the gospels who had their own specific “theology” and with that theology in mind used the tradition material that they had available, commented somewhat on it, and composed their gospel (using each other) from their own point of view in connection with, and for the special needs of, the community to which they belonged. This community could be specifically Jewish Christian, or Gentile-Christian, or a special Johannine community. The reader understands that also here we have to do with much unfounded speculation and theorizing. However, in so far there is some gain to be received from this approach: this method studies very carefully and precisely what the specific features are of each of the gospels. How do Matthew and Mark and Luke differ? And what can be the cause that they have a somewhat different order in narrating the events or relating to us the words of Christ? These questions are not unimportant. Luke had a different goal than Matthew and wrote to different original readers.

At the present time a number of scholars are making use of the so-called “Literary Criticism” method. In the last decades much attention has been given in language departments of universities and colleges to language as a phenomenon and to literature as a phenomenon, including narrative as one of

the forms of literature. Questions have been raised: what is language? What makes a certain piece of writing literature? What are the elements that constitute a narrative. Scholars studying language and literature as such found answers. About narratives they said, e.g., that each narrative consists of two basic elements, story and discourse. The story is *what* is told, the discourse is *how* the story is told.¹

The results of such studies of literature in general and of narrative in particular were applied also to the Scriptures. Scholars studied, e.g., the historical books in the Old Testament and the gospels as narratives. Also in this approach there are elements that we reject. The Scriptures are more than a collection of narratives, and so on. They are first of all the one Word of God and as such a unity. Nevertheless, it is true that parts of Scripture are given us in the form of narratives. And when scholars analyse the gospels as narratives, there can again be gain.

With this method the gospels are not torn anymore into different pieces of tradition material which are said to be pasted together by a redactor while we are told that it is our task to find the seams. Each gospel is now taken as a whole, as a complete story, that forms a unity all by itself and must be studied as a unity. Thorough analysis of the gospels as they have come to us is the result. Themes, called the plot of the story, and specific features that are characteristic of a particular gospel are discovered. Lines that run through the gospel narratives are noticed. From a Reformed point of view we can disagree with some of the conclusions. Nevertheless, we can benefit from such studies in our understanding of the gospels. That is the gain.

One literary critic, Jack Dean Kingsbury, writes, "The element of conflict is central to the plot of Matthew. As the Royal Son of God in whom God's end-time Rule is a present, albeit hidden, reality, Jesus is the supreme agent of God who 'thinks the things of God' (3:17; 12:28; 16:23)."² I would like to formulate the central element of the "plot" of Matthew in a different way, more with stress on the calling of Christ Jesus to establish God's rule on earth as God's faithful servant. Discussing the genealogy of Christ, Kingsbury writes, "the message of the genealogy is plain: the whole of Israel's history has been so guided by God that the promises made to Abraham and to King David . . . have attained their fulfillment in the coming of the heir of Abraham and David, namely, the Messiah. Consequently, Jesus is, as Matthew says in 1:1, 'Christ' ('Messiah'), 'Son of David,' and 'Son of Abraham.'"³ On this point I agree with this author.

Galatians 5:22, 23

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law.



The genesis of Christ Jesus, Son of Abraham, Son of David

It is to the genealogy of Christ Jesus as Son of Abraham, Son of David, that we shall now first pay attention. The history proper of Israel begins with God's calling of Abraham. God called and led Abraham to the promised land. He made His covenant with him. He promised to Abraham two things: seed and land. In Galatians 3:16 the apostle Paul explains that seed as being the great seed, in the singular, namely, Abraham's great Son Jesus, the Christ. Of course, the apostle Paul does not deny that God promised a large offspring to Abraham. Neither does Matthew. Paul calls Abraham "the father of us all" (Romans 4:16). However, the point which Matthew wants to make here is that Jesus Christ is the promised great seed of Abraham, and that the whole history which began with Abraham has found its fulfillment in this Christ Jesus.

Now the history that began with Abraham led to David, the King. This David was a first culminating figure in Israel's history in Canaan. He was the first great redeemer-king. But David was not the final great figure. Just like all other people, he was a sinful man. Nevertheless, he received the promise that his royal house would occupy the throne of God's people in all eternity. God was going to build him a house. This promise was maintained. Constantly the prophets of Judah and Israel referred to it. And finally, from David through the Babylonian captivity, and some five hundred years more, the history of Israel and the genealogy of Abraham via David came to Joseph and Mary, and so to Jesus, the Christ. He is the great Redeemer-King, who will inherit the throne of David forever.

Matthew divides all the generations from Abraham, via David, to Christ into three groups of fourteen. That number fourteen is constructed by Matthew. A comparison of Matthew's list of names with the lists in the books of Kings and Chronicles shows that the evangelist leaves out the names of three kings from the second group. A comparison of Matthew's genealogy with that of Luke (chapter 3) shows not only different names, but also that Luke has quite a number of generations more than Matthew for the time after the Babylonian captivity. Again, Matthew has left out a number of names in order to come to his third number fourteen: three times fourteen generations.

Why does Matthew do this? It is not his intention to count exactly. We simply have to accept that. His first readers, probably both believing and unbelieving Jews, understood that quite well. Otherwise especially for the unbelieving Jews the story of Matthew would deny his very message: Jesus is the Christ, the promised Son of David. How can that message be true if it is built on deceit? By counting three times fourteen generations Matthew has two things in mind: to tell his readers that Jesus is the great Son of David, and that God led the whole history from Abraham and David to this Son of theirs, Jesus, the Christ.

In the first place, fourteen is the number of David. In the Hebrew language David is spelled "d-w-d." Further, this language had no number signs. The letters of the alphabet were also used as numbers. "d" stands for four and "w" stands for six. It is now easy to add the numerical value of the letters d-w-d. The result is fourteen. So the numerical value of the name David is fourteen.

In the second place, genealogy means history. Order in history shows even stronger that God governs this history. He is behind it. He steers it. He makes things happen. It is God who began Israel's history with calling Abraham. God led the history of Abraham to King David and from David to Jesus, the Messiah.

Of course, the idea that God rules and "makes" history is not new for us. Neither is it a new thought for us that God led the history from Abraham via David to Christ Jesus. However, it is important that we see that this is precisely the mes-

sage which Matthew wants to convey to his readers with the very beginning of his gospel narrative, with the genealogy as he organized it.

We can see Matthew 1 and 2 as the overture to his gospel. The World-Book Encyclopedia writes about the word "Overture" that it "is a musical composition written as an introduction to an opera, oratorio, or, in some cases, to a play or spoken drama. An overture may contain some of the principal themes of the main work It is intended to put the listener into the proper frame of mind for what is to follow."

What we mean by calling Matthew 1 and 2 an overture can now be clear: it is an introduction to the main body of the gospel. In this introduction the main themes are indicated. It has the function to put the reader "in the proper frame of mind for what is to follow." If Israel's God is the One who governed Israel's history to the birth of Jesus, His Son, as the promised great Son of Abraham and David, then also all that follows in the life of this Jesus, His youth, His ministry in Israel's midst, His repudiation, His suffering and death and resurrection is all governed by God and fulfilment of His plan.

The active hand of God in the genesis (that is literally the word that Matthew uses in the verses 1 and 18) of Jesus Christ is further shown in the verses 18-25. The angel, messenger of God, tells Joseph that what is conceived in Mary's womb is through the power of the Holy Spirit. It is God's fulfilling of His old promise revealed through the prophet Isaiah, that "a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son," and that "His name shall be called Emmanuel." Therefore, it is also the active God who orders Joseph to adopt the Child to be born as his own and to give Him the name Jesus, Saviour, "for He will save His people from their sins."

The genealogy as Matthew writes it speaks of that same gospel. Israel's God is a God of undeserved mercies; a God of forgiveness of sins. Father Jacob, the man of so much deceit, is one of those mentioned. Another name is Judah, Jacob's son, who sinned with Tamar, his own daughter-in-law. Then there is David himself, who sinned with "her of Uriah" (literally translated). And is not the history of David's house a history of unfaithfulness and apostasy? Did not, therefore, David's royal house sink away into obscurity?

It is such a wonderful thing that in this overture in which the birth of Christ is narrated, God's forgiving grace for sinners is stressed. It is a line which we find throughout this gospel. To give an example, in 9:13 Matthew will record the word of Christ, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." This word is spoken as a concluding remark in the passage about the calling of Matthew himself and about Christ's eating with "many tax collectors and sinners." Matthew had been a despised tax collector, and had therefore been considered a great sinner. In the call of Christ to become His disciple, and even apostle, Matthew had experienced God's grace in Christ for himself as a sinful man.

Therefore, already in the narrative about the genesis, the birth of the Messiah Jesus, Matthew urges his readers: open your eyes and see! In Jesus God has given you the Messiah, the Saviour for sinners. Believe in Him and repent from your sins.

When Matthew continues his overture he writes about the magi, Gentiles from the East. While Jerusalem rejects the message, these foreigners revere the Son of God, the King of Israel. God brought them to Jerusalem as His messengers to announce the birth of the Saviour in the royal city of David. This was shameful, perhaps, for David's people. It showed the grace of God for the Gentiles.

The very same grace is also pointed to in the genealogy. Tamar and Rahab, Canaanite women, are taken up in God's covenant and receive the grace of becoming mothers of David and His great Son. So is Ruth, the Moabitess. This theme returns in chapter 15 where we read about the healing of the

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daughter of a Canaanite women begging, "as a dog," for some crumbs from the table for the children of Israel. This theme can also be found in 8:11ff., where Christ predicts that "many will come from east and west and sit at table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, while the sons of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness," and in the parable of the marriage feast (22:1-14). Yes, the gospel concludes with this theme: the risen Christ commands His apostles to go and preach the gospel to all the nations and to make them His disciples, to baptize them and teach them everything that He commanded them (28:19ff.). Is it not wonderful that

Psalm 122:6-9



*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
"May they prosper who love you!
Peace be within your walls, and
security within your towers!" For
my brethren and companions'
sake I will say, "Peace be
within you!" For the
sake of the house of
the LORD our
God, I will seek
your good.*

the Son of Abraham and David is born to be Saviour also for non-Jews, for Gentile-sinners.

Abraham received the promise that he would become father of many nations. In his Son Jesus, the Christ, this finds fulfilment. David conquered a large area and brought other nations under his dominion. So his Son receives the throne to be the King of all the nations to make them share in God's redeeming kingship.

Rejection in the overture

When Christ Jesus was born to save sinners from their sins and to bring them back to God as the true Emmanuel, there was immediately also rejection. Matthew relates this to us as well. God chose magi from the east to announce the coming of the new-born king of the Jews. This news caused consternation, not faith, in the palace of King Herod and among the Jewish leaders. King Herod did whatever he could to make sure that this Child was destroyed. The Jewish leaders did not bother to find out the truth of the announcement and to welcome their King, their Messiah. The people in Bethlehem mourned their little ones and had no comfort. They did not see that their little ones were involved in the enmity that God had put in paradise and that they had died for the sake of God and His Christ. They saw only the empty places. They wept because of their children, as Rachel had, and as the Israelites did when they were driven into captivity, seeing no hope for their children who were no longer there. Everything appeared only full of darkness.

Certainly, the Child, the new-born King of the Jews, escaped. Yet, was it not terrible? He had to flee; He had to flee to Egypt for safety, because He was not safe in His own country among His own people. That was even greater darkness than the death of the little ones.

Also this line of rejection can easily be followed in Matthew's gospel. Again I shall give a few examples. In chapter 9:34 we read that the Pharisees said that the Lord "casts out demons by the prince of demons." In chapter 11 Matthew tells how the Lord compared the people with children who were

unwilling to play games with other children, and he pointed to the fact that the people had rejected both John the Baptist and Him. In chapter 12 we find the picture of a stubborn hardening in sin on the side of the Jewish leaders. This line is continued to the end, when it culminates in the rejection of the Messiah before Pilate and the crucifixion.

However, in all the darkness of repudiation by His own people, as this begins already in the overture, in chapter 2, there is an important aspect in which the line of chapter 1 is continued. It is the line of God's almighty rule in everything that happens. He governed. He made the whole history of Israel, from father Abraham via King David, issue in the birth of Jesus, His Messiah. He revealed His work to Joseph making him see an angel, and hearing his message. And God continued to reveal His will and guide both the magi and Joseph. Through a dream He guided the magi back home, not through Jerusalem but via a different road. He instructed Joseph to take the Child and His mother and flee to Egypt. And later on, through another dream, God revealed that Joseph could go back. Also the settling in Nazareth was under His guidance, because also in this way the Scriptures were fulfilled.

Nazareth was a town in Galilee. For the people of Jerusalem, Galilee was the area of the Gentiles upon which they looked down with contempt. Nazareth in Galilee was for some reason even more despised. We know the reply of Nathanael to Philip, when Philip told him to come with him and meet the Messiah, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

Jesus, the Christ, had to go to disdained Nazareth, in order "that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, 'He shall be called a Nazarene.'" So we understand that this name "Nazarene" means a despised one, one looked down upon. That is how Isaiah 53 prophesied about Him: "He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one for whom men hide their faces He was despised, and we esteemed Him not." He was, according to Psalm 22:6, "a worm, and no man."

Herod can rage and try to secure the throne for himself in his old age, and drive the Child to Egypt, while the kingship of Herod's son can drive young Jesus to Nazareth; the Jews can show indifference and the Bethlehemites can refuse the comfort of God's promises, but in and through all those things it is still the mighty God of Israel who governs and rules all things. He "makes" the history of His servant Jesus in such a way, that even when devils and ungodly people act wickedly, His purpose is fulfilled. He controlled and led Israel's whole history toward the birth of Jesus, the Christ, according to His promises first to Abraham, then to David. He also leads things in the life of this Child so that in everything the prophetic words of the Scriptures find their realization.

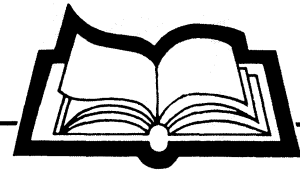
Also the final rejection and repudiation can only serve God's goal: the eternal salvation for sinners who hear the message of the gospel and receive it with a believing heart; who repent from their sins and turn to Him as their Saviour. May that faith and repentance be found in many, also in us. May this gospel go out in our dark world: the gospel of Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of Abraham, the Son of David, the Christ who gave His life as a ransom for everyone who believes in Him through the grace of God.

J. GEERTSEMA

¹More about this literary theory can be found in Seymour Chatman, *Story and Discourse* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press; and for an application of this general literary criticism to the gospel according to Matthew, see Jack Dean Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986).

²Kingsbury, *Matthew as Story*, p. 3.

³Kingsbury, o.c., p. 43.



“... and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying” Matthew 1:19, 20a

A Fallen House Restored

In the days of the prophets, the LORD had promised to raise up the fallen booth of David and restore his kingdom. But in the days of the birth of the Saviour, nothing of that kingdom could be seen. David's kingdom existed *incognito* in the person of Joseph who is only a poor carpenter, hardly known as a son in David's line. Rome ruled the land, and any hope of a sudden restoration of the kingdom of David could only appear as idle talk.

Yet we see something of David in his son Joseph. Joseph loved the LORD, and like several others mentioned in the gospels, was waiting for the fulfilment of His promises to Israel. Indeed, he excels David in the simple but believing way in which he takes a wife. His was betrothed to a young woman from his own tribe who also loved the LORD and made it her aim to serve Him. And he faithfully waits for the day of his marriage. The evangelist describes Joseph as a *just* man, that is, one who served the LORD and sought His face in everything that he did. As other passages show (Luke 1:6, 2:25), a just man is one who serves and trusts the LORD first of all. His life is marked by true faith and living obedience.

All this is reflected in Joseph's actions upon the discovery that Mary is expecting a child. Some suggest that she could not tell Joseph about the circumstances surrounding this pregnancy because she was obligated to keep everything in her heart. Yet it hardly seems likely that Mary did not say a word about these things to Joseph, and covered up all her activities, including the excitement involved in her three month stay with Elizabeth. It seems more natural to assume that she informed Joseph concerning the angel's announcement to her, and the way in which the expected Child would be conceived and born.

And Joseph? Whether he believed or disbelieved her we cannot say. But why would he have reason not to believe her? She was a faithful and believing girl in Israel! And the text nowhere suggests that he held suspicions about her. But he seeks to act in obedience to the will of the LORD. He wrestles with his duty and calling. What must he do? We can be sure that he loved Mary deeply and losing her would have brought lasting pain to his heart. But he reasoned and considered in true faith, discerning what the will of the LORD was. And he concluded that if Mary was with child by the Holy Spirit he no longer had any claim over her. He had to turn her over to the LORD, just as she had turned herself over to Him with the words, “I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word,” Luke 1:37.

Here by faith, and by obedience to God's demands in the covenant, Joseph comes to the confession of his own

unworthiness before God. He admits he has no task here. And in him the house of David speaks! That house was already fallen and in complete ruins, lost and hidden under years of exile and dispersion; now it comes to its final admission of *total* unworthiness. Just as Adam had to admit his own unworthiness in hailing Eve as the mother of all living, so Joseph admits his own and David's unworthiness by recognizing in Mary not his betrothed, but the “mother of my Lord,” Luke 1:43.

Yet this moment of the admission of total defeat and unworthiness and this point when David's house cancels itself out because of its clear recognition of its own unworthiness is exactly the moment that the LORD sends the angel to Joseph. As faith *ponders* the solution, the LORD gives the answer. For Joseph it all appeared as an unexplainable and unsolvable paradox. He was of David's line, and the LORD had promised to restore the house of David. But in true faith he could only conclude: here I must turn my betrothed over to the LORD.

But then the angel comes with the solution to the riddle. And what a wonderful solution it is! For God had so chosen the time of Mary's conception that it occurred between the betrothal and the marriage of Joseph and Mary. Now Joseph received the reward for his faith. Having admitted his own unworthiness, he is accepted of God by grace alone! He is called to take Mary as his wife in order that the house of David might be restored! He also may share this glorious salvation gift of God. What's more, he also received his beloved from the Lord again. Only when the LORD sees his obedience in being willing to sacrifice her for the sake of the kingdom, only then does the reward for his faith come. As Abraham received Isaac back again, so Joseph received his beloved again!

In this way the Lord Jesus receives all the legal rights of the throne of David. They are passed on to Him by virtue of His willingness to assume our flesh and blood, and so take His place in the lineage of David. And by His suffering and perfect obedience, He restored the fallen house of David! He is now an eternal King, and holding the keys to the house of David, He administers the blessings of this kingdom to His church all over the world through His Word and Spirit.

So we may rejoice and give God the glory! He has brought us the wonder of His salvation! He restored the booth that had fallen! And He enjoins upon us all a true faith, and simple obedience, in order that we may be living witnesses of His wondrous triumph in the world. For His kingdom endures forever!

J. DE JONG

The gospel brings to light what in your heart you hide.

Inaugural Speech held at the Theological
College / Convocation Evening, September 11, 1987

Mr. President of the Board of Governors,
Members of the Board; Mr. Principal and
Members of the Senate, Students; Brothers
and Sisters,

It is an honour for me to be allowed to
address you tonight and to propose to you
a possible solution to an exegetical prob-
lem in the interpretation of Luke 8:16-18.
The problem is basically a twofold one.
We can formulate it as a problem of con-
text and of meaning. The two aspects are
interrelated.

The problem of the context

I should like to introduce the con-
textual aspect of this problem to you by
quoting what a number of scholars have
written. W. Hendriksen begins his expla-
nation of these verses with the following
remark: "Though the connection between
the parable of The Sower . . . and the
present little paragraph, containing other
sayings of Jesus, is not clear, it may have
been as follows: Soil must be productive;
that is, hearts must be fertile." The author
refers to Matthew 5:14-16.¹

Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., in his com-
mentary on Luke, rejects the name "the
parable of The Lamp," which is some-
times given to the whole of the verses
16-17(18), with the following strong words:
"This really is a misnomer, since the
verses are a series of sayings of Jesus,
most likely of independent origin, which
have been strung together." He men-
tions that V. Taylor, another commen-
tator, "stresses the artificial arrangement
of the sayings."² C.H. Dodd, in his book
about the parables, wrote regarding the
sayings of the Lord in the parallel place
Mark 4:21-25, with reference also to these
verses in Luke, "That this connection is
artificial hardly requires proof."³ It can be
clear that these scholars see the combi-
nation of the three different sayings in

Luke 8:16-18 and their connection with
the parable of The Sower as an artificial
arrangement by the authors of the gospel
and as not necessarily originally spoken
by Christ Jesus in the order and the con-
text which Mark and Luke give them.

Now also Calvin had his difficulties
with the connections. In his commentary
on the synoptic gospels, Calvin discusses
verse 16 and its parallel place, Mark 4:21,
in the context of his explanation of Mat-
thew 5:13-16, where Christ calls the dis-
ciples "the light of the world" and charges
them to let that light shine. Dealing with
Luke 8:16 and Mark 4:21, Calvin writes,
"Perhaps the discourse related by both
of them [Mark and Luke, J.G.] are de-
tached from the immediate context."⁴ In
other words, for Calvin the connection
between these verses in Luke 8 and the
preceding pericope of the parable of The
Sower is not fully clear.

In itself there is nothing wrong with
assuming or accepting as fact that the
evangelists have arranged their material
in their own order, when the gospels them-
selves show this. It is a simple fact that
sometimes Matthew, Mark and Luke follow
a different order in narrating to us the
things that were done or said by Christ.
As example we can take the next verses
in Luke 8, the verses 19-21. Luke places
this story after the parable of The Sower,
while both Matthew and Mark place it
before this parable. The question is, how-
ever, whether we must assume such an
own redactional arrangement also for the
verses in Luke 8 with which we are deal-
ing, and whether we must further assume
that Christ did not speak these words in
this context, since they do not really fit in
the situation, the *Sitz im Leben*.

Calvin shows the same uncertainty
when discussing verse 17. He explains
this verse when interpreting Matthew
10:26-31, and connects verse 17 especial-
ly with Matthew 10:27, where Christ also

speaks about things that are hidden and
must come to light. Also in Matthew 10
the meaning of the saying is clear from
the context. What is hidden is here the
gospel that Christ revealed to His disci-
ples and which they have to proclaim. Cal-
vin remarks regarding our verse 17 that
this passage "was, perhaps, spoken at
a different time, and in a different sense."
And he expresses his hesitation and doubt
when he explains our verse 17 in the
same way as Matthew 10:27; he says that
this interpretation, nevertheless, seems
to him to be the best one.⁵

Calvin explains verse 18 together
with the parable of The Sower, but makes
the remark that "Luke mixes this sentence
with other discourses of Christ spoken at
different times, and likewise points out a
different purpose for which Christ used
these words."⁶

Also S. Greijdanus speaks of diffi-
culties, although he does not see a con-
textual problem himself. He writes, "The
impression could be given that these
words of the Lord have no connection
with those in the verses 4-15."⁷

I should like to quote one more au-
thor who speaks about contextual prob-
lems. It is I. Howard Marshall. He writes
in his commentary, when explaining verse
17, "We now have a commentary on the
parable [namely of verse 16, about the
lamp, J.G.] in which its significance is
indicated; the commentary is not an exact
fit with the parable, since the idea of some-
thing originally hidden is not present in
the parable, unless perhaps in the thought
of the unkindled lamp which sheds no
light until it is lit."⁸

Our conclusion on this point is that
both the connections between the dif-
ferent parts of these three verses, 16-18,
as well as the connection of these three
verses, taken together, with the preceding
parable of The Sower and its explanation
are seen as difficult and even artificial.

The problem of the interpretation

The second aspect of the problem of Luke 8:16-18 is that of the interpretation, especially of the verses 16 and 17. As I see it, this interpretation problem is closely related to, even causing, or caused by, the problem regarding the connections, mentioned above.

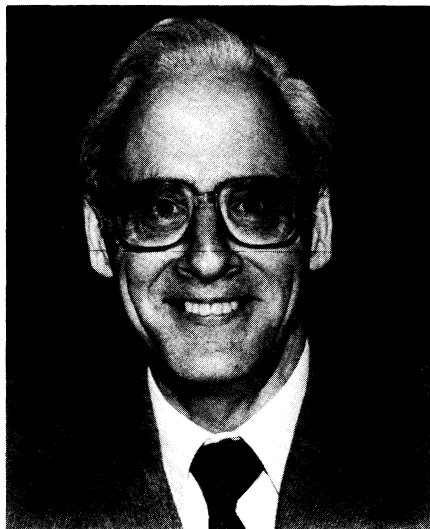
The metaphor, or rather simile, or short parable in verse 16 is not difficult in itself, neither is the saying as such in verse 17. When a person lights a lamp, he places that lamp on a lampstand in order that people entering the house may see by its light. To give light is the purpose and function of a lit lamp. Lighting a lamp and hiding it under a bushel or bed is without sense and meaningless. No one in his right mind does a foolish thing like that.

The connection of verse 17 with verse 16, namely, as a commentary (I. Howard Marshall a.l.), or rather, as providing the reason for the truth expressed in verse 16, can be clear as well. When a lamp shines, that which was hidden by the darkness comes into the open and can be seen. When a person lights a lamp and makes its light shine, it is his intention that everything comes into the open. So far these verses are quite easy to understand.

However, what is now exactly meant by this lamp or light? Of what is it a picture? And what does Christ mean by the things that are hidden and will come into the open? What are the things that are covered but will be seen? Christ does not give an explanation, nor does Luke. That is why, on this point of the interpretation, difficulties arise. Joachim Jeremias writes in his book about the parables, "Unfortunately we do not know what meaning Jesus gave to the *simile of the Lamp whose Place is on the Lamp-stand*." He refers to all the places where we find this simile or short parable: "Mark 4:21; Matthew 5:15; Luke 8:16; 11:33; Gospel of Thomas 33b," and he adds, "According to the context (4:22) Mark and Thomas relate it to the Gospel, Matthew to the disciples (cf. 5:16), Luke to the inner light (11:34-36 . . .)." It is remarkable that Jeremias does not refer again to Luke 8:16. Although for Luke 8:16ff. somewhat different explanations are given, most exegetes follow the same line in their interpretation. I shall again give a few examples.

As said before, Calvin discusses verse 16 in connection with Matthew 5:14-16, where Christ (as mentioned above) addresses the disciples and says, "You are the light of the world." Thus Calvin explains the lamp of verse 16 and its light as speaking about the disciples who are to be the light of the gospel of Christ Jesus in a dark world.¹⁰

Most interpreters are in agreement with this explanation of Calvin. Hendriksen writes, "The point is, of course, that believers, too, must let their light shine."¹¹ Further, in a 17th century Dutch commentary on the gospel of Luke, written by several English authors and translated by Joan van den Honert, Gill remarks on the verses 16 and 17 that the disciples of Christ, having received the light of the gospel and the knowledge of its doctrine, "must not hide that light in their bosom."¹²



Professor J. Geertsema

Plummer writes, "By answering the question of the disciples (verse 9) and explaining the parable to them, Jesus had kindled a light within them. They must not hide it, but must see that it spreads to others."¹³ And Joseph A. Fitzmyer says, "Thus the lighting of the lamp describes the conduct of the disciple: his/her way of listening to the Word must bear fruit . . . The gift granted to the disciple to know the secrets of the kingdom is destined by God to a wide and public broadcasting."¹⁴

Turning to verse 17, we begin again with the interpretation of Calvin. We saw already that he explains this verse together with Matthew 10:26,27. Christ says there to the disciples, "So have no fear of them [the enemies who persecute the disciples, J.G.]; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known." And the Lord continues, "What I tell you in the dark, utter in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops." Calvin writes, "Though He [Christ] sometimes preached openly in the temple, yet, as his doctrine was rejected, it was still *concealed* in dark corners: but he declares that the time for proclaiming it will come." Calvin adds, "Now the *lamp* of the gospel was kindled by the apostles, as it were, in the midst of darkness, that by their agency it might be

raised on high, and shine throughout the whole world."¹⁵

I. Howard Marshall writes of our text, "Here the context refers to the disciples making known publicly what Jesus has told them secretly and the principle appears to be applied to the present secrecy and future manifestation of the message of the kingdom." He refers to Matthew 10:26ff.¹⁶ In the same way Plummer,¹⁷ Alexander Balmain Bruce,¹⁸ H.D.M. Spence and J. Marshall Lang,¹⁹ N. Geldenhuys,²⁰ Joseph A. Fitzmyer,²¹ H.N. Ridderbos,²² J.T. Nielsen,²³ Th. Zahn,²⁴ E. Klostermann,²⁵ H. Schurmann,²⁶ and so on.

I am not completely sure in which direction S. Greijdanus goes in his commentary on the gospel of Luke, because he seems somewhat vague. Greijdanus comments: "The train of thought is this: everything must come to light and become known, verse 17, and for that reason God has kindled His light, which therefore has to shine everywhere and enlighten all things."²⁷ Does Greijdanus go in a different direction, as he also does in his more popular *Korte Verklaring?* (See below) Or is he in agreement with the majority of scholars? The remark which he makes in the introduction to the explanation of these three verses is in line with the explanation mentioned so far. Greijdanus writes, "Here the Lord points out that the preaching of the gospel must bring forth good fruit with everyone to whom it comes; that that is what God requires."²⁸

However, not all the exegetes agree with this explanation. Hendriksen, e.g. gives a different interpretation. He writes, "Men may try to cover up things, but they will be unsuccessful, for God brings everything out into the open. One day whatever is now concealed will be revealed." He refers to many texts in the Old and in the New Testament and continues, "Men may think that they can get away with their evil thoughts, plans, words, and actions. God, however, will expose all this."²⁹ So, Hendriksen does not interpret the things that are hidden and will come to light as the gospel of Christ, but as all the evil in the heart and life of people, which God will bring to light on the day of judgment.

I should like to mention also what S. Greijdanus writes in his *Korte Verklaring* (Brief Exposition) concerning verse 17. He begins his explanation as follows, "God has given the light of His Word in order to bring everything to light and place it in the light. Therefore it must become visible and shine forth in every direction, for that which is hidden must become visible and known. And there is nothing that is hidden that will not at some time come into the open . . . Secret thoughts and intentions, conspiracies that

were concealed, . . . everything is placed in the light by the Word of God, . . . and will come into full daylight at some time, I Corinthians 4:5. It is for that reason that also now already the Word of God must be proclaimed uncovered and openly in spite of everything.”³⁰ Greijdanus and Hendriksen are here clearly in agreement (Hendriksen has probably followed Greijdanus), although Greijdanus does not restrict the moment of the uncovering of the concealed things to the day of the final judgment, but sees the function of the gospel as a revealing agent in the present history. Our interpretation will follow Greijdanus on this point.

R.C.H. Lenski first says of verse 17 “The two propositions are entirely general and thus apply in all directions.” He then explains, “In the present connection . . . Jesus is thinking of the blessed secrets of the gospel The gospel is a mystery indeed . . . , but it is to be made known everywhere.” Here Lenski is fully in line with the majority of the exegetes. However, he continues, “This principle [namely as expressed in verse 17] works itself out in another way: the light of the gospel will also expose the dark and hidden things of the world, will show what they really are (Ephesians 5:13), and will thus begin what God himself will finish completely in the final judgment.”³¹ This shows that Lenski, practically, wants to combine two entirely different explanations, even though, according to him, the former is the one that fits within the context. In my opinion, such a combination or double interpretation is not correct. The words must be taken in their own context, and what they can also otherwise mean in a different context or when taken by themselves should not be brought in as also being a truth expressed here. It is either the one or the other.

The saying of verse 17 occurs with basically the same words again in Luke 12:2. I. Howard Marshall writes, “In 12:2 the logion [=saying, J.G.] is applied to the unveiling of secrets on the day of judgment.”³² But for our text he rejects this explanation.

Our conclusion can be that most scholars interpret the lamp with its light in verse 16 as a metaphor for the disciples, and the things that are hidden as the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, the gospel, which was preached to the disciples in a hidden way, through parables, by Christ, but which later on must be openly proclaimed to all nations by the apostles as the light for the world.

As for the connection between the parable of The Sower and the parable of The Lamp in the, what we might call, majority interpretation, it is explained in this way that, for the disciples, to bear fruit (the aim of the parable of The Sower)

means to proclaim the gospel and so to be light for the world. If the majority interpretation were correct, this would be a very plausible connection.

Our final conclusion is so far that this majority interpretation of verse 16 and 17 is influenced by the meaning of similar sayings in Matthew 5:14-16 and 10:26,27, respectively.

— To be continued
J. GEERTSEMA

¹W. Hendriksen, *The Gospel of Luke*, in *New Testament Commentary*, Baker, Grand Rapids, p. 429.

²Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke I-IX in The Anchor Bible*, Double Day, New York, 1981, p. 716.

³C.H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, revised edition, 1961, p. 113.

⁴John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*, vol. I, Baker, Grand Rapids, p. 274.

⁵John Calvin, o.c., vol. I, p. 461.

⁶John Calvin, o.c., vol. II, p. 105ff.

⁷S. Greijdanus, *Het Heilig Evangelie naar de Beschrijving van Lucas*, H.A. Van Bottenburg, Amsterdam, vol. I, 1940, p. 373.

⁸I. Howard Marshall, *Commentary on Luke*, in *New International Greek Testament Commentary*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1983, p. 329.

⁹Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, revised edition, SCM Press, London, 1963, p. 120.

¹⁰John Calvin, o.c., vol. I, p. 274ff.

¹¹Hendriksen, o.c., p. 430.

¹²*Verklaring van het Evangelium van Lucas uit de Engelsche Werken van de heeren Polus, Wels, Whitby, Gill, Doddridge, etc., vertaald door Joan van den Honert, Isaak Tirion, Amsterdam, 1751, a.l.*

¹³A. Plummer, *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Luke*, in *International Critical Commentary*, 5th. ed., T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh, p. 222.

¹⁴Joseph A. Fitzmyer, o.c., p. 718.

¹⁵John Calvin, o.c., vol. I, p. 461.

¹⁶I. Howard Marshall, o.c., p. 330.

¹⁷A. Plummer, o.c., p. 223ff.

¹⁸Alexander Balmain Bruce, *The Synoptic Gospels*, in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*, T. Wever, Franeker, p. 521.

¹⁹H.D.M. Spence and J. Marshall Lang, *St. Luke*, in *The Pulpit Commentary*, Vol. 16, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1962 (1950).

²⁰N. Geldenhuys, *Commentary on the Gospel of Luke in The New International Commentary on the New Testament*, p. 247ff.

²¹Joseph A. Fitzmyer, o.c., p. 718.

²²H.N. Ridderbos, *The Coming of the Kingdom*, Paideia Press, St. Catherine's, 1978, p. 134, or original *De Komst van het Koninkrijk*, Kok, Kampen, 1962, p. 129.

²³J.T. Nielsen, *Het Evangelie naar Lucas*, in *De Prediking van het Nieuwe Testament*, Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1979, p. 245ff.

²⁴Th. Zahn, *Das Evangelium des Lukas*, Leipzig, A. Deichert'sche Verlagsbuchhandlung Nachf., 1913, a.l.

²⁵E. Klostermann, *Das Lukas-evangelium*, 2nd pr. in *Handbuch zum Neuen Testament*, J.C.B. Mohr, Tübingen, 1929, a.l.

²⁶H. Schürmann, *Das Lukasevangelium*, in *Herders Theologischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament*, Herder, Freiburg, vol. I, p. 467.

²⁷S. Greijdanus, *Het Heilig Evangelie naar de Beschrijving van Lucas*, o.c., p. 375.

²⁸S. Greijdanus, *Het Heilig Evangelie*, o.c. p. 374.

²⁹W. Hendriksen, o.c., p. 430.

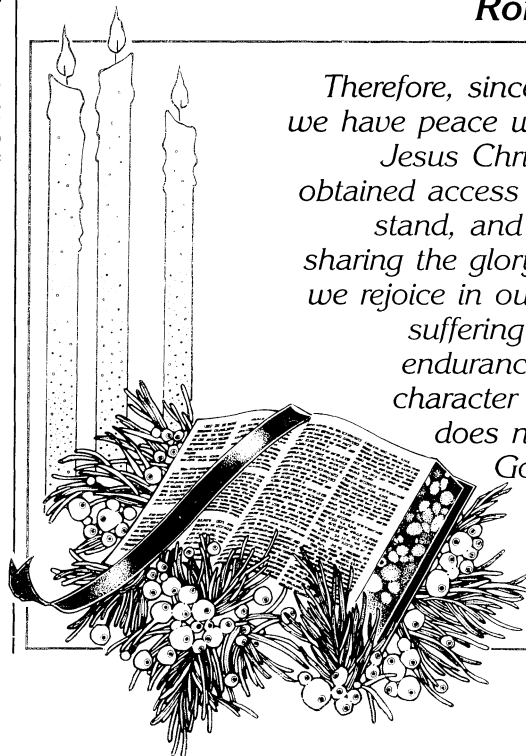
³⁰S. Greijdanus, *Lucas*, in *Korte Verklaring*, o.c., p. 206.

³¹R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel*, Augsburg Publishing House, Minneapolis, 1961, p. 455.

³²I. Howard Marshall, o.c., p. 330.

Romans 5:1-5

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through Him we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in our hope of sharing the glory of God. More than that, we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us.



The Antichrist and the man of lawlessness¹

*Speech held for the League of Canadian Reformed Women's
Societies on October 21, 1987, in Burlington South*

Introduction

When I was first presented with a list of possible topics from which to choose my speech title for today, I did not hesitate long in choosing the topic of the Antichrist. I chose this topic partly because there remains a good deal of confusion as to who the Antichrist is, and as to what his actual role and function is according to the Bible. But that was not my foremost reason. I also was directed to this choice because of the tremendous resurgence of interest in the macabre and the demonic, and because antichristian pressures in our world keep increasing. The youth sub-culture of our day shows an all too keen interest in what might be termed the "satanic" — the bizarre, the morbid and the grotesque. The complete "transvaluation of values" — to borrow a term from Nietzsche — has occurred among the leading cultural forces of our day. The confusion of the sacred with the profane, the confusion of morals and codes of conduct — all this has come to new and unparalleled dimensions today.

You may think that this has little to do with the topic at hand. For example, if we point to the increasing reversal of roles with respect to the place of men and women in our society, or to pop cult figures like Michael Jackson and Madonna, not many of us would directly think of the Antichrist. After all, cult heroes only form a fractional influence on society as a whole. And while a steady change in values and accepted or traditional roles may be termed negative with respect to the gospel, it cannot directly be connected with the appearance of the Antichrist.

However, Scripture itself clearly warns us that Satan appears as an angel of light, and that his power of deception is forceful and acute. That is why we also must be aware of the times we are living in as Reformed women, not only with respect to

our own position and situation, but also with regard to our children, and the coming generations. We must be aware of the direction of history, and learn to know that person whom the Bible calls the Antichrist, that person who dominates the final years of this dispensation. Knowing both the signs of his coming and the nature of his person, we will be all the more equipped to meet the enemy in the gate, and be spiritually armed and dressed for battle in regard to the approaching day of evil.

Our purpose then is to study the figure of the Antichrist, and the manifestation of his activities on earth. We will first look at some views of the Antichrist and the antichristian world, then consider some Bible passages, after which we will try to piece together the correct view of the Antichrist and his manifestation in the world. We will then consider the rise, onslaught and the fall of the Antichrist.



Rev. J. de Jong, speaker on the topic

Views on the Antichrist

Who is the Antichrist? Is he the same figure as the man of lawlessness of whom Paul speaks in his letter to the Thessalonians? Does the Antichrist represent a series of figures, or is he restricted to one person alone? These are some of the questions that often arise when one runs into the Scriptural teaching on the Antichrist. Admittedly, there are several difficult passages with regard to his appearance, and we will take some time to consider the passages individually before getting a global picture of the identity of the Antichrist.

Every age has had its views on the Antichrist.¹ Many of the early church fathers held that the Antichrist would be a Jew, and that he would establish his throne in Palestine. On the basis of Jeremiah 8:16, Ireneaus held that he would descend from the tribe of Dan. Others pointed to the Roman rulers as antichristian figures. Chrysostomos, the bishop of Constantinople, held that Paul was referring to Nero when he wrote about the "mystery of lawlessness" and the "man of lawlessness" in II Thessalonians 2. Augustine, too, pointed to the Roman empire as the forthcoming kingdom of evil, and on the basis of Daniel 7:24 expected the empire to be divided into ten parts, after which the antichristian ruler would appear.

In the Middle Ages, views on the Antichrist became much more colourful and dramatic. The general spirit of darkness and superstition led to the development of many legends and sagas with regard to Satan, the devil, and the Antichrist. The Antichrist would be born out of an illicit relationship between a nun and a bishop, or, as others said, between a bishop and a public woman. The devil would specially influence his conception, filling him with many destructive powers. He would appear

in Jerusalem, and claim himself to be the true Messiah. He would pretend to reintroduce the Mosaic form of worship, but in himself he would harbour the seven deadly sins.

The Antichrist then becomes a powerful king, and the devil gives him stores of secret treasures. All the kings of the world seek his favours. Lawlessness rules the world, but the faithful will be persecuted. So the preachers threatened congregations with his imminent appearance. He would be surrounded with a great company of witches, goblins, and beggars. In the mystery plays so typical of this period, he was often portrayed as standing alongside the devil himself, surrounded by eerie sounds, smoke, flying satyrs, and the flaming hole of hell with the huge dragon cave pictured nearby as the place where the devil rapidly ran with his prey after snatching them in the moment of carnal weakness.

This spirit of fantasy so typical of the Middle Ages came to a radical change with the dawn of the Reformation. So corrupt had the Roman see become, and so polluted with harlotry and vice, that Luther did not hesitate for a moment to label the pope and his cohorts as the Antichrist. It was an appellation that Luther never saw reason to retract his whole life long, and later it became anchored in the Smalcald Articles of 1537. For Luther, not one particular pope, but popery as a whole was the Antichrist. He also expected an imminent return of Christ, and hoped to be able to witness the defeat of the Antichrist in his lifetime.

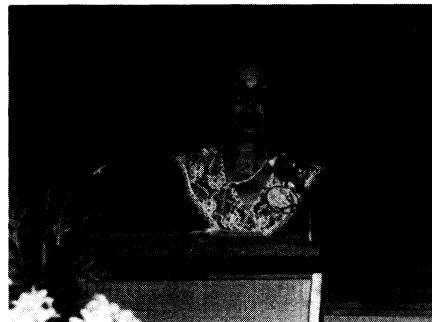
Calvin's references to the papacy as the Antichrist are less frequent, and he is more concerned to show the error lodged in the entire Roman system, including its doctrine of merit and works, as well as its view of the sacrament and the offices. Yet, in distinction from Melancton, he also unreservedly held the view that the pope was the Antichrist. However, in Calvin this label did not imply the imminent end of the world. Rather, the pope deserved the name Antichrist because of his open and violent hostility to the progress of the true gospel of Christ in the world. All heretics and sects through the ages were also considered as part of the kingdom of the Antichrist, and Calvin viewed the papacy as the vanguard and standard bearer of this kingdom. We indirectly support Calvin's view in the third of our doctrinal standards, the *Canons of Dort*. The preface to this confession acknowledges how the churches of Holland "were delivered by God's almighty hand from the tyranny of the Roman antichrist and the terrible idolatry of popery."²

In more recent times, Reformed scholars and exegetes have made some significant distinctions with regard to the Anti-

christ. H. Bavinck distinguished between the antichristian power which is always present and has its own history, and the Antichrist as a unique end-time figure. Abraham Kuyper had a similar view. Many also distinguished between the Antichrist as an end-time figure and various forerunners of the Antichrist throughout history who would pave the way for his appearance at the end of time. This has been the standard view in Reformed circles for many years.

The antichristian world

Many people have painted pictures of the horrible totalitarian state which they suppose will one day take hold of the world and dominate all world events. Many au-



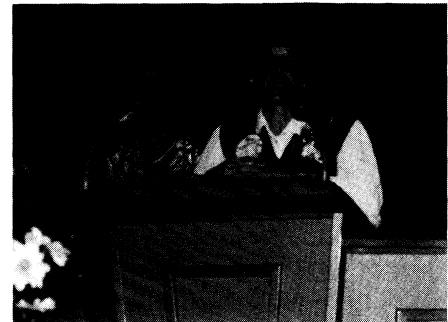
Mrs. van Delden, president of the Women's League Day

thors — also outside the circle of faith — have been preoccupied with this theme. That only shows how much the fear of encroaching state power and the fear of large scale terror looms in the human mind. For example, George Orwell vented his fear of the growing power of the state in his book *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. All of life was controlled by the Party, and all individual freedoms were sacrificed for the state. One had to live in constant fear of Big Brother, who regulated human existence and controlled all human thought from birth to death. Science and the technocratic ideal ruled the world, preventing any room for individuality or individual expression. The German novelist Franz Kafka gives a similar point of view in his famous book *The Trial* (*Das Proce*s).

A more recent example, which may be of interest to you as Canadian women is a new book by Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood entitled *The Handmaid's Tale* (Toronto, 1985). This book describes a world in which — remarkably — the televangelists and their followers come to absolute power. Life is totally restructured according to rigid Old Testament laws, and most women are relegated to the position of "handmaids." Handmaids are expected to serve as mechanical child-bearers for the "Commanders," producing children for the new Christian society.

Just as Rachel gave her maid Bilhah to Jacob, so the Commanders' wives give handmaidens to their husbands. Women who fail to comply with the new laws are "salvaged," i.e., ruthlessly "tarred and feathered" and killed in public squares — all in accordance with Old Testament laws.

What awakens our interest in this last publication is that this view of the totalitarian state is not so much determined by prophecy as it is determined by a hatred of Biblical prophecy. In Atwood's view, the Christian heritage is obviously to blame for the longstanding tradition of the role of servitude which women are supposed to endure. So the evil totalitarian world is for her one in which the televangelists rule the day. And while we do not



Mrs. J. de Jong speaking about the "Mother of Jesus"

want to minimize the danger of the false prophecy inherent in so much of today's television preaching, we ought to be clear about Atwood's essential motivations. Unfortunately, her work shows an outright hatred for prophecy, and this only prevents her from getting any kind of true assessment of what the real world of evil and the Antichrist will be like.

That the end-time world will be a totalitarian state is one point where we can agree with writers mentioned above. But their view of the extent of the terror and oppression that will reign is much too limited. For the terror that will be exerted is at bottom conditioned by the *antithesis*, i.e., the spiritual battle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. This battle will come to its final apex at the end of days. This will be a time of suffering, persecution, and tribulation for the church. Let us now turn to some Scripture passages to see what contours this end-time struggle will take.

— To be continued —

J. DE JONG

¹For this section see I. De Wolff, *De laatste jaren dezer wereld*, (Goes, 1960), pp. 10ff.; and V. Hepp, *De Antichrist* (Kampen, 1921), pp. 56ff.
²P. Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom*, (Grand Rapids, Mich., 3rd Ed. 1977), III, p. 550.

The sixth Latin American Mission Conference at Curitiba, Brazil

Participants

From October 28 to November 4, 1987, the sixth Latin American Mission Conference was held in Curitiba, the capital of the province Paraná, Brazil.

In this city of 1½ million inhabitants, three missionaries of the mission church of Assen-South, the Netherlands, are working. They are Rev. P.W. van de Kamp, Rev. Th. Havinga, and Rev. E.A.W. Mouissie. All the other participants of the conference, numbering 11, were the guests of these three families. Five of these participants came from Curaçao, Netherland Antilles, three came from the northeast of Brazil (São José and Maragogi), and three came from Hamilton, Ontario.

The delegation from Curaçao consisted of the three missionaries sent by the mission church of Rijnsburg, the Netherlands: Rev. O.W. Bouwsma, Rev. J. Glas, and Rev. J.J. Schreuder. Also

from Curaçao two native helpers, Miss Laurina Leshommes and Miss Sharline Martina, were present. Miss Laurina works in the service of the church of Rijnsburg. She helps in teaching the young people of Curaçao in the Bible lessons. Miss Martina finished the G.S.A. (Reformed Social Academy) at Zwolle and is sent out by the organization "De Verre Naasten" (mission aid) to her native land for social work. From the northeast of Brazil (mission field of the church at Surrey, BC) both missionaries were present, Rev. R.F. Boersema and Rev. P.K. Meijer. They were accompanied by the mission aid worker br. G. Glas.

From the mission church of Hamilton, Ontario, the missionary Rev. P. Aasman and his wife were present (Mrs. Aasman participated partially in the conference), and the undersigned, teacher of missiology at the Theological College.

Also invited as guest was the missionary Rev. T. de Boer of South Africa,

but he was not able to take part in the conference. The same can be said of the third mission helper from Curaçao, Mrs. I.O. Martina-Giribaldie, and the mission aid worker br. J. Souman of Maragogi.

This was the sixth conference of the Latin American mission workers. Normally a conference is to be held every two years. This conference should have been held in March/April of this year, but it had to be delayed until October.

Opening

On Wednesday, October 28, the conference was opened by the oldest missionary of Curitiba, Rev. P.W. van de Kamp. He expressed his gratitude that all the missionaries could be present. He paid tribute to Drs. M.K. Drost, lecturer in missiology at Kampen, the Netherlands, who passed away last year. Drs. Drost greatly promoted and stimulated the whole work of mission, including conferences like this. Unfortunately his successor, Drs. C.J. Haak from Irian Jaya, could not be present at this conference.

Rev. P.K. Meijer was chosen as chairman, and as clerk Rev. P.W. van de Kamp was appointed.

The agenda of the conference consisted of reviews and discussions of mission activities on the several fields, and also of the following topics:

1. Poverty and Mission;
2. The Relation between the Mission Workers and the Natives;
3. The Pentecostal Movement in Brazil;
4. The Practice of Social Help on the Mission Field;
5. Theological Education by Extension (TEE);
6. The Nevius Method and Our Practice.

Extension of mission work

As far as the reviews of the work in the several mission fields are concerned, it may be said that there is everywhere



Most of the participants of the 6th Latin American mission conference in the front of the church building of Curitiba

more *decentralization*. In Curaçao the missionaries started with worship services at four places; in the northeast of Brazil there is an expansion (services at three places), while a third mission field is being sought for the mission work of the Rev. P. Aasman. Also in Curitiba services are held at three places. The participants in the conference experienced that also themselves. On Sunday morning they attended the worship service in the church building at the Avenida Paraná, and most of them also attended the service held in the second part of the morning in the small village São Sebastião in the north of the city. In the afternoon there was a worship service in the small village of Roça Grande (also in the north of the city) and in the evening there were again two services, the one in the church building and the other one again in São Sabastião.

It is noteworthy that the natives are very much involved in the services as well as in other activities. After the morning service there is an "Escola Dominical," guided by one of the Brazilian members of the church. Also one of the Brazilian members of the church is the chairman of the Bible study society, and at the same time Mrs. van de Kamp gives Bible lessons for the younger children. The sermon in the worship service is delivered by one of the missionaries, but there is quite some singing by the congregation, and the Scripture reading is done by one of the members of the congregation.

Especially in the services in the villages there is also a kind of discussion of the sermon. The missionary asks questions; there is a good response from the side of the hearers; they have the opportunity to ask questions.

This pattern (with variations according to the special situation of the mission field) is also to be found in the northeast of Brazil and in Curaçao.

The participants in the conference also attended a congregational meeting in the church building of Curitiba. In it, too, several activities of members of the congregation were included. The congregation received an impression of the work in Curaçao via slides, and also of the work in São José and Maragogi via an extensive video tape. It was a pleasure to me to tell the congregation something about the Theological College at Hamilton, and our teaching there.

Poverty and mission

On the one hand, the expansion of mission work is clear. But on the other hand there are still many problems. One of them is the fact that there is, especially in Brazil, much poverty. The topic *Poverty and Mission* was discussed at the conference in groups (two of them in the



The participants of the 6th Latin American mission conference at Curitiba, Brazil (beside the church building of Curitiba)

Dutch language and one of them in English), with a general discussion afterwards. First of all the hermeneutic background and starting point was discussed. Especially in Brazil the liberation theologians have much influence, but in most cases they let the "context" (situation of the people) dominate over the "text" (Scripture, which is not even normative to them). They use a modern exemplarism and are very selective in the choice of texts. As far as the inspiration of the Bible is concerned, they transform it into the answer given by the people in their situation of life. In this respect we can speak of an "inflation theology."

What is our answer? We have to stress very strongly the normative character of God's Word. There is always the great difference between inspiration and illumination. We have to discover the message of the text, appropriated to the church of all ages, and also the special application to our specific situation. As far as the poor are concerned, time and again *those* poor are mentioned in the Bible who take their refuge in the LORD. In the last verses of Acts 2 it is clear how the diaconate flourishes in the church when the Holy Spirit is sent upon the members of the congregation.

What about the passage about the man of great wealth (Matt. 19:16-22)? Is that passage to be read as a general example for us? The answer is: do not isolate that passage from the context (the children [vv. 10-15] and Christ's followers [vv. 23-30]). The LORD asks from all His children total obedience, consistent faith.

Not everything which is said by

liberation theologians is to be rejected right away. Sometimes they word the Biblical appeal in a way that is to the point. But we have to stress that poverty is one of the many consequences of *sin*, and it is clear that we as Christians have the task to dissolve poverty as far as possible. Also on the mission field the church has to be a merciful people, understanding their diaconal task.

Relation between mission workers and natives

Important was also the topic concerning the relation between the workers on the mission field (who are sent out by a mission church or by mission aid) and the native population. It was something very special that this paper was delivered by the two native mission workers of Curaçao, Miss Leshommes and Miss Martina. It was especially discussed that it is absolutely necessary that the mission workers are able to speak the *language* of the country, and that they even master that language. One of the conditions is also that the workers who are sent out have knowledge and understanding of the *culture* of the natives. They have to study that, but very important is also a patient and respectful relationship with them. The mission worker has to accept also criticism from the side of the natives.

The culture and the lifestyle of the mission worker is not *as such* normative for the natives. Decisive is here what the *Bible* says.

A condition for good cooperation is that the mission worker does not stand *above* the natives but *beside* them, and

also that from the side of the natives an accommodating attitude may be expected.

The pentecostal movement in Brazil

Especially in Brazil, but also in Curaçao, there is tremendous expansion of the pentecostal groups. Industrialization and migration promoted this movement, but also the emphasis on emotions, healing of illness, poverty, the ascription to the Holy Spirit of all kinds of inexplicable matters, legalism, and also the urge of expansion.

There is a relation between "national catholicism" in Brazil and the pentecostal movement. There is also an anabaptist background in the pentecostal movement. It is said by the pentecostals that one has to be freed from *sins*, but the meaning of that is that they are actually freed from the *world*. The anabaptists separate the work of God the Father from the work of God the Son (the world in the sense of God's creation is a total loss, so there has to come a complete new world, not a re-creation), and they isolate also the work of God the Son from the work of the Holy Spirit (their idea is that there is no connection between God's Word and the Holy Spirit: the Holy Spirit does not work *with* the Word of God). That is to be discovered in the pentecostal movement. There is a tendency to shun the world, and also to put emphasis on utterances of the Holy Spirit, but not as related to the Word of God.

As far as the worship of the *saints* is concerned, the pentecostal movement uses worshipping the saints, but in order to profile themselves over against the Roman Catholics. Nevertheless the *basic view* is the same: both of them stand over against the idea of: "*The Word is near you*" (Deut. 30:14, Rom. 10:8).

One of the reasons for extensive growth of the pentecostals is also that the public worship, the cult, is freed from the official framework of the Roman Catholic Church. The people are not passive any more, but much more involved in it.

In this respect it is very important that on the mission field the people are indeed more involved in what happens in the worship services. There is indeed the danger that the whole matter of the worship service is a one-man-show. Is it not advisable that the people are involved, not only in singing and offering, but also in reading of the Scripture and in praying?

Two things may not be forgotten. In the first place that the LORD is not a God of disorder but of order, and secondly that God's Word distinguishes clearly between man and woman, a distinction which has to find shape in the practice

of liturgy and also in congregational life as a whole.

Especially the exegetical side of this matter could be a good topic for a next conference.

Finally, the concrete and direct way in which people of the pentecostal move-



After the worship service in the village of São Sebastião in the north of Curitiba.

ment are able to profile themselves, can make us jealous. Also our people have to speak freely and directly. Maybe we can teach them to do it in the way of the old adages of The Reformation, *sola Scriptura, sola gratia, and sola fide!*

Practice of social help

Mission aid worker br. G. Glas introduced the topic of the practice of *social help on the mission field*. Especially in the northeast of Brazil it is very hard to ac-



The "upper room" of the church building at Curitiba, where the 6th Latin American mission conference was held

tivate the poor. There are many poor and sick people, and also many of them are coming to the policlinic, asking for help. But it is more or less a bottomless pit. One of the problems is that mission aid work is not a kind of diaconate work of the church. It is very important that the congregation is involved. Now the future deacons of the church are doing lots of work, but mission aid is working separate from them.

In Curaçao it works differently. In the beginning financial help was given by the social worker, but now there is a special committee with representatives from the future congregation and a deacon from the instituted congregation. This committee makes the decisions. In Brazil the situation is again different. Most of the time the people need help immediately, so that it is impossible to wait for a decision of a committee. The medical work is not to be transferred to the local population, but maybe in the future to the government.

Another question is: how to set up the *budget*? The answer is that it is maybe best to let the future deacons be involved in it. Finally the question: is it necessary that each and every mission field has its own social worker, sent out by mission aid? The answer is: there is a big difference between the several mission fields. Maybe a project can be set up which uses the know-how from the Netherlands in order to let the work be done by a committee of natives in the mission field (e.g. in Curitiba).

Theological Education by Extension

Already years ago the *Theological Education by Extension* started in Central

America (Guatemala). This "TEE" had the idea to start with theological education of the natives in a centre, but to let the missionaries and the teachers go to the periphery as soon as possible. Especially because of the fact that natives who had special gifts for it were involved in the whole matter of education, it worked very well. There was indeed a remarkable extension. The problem in the mission field is often that people who have received their further education in another country, are inclined not to go back to their native land.

In many cases it is also impossible to let the natives follow all the academic courses which they need. Nevertheless, there are people with special gifts. Now the question came up: do we not have in the *Church Order* of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands and in Canada the well-known Article 8? It was discussed that it must be possible in situations of mission to admit brothers to the office of minister of the church in special cases, without having followed the whole course of academic training. So the conference stressed the necessity of training for leadership at several levels within the structure of the congregation and the cultural situation. Therefore it would be good to investigate the TEE-material, and to take stock of it. It is also good to have in this respect a close co-operation between Curaçao and Brazil. It is necessary that some missionaries are sent out who have this kind of training in their instruction.

Finally: we can learn from TEE that there is a very close connection between *theory and practice*. Sometimes our training is rather theoretical and then it is hard to find the way to practice.

The Nevius method and our practice

At one of the former conferences (1983) the whole matter of the *Nevius method* (practiced in China and Korea before) was discussed. The main points of this method are: let the missionary not stay very long in the same place, and let the natives right away be involved voluntarily as "evangelists."

Now it appears that it is not possible to follow-up the *Nevius method* consistently. Especially the many activities of other "churches" and sects are an impediment to that. But the farther the distance is between these activities and our own mission post, the more it is possible to execute certain points of this method.

Not only in Curaçao, but also in Brazil the work is to be done the better with the participation of the native people, because of a good form of decen-

tralization, and/or expansion of the mission work.

There is quite some material available, but it must be said that much of it is not useful. Not only good translations are necessary, but in many cases the material has to be accommodated to the situation. In many cases it appears also that the material is too difficult for the people, so that simpler material must be procured.

In the course of time the missionaries have to yield to native people. In this respect it is absolutely necessary to extend the training of the natives, so that native ministers, elders, deacons and members of the congregation can take over the work. We have to take into account that this goal is to be reached only in the way of a *process*.

The element of *doctrine* must be given a place, and it is advisable to do that especially in the second service on Sunday, according to the custom of the beginning of Reformation times. The people are not used to going twice to the church every Sunday, but especially the variety of the services makes it easier for them.

Evaluation

As far as the evaluation of the conference is concerned, the matter of the *language*, used at the conferences is to be reconsidered. If the next conference

will be held in the Dutch language (as was the custom from the beginning), a *summary* of the papers could be delivered in English, as well as the *discussion points* which are added to the papers in most cases.

The general opinion was that the conference was very helpful for the mission work, and it was appreciated by all the participants that the topics were also directed in a practical way. There were two main concerns: the importance of the social aspect, with special attention to the poor, and on the other hand the whole matter of further training, so that leaders could be formed in the several mission fields.

There was at the conference a very good atmosphere and a strong desire to help each other in the problems of the individual fields.

It was decided that the seventh Latin American Conference of mission workers will be held, the LORD willing, in the beginning of October, 1989. Curaçao will receive the brothers and sisters and will start right away at the beginning of next year with the preparations for the new conference.

The chairman closed the conference after having wished all the participants and their churches the indispensable blessing of the LORD.

K. DEDDENS



After the afternoon worship service in the village of Roça Grande, (north of Curitiba).

To Our Readers

Another year has passed in which we saw the antichristian forces hard at work — and succeeding in many ways to establish and promote ungodly practises. At times we may be inclined to despair. We may wonder how long we will still have the freedom to live and express ourselves as Christians in our society. Yes, we saw the works of iniquity increasing, but we also saw the almighty, restraining hand of God at work. Time and again the LORD surprised us by the opportunities He gave us to bear witness to the truth and to promote the honour of His Name. In His mercy, He gave us the freedom openly and publicly to worship Him and to serve Him on our many and varied tasks and positions.

Many hours have been spent also this year again to give us, Clarion readers, a great variety of articles for our spiritual enrichment, to equip us for greater service in the kingdom of God. We are indebted to our editors — in particular, Prof. Geertsema — and the other contributors for the steady supply of copy to fill the pages of our magazine. The reports of ecclesiastical assemblies, of the meetings and activities of other organizations, and of other events within our churches, keep us well-informed of what is happening from coast to coast and “down under.” Via the family announcements and notices, we share in the joy and the sorrow of our brothers and sisters and exercise and experience the communion of saints.

Not only are we receiving more news from Australia, but we are also gaining readers there. And the number of subscribers continues to grow on our continent as well. May Clarion be a vehicle to establish closer ties between the two.

Reformed Perspective, published by a foundation, but printed by Premier, also experiences support from our Australian brotherhood. We urge all the readers of Clarion to support Reformed Perspective by taking out a subscription, if you have not already done so. Those who have undertaken special studies in a particular field are invited to share their knowledge and expertise with the readers of Reformed Perspective. It will be greatly appreciated.

1987 has been an exciting year for Premier. In July we moved into a brand-new, 24,000-square-foot facility — modern in design, fully air-conditioned, professionally landscaped, and illuminated at night. It is a roomy, comfortable workplace for our 45-member staff. Who could have imagined it 25 years ago when Premier started up as a one-man, one-room shop!?

It was an honour for us to have Mr. Bill Norrie, the mayor of Winnipeg, in our midst during the opening celebrations on October 21. As he turned on our four-colour printing press — instantly producing a beautiful four-colour calendar/poster, specially designed for the occasion — he declared the plant officially opened. Many of our valued customers participated in the ceremony and received a tour of the premises.

We at Premier, too, have been richly blessed, and we acknowledge our total dependence on the LORD from day to day. What a comfort to know that our Saviour, whose birth we remember during these festive days, is God Almighty who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

May we all place our trust and confidence in Him alone during the coming year and praise Him every day anew for His mercy and grace.

G. KUIK

Mercies

Old Yet New

To review a year that has almost come to an end is a gratifying work; on the other hand, it also brings back the pain and concern which was felt on more than one occasion.

One discovers anew the truth of the confession, "If not the LORD had kept and protected us, we would have perished."

This is also the reason why there is abundant reason for gratitude and a solid ground for hope for the future. It is evident to everyone who is willing to see that we have been blessed most richly by the Father of Him who is an eternal King and who, for this reason, must have subjects, a people willing to do His work and to continue in His paths, serving in His army, willing on the day of battle, as Psalm 110 states it.

It is by His grace and by the power of the Holy Spirit that the churches have been preserved with the true doctrine and were enabled to continue the work to which they were called. Not only did their number not diminish, it even grew.

Numerical growth is not necessarily proof of blessing, and we have never set goals such as we read of others, who aim at adding thousands of members and hundreds of new congregations. It is not in the hands of man to change the hearts and to cause people to turn from their wicked and erroneous ways.

In the growth which we experienced during the past year we may see the goodness and favour of the Lord our God.

This growth we experienced first of all in the admission into the federation of the Covenant Church at Lower Sackville, NS, and of the Tri-County Church in Laurel, MD. For the brothers and sisters in these churches it will have been a reason for joy that they found a federation of churches which, like they themselves, had the desire to hold on to the Truth as summarized in the Reformed Confessions and which, in their church government, abided by the basic rule that only Christ is the Head of the church, governing His churches locally by the appointed office-bearers.

For the churches, on the other hand, it was a joy to receive them, to extend the hand of fellowship to them and to offer them the help which they might need.

The number of churches grew further by the institution of two churches in Ontario: the one at Elora and the one at Grand Valley.

This brought the number of churches in the two classes of eastern churches to twenty-three, and this, in turn, occasioned proposals to form three classes instead of two. A committee was appointed and the new year may see development into this direction.

In British Columbia, too, the number of churches was increased. Slowly but surely the membership in the Okanagan Valley grew so that institution could take place. Until the mo-

ment of institution the Rev. VanSpronsen was minister of the Church at Chilliwack for the house congregation in Vernon; now he became Vernon's first own minister.

The question of institution of another church between Cloverdale and Langley seems to have been put on the backburner for the time being.

No new developments can be mentioned for the Burlington area either, except that Burlington-West is aiming towards calling a second minister as the membership has grown to such proportions that one minister cannot possibly take care of all the things belonging to his task.

Although it is not a member of the federation, yet we gratefully mention the institution of the Church at Manggeium in Irian Jaya. The work of bringing the Gospel to the people in that country and region, started seventeen years ago, has borne rich fruit. It has pleased the Holy Spirit not only to work the faith in the hearts of many brothers and sisters but also to provide them with men who are able to lead them further in the path of Truth.

All the gratitude and all the joy, because of the above mentioned blessings is not taken away, but it is somewhat diminished by the fact that in Edmonton a group organized themselves in a separate and schismatic congregation which shows no signs as yet of being prepared to submit to the authority of the legitimate office-bearers.

Ministers

With gratitude towards the Lord from whom all their strength was, some of the ministers were privileged in celebrating the twenty-fifth anniversary of their ordination. They were the brothers M. VanderWel and J.D. Wielenga. Our brother M. VanBeveren celebrated the thirtieth anniversary of his ordination, while the Rev. A.B. Roukema remembered that he was ordained even fifty years ago.

Some were also taken away to enter into the joy of their Lord. One of the first ministers to come to Canada, the Rev. W. Loopstra, was taken up by his Master.

Although he was not a minister yet, but called to be one, we remember also our brother G. Peet who was to have become the minister of the Ottawa Church, but for whom the Lord had something better in store: all the joys but also all the tensions and difficulties of the ministerial service were kept from him; instead the Lord gave him only joy.

The number of ministers was further reduced by the departure of the Rev. C. Bouwman who accepted a call from the Church at Byford in Western Australia, and will be reduced further by the departure of the Rev. A. DeJager of Neerlandia, who accepted a call to a church in the Netherlands.

On the other hand, new names were added. The acceptance of the Church at Laurel, MD into the federation also resulted in the Rev. B.R. Hofford being received as a minister in good standing.

The Church at Blue Bell, PA received a minister when Candidate K.A. Kok was ordained as such.

The four graduates of the Theological College all entered the ministry.

Candidate P. Aasman became the missionary of the Hamilton Church and is preparing to gain entry into Brazil to join the brothers already there, be it in a different region.

Candidate M.K. Marren became the missionary of the Smithers Church for the work among the native population in the Smithers area, a position which became vacant when the Rev. C. Van Spronsen left to serve the Church at Vernon, BC.

Candidate R.A. Schouten was ordained as the minister of the Church at Calgary.

Candidate G.Ph. VanPopta became the minister of the Ottawa Church.

Calls

The various churches which were or are vacant sought to fill the vacancy by calling another minister.

The Church at Chilliwack extended a few calls after the departure of the Rev. Bouwman, but it did not yet receive a favourable answer. Both the Rev. J. Moesker and the Rev. E. Kampen declined the calls extended to them.

The Church at Cloverdale, on the other hand, saw its first call accepted and is awaiting the arrival of the Rev. J. Moesker and family.

The Hamilton Church called the Rev. W. DenHollander of Winnipeg, who also received a call from the Church at Kelmscott, Western Australia, but he declined both calls. He received another call in the meantime, this time from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton.

The Church at Langley did not look far: they called the Rev. J. Visscher from next-door, and he accepted.

With a view to the impending departure of the Rev. De-Jager the Church at Neerlandia extended a call to the Rev. B.J. Berends.

Neither the Rev. Berends nor the Rev. Den Hollander has made a decision yet at the time of this writing.

The Surrey Church will be faced with a vacancy in the mission field in Brazil, and called Candidate R.A. Schouten to become its missionary. The same brother was also called by Hamilton as a missionary, as well as by the Church at Albany, Western Australia, for the work in Papua New Guinea. He decided, however, to become Calgary's minister. Surrey then extended a call to Candidate J. Koelewijn of Kampen, the Netherlands. Again: at the time of this writing no decision is known as yet.

Buildings

Building projects seem to be going on all the time, mainly because of the growth of the congregations. Many children are born and when they grow up, they join the ranks of worshippers in increasing numbers. This necessitates changes in auditoria and other facilities.

Attercliffe has a new church building, and Neerlandia sold its old one and is in the process of completing a new place of worship. Houston purchased property with a view to erecting a new church building, and Lynden has drawn up plans to do the same. Houston is still not without a roof over its head;



Kananaskis Country, Calgary, Alberta

Lynden, on the other hand, is renting facilities in a school building from which they may have to move in the foreseeable future.

When the Church at Langley called the Rev. J. Visscher, they were in a privileged position as far as the manse is concerned: their new minister could stay in the house which he occupied as minister of Cloverdale; but the acceptance of the call to Cloverdale by the Rev. Moesker hastened the process of looking for suitable property and building of a proper residence.

The Maranatha Church in Surrey sold their old manse and purchased another more suitable one which the G.H. Visscher family appears to enjoy living in.

Theological College

Our Theological College continues to operate quietly and unobtrusively but nevertheless effectively. This past year four brothers graduated, all of whom have found their place in the churches.

No illness prevented the faculty from fulfilling their teaching duties and they also gave lectures outside of the regular schedule, for the benefit of church members who were able to attend.

It remains a cause for concern that there are relatively few young men who are aspiring to the office of minister of the Word. It is a reason for thankfulness that our College is also instrumental in training men who do not belong to the churches but who desire a thoroughly Reformed instruction and training and have found it in Hamilton; but, although we are not nor should be stingy in letting others share the gracious gifts which the Lord our God has bestowed upon us, it should be borne in mind that it is an institution for our own young men in the first place: they should come first of all!

Attention was paid in our press to the need for students for the ministry, and it be repeated here. At present there are

eight vacancies (including Burlington-West's upcoming one), besides the two vacancies for missionary, which makes a total of ten. Since the number of churches is forty-one, the eight vacancies in our own countries constitute almost 20% of the total.

The Women's Savings Action continues to provide our College with funds for expansion of the library and this is a much appreciated labour undertaken without much ado and fanfare but faithfully and steadily. It was a strange thing that at the latest Convocation we had to do without the presence of and presentation by our sister G.R. Selles. May the Lord's grace and mercy surround her also in her illness.

Schools

From the Theological College to the Teachers' College is but a small step, not only because both of them are located in the Hamilton area, but also because what the Theological College is for the churches, the Teachers' College is for the schools.

Not all teachers come from this institution. It is more a facility to train teachers for the elementary level, although also high school teachers will benefit from the instruction given at it. Our schools would be in a worse position than they already are as far as teaching staff is concerned if this Teachers' College had not been established and sustained for quite a few years. Many graduates serve our schools throughout the country.

Still some schools cannot expand due to lack of available staff. This applies especially to the secondary level. The advertisements which appear throughout the year are an eloquent testimony of the need. More and more societies are expanding so that all grades can be taught at our own schools, but several of them are hampered in their endeavours because they are unable to obtain a sufficient number of qualified teachers to teach the subjects which are required.

To this point, too, attention was paid in the press and the urgent need was placed before our young men who have received the gifts needed for this occupation.

New schools, too, were established as the present facilities proved inadequate to provide room for the growing number of students.

The William of Orange School in the Fraser Valley established a satellite school in Langley, the Credo Elementary School, which in due time will become an independent school under its own board.

The John Calvin School in Burlington also saw many of its students leave for the new school established in the Flam-borough area for the children of families who moved to the area north of Burlington/Hamilton.

The Fergus/Guelph School Society moved into new facilities as the old Maranatha School became too small and too old; negotiations are on the way for the sale of the Immanuel High School building in Guelph, a building which requires too much maintenance to remain usable and, besides, becomes inadequate. An addition to the new building on East Garafraxa Street will then house the High School as well.

The London and Watford societies, on the other hand, conferred about the possibility of merging their two independent schools.

Mission

In the above we already mentioned the mission work. A few more remarks have to be made about it.

The *Mission News* keeps the membership faithfully in-

formed about the developments and from the reports of the missionaries and mission aid workers we learn of the progress of the work and the growth in faith and numbers of those who have been drawn to the Light.

Hamilton is still looking for a second missionary, while the Rev. Boersema has indicated that the future education of his children will necessitate a move to a larger centre, particularly Recife. This places the Church at Surrey for questions such as, "Are we to establish a third post?" or "Should we confine ourselves to the two places at which our missionaries are working at present?"

A visit by a team from the Surrey Church resulted in an extensive report to the Consistory and proved to have been a very beneficial trip. Letters and even telephone conversations can never take the place of personal contact and personal observation of the local situation and difficulties.

The development in Irian Jaya has already been mentioned. It won't be long before the Rev. Versteeg will be able to direct his full attention to other regions. It is our sincere wish that the Church at Mangelum may be a blessing for others in that country so that the work of mission is taken over by native churches whereby it becomes the more evident that the Gospel is not a "Western message," but the universal tidings of God's grace towards the fallen human race.

Varia

It will be impossible to record and relate all the activities which took place in the midst of the churches during the past year. The brothers and sisters active in activities which are not mentioned should not feel slighted. After all, it is not what we see and appreciate that counts but what *the Lord* sees and approves of.

We mention here the work of "Anchor," the society which takes care of handicapped brothers and sisters; we think of the society which provides care for the elderly and which operates a nursing home.

It should be mentioned that the work of broadcasting proceeds in various regions and that the World Relief Fund continues to extend help to those who are in need in faraway countries and are suffering from disease, famine, abuse and oppression.

The Inter League Publication Board keeps looking for ways and means to aid our societies with their study of God's Word and the Confessions; the Vacation Bible Schools report that the work appears to be appreciated and that it is blessed.

Our Study Societies continued to meet and League Days were held in various parts of the country.

The ministers held their conferences in Ontario as well as in Southern British Columbia, although the former are more elaborate than the latter.

Office-bearers also met specifically to edify one another with a view to their various tasks. In this connection the appearing of a new periodical, *Diakonia* is to be thankfully mentioned.

What more should we say?

Making up the balance, we can arrive at one conclusion only: Who are we, O Lord, that Thou showest so much mercy to us and that we were allowed to receive and do so many things?

Every day the Lord's mercies are new; yet they are from of old.

On this we may count also for the new year.

VO

I Greet Thee, My Redeemer Sure

*I greet Thee, my Redeemer sure,
I trust in none but Thee,
Thou who hast borne such toil and shame
And suffering for me:
Our hearts from cares and cravings vain
And foolish fears set free.*

*Thou art the King compassionate,
Thou reignest everywhere,
Almighty Lord, reign Thou in us,
Rule all we have and are:
Enlighten us and raise to heaven,
Amid Thy glories there.*

*Thou art the life by which we live;
Our stay and strength's in Thee;
Uphold us so in face of death,
What time soe'er it be,
That we may meet it with strong heart,
And may die peacefully.*

*The true and perfect gentleness
We find in Thee alone;
Make us to know Thy loveliness,
Teach us to love Thee known;
Grant us sweet fellowship with Thee,
And all who are Thine own.*

*Our hope is in none else but Thee,
Faith holds Thy promise fast;
Be pleased, Lord, to strengthen us,
Whom Thou redeemed hast,
To bear all troubles patiently,
And overcome at last.*

*Children of Eve and heirs of ill,
To Thee Thy banished cry;
To Thee in sorrow's vale we bring
Our sighs and misery;
We take the sinners' place and plead;
Lord, save us, or we die.*

*Look Thou, our Daysman and High Priest
Upon our low estate;
Make us to see God's face in peace
Through Thee, our Advocate;
With Thee, our Saviour may our feet
Enter at heaven's gate.*

*Lord Jesus Christ of holy souls,
The Bridegroom sweet and true,
Meet Thou the rage of Anti-Christ,
Break Thou his nets in two;
Grant us Thy Spirit's help, Thy will
In every deed to do.*

John Calvin, 1560

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The torch is passed to a new generation

Ordination of Candidate G.Ph. van Popta Ottawa, October 11, 1987

By the time you read this account, the Olympic flame will have come closer to its goal, carried by selected Canadians, each in their turn, over thousands of miles of generally inhospitable terrain. The preparation for this sharing of the flame was a huge task

On October 11, 1987 a torch of a different kind was passed. Since the beginning of time, the light of the gospel has never been extinguished but has always been passed on. Sometimes, this torch is passed along family lines. Thus it was somewhat of an historic occasion when the son of the Canadian Reformed Churches' first minister was ordained into the ministry. God had arranged it that way

Candidate G.Ph. van Popta knelt down after Rev. J. Mulder, Professor C. Van Dam and the elders of the church had placed their hands over his head, the following words were spoken: *May God, our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with His Spirit and so govern you in your ministry that you may fulfil it obediently and that it may bear fruit to the honour of His Name and the expansion of the kingdom of His Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.*"

These words climaxed the ordination of Candidate G.Ph. van Popta as minister of the Word at the church of Ottawa. Among those looking on was the mother of the candidate who no doubt recalled the installation of her husband, Rev. J.T. van Popta as the first minister of the Canadian Reformed Churches, some 36 years ago.

The ordination service was conducted by a long-time friend of the van Popta family — Rev. J. Mulder who selected as his text the words of the apostle Paul as they are found in I Corinthians 4:1: *"This is how one should regard us,*

as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." In his sermon, Rev. J. Mulder dealt with the apostolic instructions concerning the position and the task of a minister of the Word. He showed how ministers were responsible to Christ and not to men and how they were to bring the cross of Christ to their congregations.

The text of Rev. G.Ph. van Popta's inaugural sermon was Isaiah 40:6-8. *"A voice says, 'Cry!' And I said, 'What shall I cry?' All flesh is grass, and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass*

withers, the flower fades, when the breath of the LORD blows upon it; surely the people is grass. The grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God will stand forever." Interestingly, the last part of this text forms part of the cover of the Ottawa church bulletin. The sermon was summarized by our new minister as follows:

"A minister, in fulfilling the duties of his office and calling, uses words. He speaks. In fact, he is called to speak the Word of God to the people of God. We learn this from our text. We learn that *The Lord God commands His servant to proclaim loudly His Word.* Two things are to be noted: 1) The character of this proclamation; 2) The contents of this proclamation.

God says to Isaiah, "Cry!" He is to call out the Word of God. He is to shout it boldly, loudly and clearly. God does not want His Word whispered or mumbled. The prophet's voice is to be like that of a trumpet. Today too, whether off the pulpit, in the catechism room, or during home visits, the servant of God is to speak the Word of God loudly and clearly.

Isaiah asks, "What shall I cry?" The servant may not come with his own ideas. He may not feed the flock the latest notions out of the theological or philosophical world. He must speak only that which God commands him to speak.

God tells Isaiah to proclaim the fragility of life. All flesh is grass. It dries up and withers in a moment. But the Word of our God abides forever. Today too, a minister must help his congregation see how fragile she is, how weak and frail and sinful she is. This is not to discourage her. It is to show what she has done to herself, and to prepare her to receive the ever-abiding Word of God. And, as the apostle Peter said when he quoted Isaiah 40:8, it is through this ever-abiding Word that



Rev. J. Mulder and Rev. G.Ph. van Popta

we are born again unto a new life of thankful obedience to God."

At the end of the service br. A. de Leeuw, in his capacity of chairman of the consistory, welcomed the many visitors present. He spoke for the entire congregation when he expressed thankfulness to God for providing the church at Ottawa with another pastor. This ordination was a little unusual in that the guests outnumbered the members of the congregation as became evident when the guests were asked to stand up. Rev. Mulder was thanked for acting as the Counsellor for the church at Ottawa and was asked to speak a few words. Rev. Mulder extended best wishes to the church at Ottawa and to the new pastor and his wife on behalf of Classis Ontario-North, the church at Burlington-West and in his unique capacity as "Oom Hans." He echoed the inaugural sermon by citing the well-known words of Psalm 73:26: *My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.* A special word of thanks was given to Dora van Popta for lending her support to Rev. van Popta especially during his studies. Rev. Mulder closed by alluding to II Thessalonians 2:16: *Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God our Father, who loved us and gave us eternal comfort and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts and establish them in every good work and word.*

Professor C. Van Dam spoke on behalf of the Theological College. He noted the long-standing bond between the College and the van Popta family; and that Rev. van Popta Sr. had been appointed to teach dogmatics at the College some 19 years ago — just before he was taken home by the LORD. It is the wish and prayer of the College that the glad tidings be proclaimed in the capital of our country. In this way *the Light will shine in the darkness, the Shepherd of the sheep will be heard and the sheep will recognize the voice of the Good Shepherd.*

The opportunity to express their best wishes was then given to representatives of sister churches of the Federation. A letter was read from the consistory of the church at Smithville. The churches of Cloverdale, Ancaster, Orangeville and Brampton were represented in person.

Rev. van Popta was then given a chance to respond. He thanked all those who had helped him along the long road to the ministry and asked that the delegates bring back greetings to their respective congregations. In conclusion, the last stanza of Hymn 65 was sung. Visitors had a chance to mingle with members of the congregation in the coffee hour which followed the church service.

A welcome evening was held the



The van Popta's and Mrs. N. van Popta, mother of Rev. G. Ph. van Popta

following Friday in the gymnasium of the Ottawa Christian School. Br. G. Van Woudenberg acted as M.C. for the evening. Sr. G. VanWeerden reflected on how the Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa developed from its roots. In this way the van Popta family gained some insight into the history of their new congregation. The children of the congregation sang a welcome song and presented gifts to the van Popta children: Matthew, Joel, Anne-

Marie and Sarah. This was followed by a presentation by sr. R. Speyer who used her poetic license to describe the families of the congregation. On behalf of the young people, Elinor Piepers presented a booklet containing an annotated collection of pictures of each family in the congregation. A musical intermezzo followed and both fledgling (Irene Buist and Kevin Jager) and experienced (br. and sr. R. Buist) musicians performed. The catechism students welcomed their new teacher in their own unique way. Since the vagaries of Ottawa valley weather represent a challenge even for Valley folk, the new minister and his family were presented with a barometer by br. P. Buist on behalf of the congregation.

Rev. van Popta responded with words of gratitude. He noted that he was fully aware of the fact that he was taking up his task here in Ottawa because Candidate Garnet Peet, minister elect of the church at Ottawa, had been called home earlier this year. He asked for the understanding of the congregation as he executed his task as teacher and preacher. preacher.

Before the social hour began, the M.C. read letters of best wishes from the church at Elora and from the previous minister of the church at Ottawa, Rev. G.H. Visscher.

By the time you read this account, the Ottawa congregation will have benefitted several times from the clear exposition of the Word by its new minister. We hope you will be able to visit us this winter and join us in our worship services. Come share the flame.

P. BUIST



Coffee time

Ordination of Rev. M.K. Marren

On Sunday, October 25, 1987, the church at Smithers, BC., witnessed a joyful event: God provided another servant to take up His task in bringing the gospel to all nations. Candidate M.K. Marren and family had been brought to us to take up the call for the work specifically amongst the natives of our area.

The text chosen by Rev. B.J. Berends for the ordination was II Corinthians 2:14-17, dealing with "... the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing ...". God calls for men to spread the fragrance, i.e. the knowledge of salvation in Jesus Christ, to all nations and languages, as in a procession of life. That characterizes the ministry. The victory of Christ over death means life to those who embrace this saving knowledge with heart, soul, and mind. The force of the evangelical ministry will be effective, no matter whether there is acceptance or even refusal. The first brings eternal life, the latter that the hearers perish.

That saving knowledge is not merely a "take-it-or-leave-it-business." Christ's Name is the *only* Name. Paul knows himself commissioned by the Head of the Church, not to preach an opinion, a man-made idea or projection, but the message of God Himself. That includes all that is revealed through the law, the prophets, and yes, also the apostles. Each minister of the Word may expect comfort and competence from Christ, who will give fruits at His time.

After the sermon the form for the ordination of missionaries was read and the Rev. Marren ordained in his office.

Rev. Van Spronsen, our former missionary, spoke on behalf of the churches of Classis Pacific. He urged his successor to continue to call, gently and persistently, and urged us all to support this work, especially also in our prayers.

In the afternoon, Rev. Marren preached God's Word to us, using as text Haggai 2:6-9. Haggai promises the depressed church splendour and peace in the Name of the Lord of Hosts. God will again show His might as He shakes creation and the

nations. After some depressive times in the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the temple these words were sorely needed. God had fulfilled His promises. Israel had been shaken free from Egypt, and now also from Babylon. Now too: look not only back at what was before but look *up!* Upon faithful work *God* will bless. God will take care of outward circumstances. The people are busy at the right place and the right time. Only, they had to understand that God has *His* time in which He will bless. He will bring splendour by giving the resources from nations that may formerly have been antagonistic. In some translations the word "treasure" is put as "desire," which is then seen as a reference to the coming Christ (e.g. in Handel's "Messiah"). However, the primary meaning is resources, rather than desire. Ultimately, everything belongs to God and when people continue building, at His time He will reveal prosperity and peace. For that it is necessary that our consciences are right with God and our priorities straight. At God's time, i.e. when there was one common language, the Pax Romana, the system of roads and communication, it was ripe for the Christ. It would have been unimaginable to the Jews. The ultimate fulfillment of Haggai's promise of splendour is that Christ came to that temple, yes, that He was greater than that temple! And so the nations shall be taught to walk by the light of the New Jerusalem. We are not to despise the day of small beginnings. God has His workers at the right time, in the right house, for the right purpose. Salvation is promised to all who believe and in faithful obedience do their work.

On Monday evening, November 2, a congregational welcome to the Marren family was organized. Representatives of various organizations had been working to make this a joyous event. Mr. Van Bostelen, as oldest male member, welcomed the family on behalf of the Bijbel Studie Club and the Bloeiende Amandelboom, even though he did not expect their immediate participation.

The Ladies Society presented through



Rev. and Mrs. M.K. Marren and family

song the various weekly activities.

The Grades five and six had some representation with poems to welcome especially Katie. The junior choir delighted all by "Antiphonal Hosanna." The Ladies Auxiliary presented a gift to Mrs. Marren. Then it was the school's turn again. The Drama Club gave a fine performance of a princess and, what else?, a prince — though not one at first sight. Also the senior choir showed its talent and praise was brought to God with Psalms 146 and 42.

The Young Peoples presented the Marren family with a scenic clock. On behalf of the neighbouring church at Houston, br. G. Leffers welcomed our new missionary and his family to the Bulkley Valley.

Rev. Berends was spokesman for the Council of the church at Smithers. He stressed that there was a great task awaiting. A commission — to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ to the native peoples and others. Such work is a reciprocal affair. It needs prayerful support.

After the official part of the evening, there was a chance to meet the Marrens more casually, and to enjoy a piece of the enormous welcome-cake, provided by the Young Adults.

God has blessed us in providing another worker in His great vineyard. May He continue to bless our new missionary and his family, and make them instrumental in His great plan of salvation.

JWK

Another church in the federation

Sunday, November 1st, 1987. Another milestone could be reached in the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches. We could again witness how the Lord gathers His people with the institution of a Canadian Reformed Church, Vernon, British Columbia.

Following the morning service during which the office-bearers were ordained, a short ceremony was held at which time subscription forms were signed. Rev. M. VanderWel, delegate for Classis Pacific and elder P. Van Woudenberg for the Chilliwack consistory then spoke a few words of thankfulness. They said that the Lord had made this day possible, and they wished us the Lord's blessing in the future.

That evening a social gathering was held at which time a slide presentation was shown depicting the history of the growth over the past 10 years.

May the Canadian Reformed Church at Vernon continue to grow and be a beacon also in this city.

D.K. DETERS



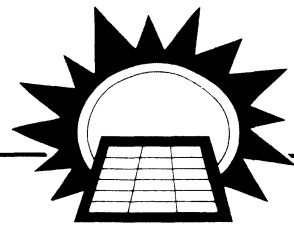
HYMN 9

Isaiah 40: 28 - 31

Orlando Gibbons, 1623

Song 67

1. Do you not know? Have you not heard?
The LORD, en-throned on high,
He is the ev-er - last-ing God
Who made both earth and sky.



"This is my comfort in my affliction, that Thy promise gives me life."

Psalm 119:50

Dear brothers and sisters

There were many occasions in David's life that he was beset by dangers. Grief and distress were no strangers to him.

The Book of Psalms testifies to that!

However, in this Psalm David does not first and foremost focus his attention upon himself and his circumstances, but he speaks here about the law, that is the Word of God as he knew it. That Word of His God has been the anchor of hope in the course of his life. In his afflictions he found comfort in God's Word, for it contained a promise, the promise of the Messiah to come.

In Article 18 of our Belgic Confession we read that God has fulfilled the promise He made to the fathers by mouth of His holy prophets, when at the time appointed by Him He sent His one and only Son into this world.

This promise of God's love in the coming Messiah made his life! For David trusted and believed that the LORD would do as He promised. He knew himself every day surrounded by the loving care of His God who was bringing the great Redeemer into the world. That Redeemer would deliver Israel from all its afflictions. The steadfast love and faithfulness of the LORD enabled David to go on, in spite of troubles and anguish. For although often the darkness of death surrounded him, he found comfort in the promise of God, which assured him of God's concern for His people, also for David.

Soon it will be Christmas again! What David was looking forward to see, we are allowed to see, the Word of God who became flesh and lived among us. The Dayspring from above has come and in Him salvation to all His people. He has set our feet on the path of life! His Name is JESUS, the LORD saves.

Our comfort in all our afflictions is, that all who believe in the Lord Jesus are walking on that path of life. Even if they are surrounded by powers of death. We shall not perish but have everlasting life. We are heading for the greatest and most joyous event in history, the fulfilment of all God's promises. That day of everlasting bliss will come, not in spite of afflictions, but also through times of distress and anguish.

When the Lord Jesus Christ was taken up into heaven, an angel told his disciples and us, "This Jesus will come again in the same way you saw Him taken up into heaven."

While we are awaiting His glorious return, we do not have to lose courage. For when He departed from this earth, Christ gave us the Holy Spirit to guide and

direct our feet on that path of life. Through His Spirit and Word He lifts us up when we fall down. He makes us willing and ready to live for Him. His rod and His staff comfort me.

I wish you all a blessed Christmas for Jesus lives and we will live with Him!

Maranatha, come Lord Jesus!

From the Mailbox

First of all I received a letter from Pauline DeHaas, a sister of Liz Koning. She told me that Liz has been transferred from Red Deer to Edmonton. Liz now lives in a fifty-two patient modern building, where she shares a sunny room with one other patient. She enjoys it to be close to her parents and other relatives. Liz suffers from epileptic seizures and spends most of her days in a wheelchair because of scoliosis of the spine. Pauline expressed her sincere appreciation that so many societies and brothers and sisters regularly remember Liz' birthday. Liz saves all the cards and lets everybody admire her collection. Keep it up people, whether you are young or old!

I also received a letter from Mary VandeBurgt. She thanks all the brothers and sisters for the many cards, presents and phone calls she received for her birthday. She has a job at the Cloverdale workshop and is enjoying it. Good for you, Mary!

Our birthday calendar for January 1984

We are off to a good start! There are quite a few!

LIZ KONING

Allen Gray Auxiliary Hospital
7510-89 Street
Edmonton, AB

Liz will be 27 years old on January 2nd.



CHRISTINE KONGING

Box 666
Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

Christine's birthday is on
January 7th when she will be 16
years old!

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

Henry hopes to celebrate his 32nd birthday on
January 17.

"Anchor Home"
361-30th Road South, RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

On the same day as Henry in BC (Jan 17th),
Grace will also have her 32nd birthday!

RR 1
Arkona, ON N0M 1B0
Janine's 18th birthday will D.V. be on January 19th.

705 Surrey Lane, Apartment 1201
Burlington, ON L7T 3Z4

Henk hopes to celebrate his 57th birthday on
January 27. Since we moved to Burlington I met Henk
a few times and I know he is a good letter writer. If
you write him a letter, I am sure you will receive one
back! Try it!

I wish you all the LORD's blessing in this new
year of your life and may your birthday be a day to
remember!

"Come, Lord Jesus! Maranatha!"
Pray the Spirit and the Bride,
Come upon the clouds of heaven
With Thy angels at Thy side.
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!
Ever more with us abide.

No one knows the day or moment
When the Bridegroom shall appear.
Let us then be ever watchful;
May our lamps be bright and clear.
Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!
Thy great Day is drawing near.

Hymn 50:1,7

Greetings to all of you.

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

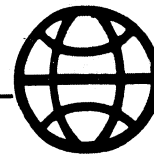
HYMN 11

Ainsi qu'on oit *Isaiah 40: 1 - 5*



1. Com-fort, com-fort ye My peo-ple,
Speak ye peace, thus saith our God;
Com-fort those who sit in dark-ness,
Mourn-ing 'neath their sor-row's load.
Speak ye to Je-ru-sa-lem
Of the peace that waits for them;
Tell her that her sins I cov-er,
And her war-fare now is o-ver.

2. For the herald's voice is crying
In the desert far and near,
Bidding all men to repentance,
Since the kingdom now is here.
O that warning voice obey!
Now prepare for God a way;
Let the valleys rise to meet Him,
And the hills bow down to greet Him.
3. Make ye straight what long was crooked,
Make the rougher places plain;
Let your hearts be true and humble,
As befits His holy reign.
For the glory of the Lord
Now o'er earth is shed abroad;
And all flesh shall see the token
That His Word is never broken.



"The service was the greatest iniquity. Idol worshipers, spirit tamers, and spokesmen for Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs, the Roman Catholics, and the Protestants and Jews joined together in a prayer service where all had their own prayers printed in one program," said Dr. Carl McIntire in a press release on an "Interfaith Convocation" held last month in Philadelphia at the two hundredth anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution."

Few church leaders still protest against interfaith worship. The seminaries of many denominations now promote or at least tolerate universalism, the notion that the gods of all religions actually exist and can hear prayer. Hundreds of liberal seminary professors teach that Christianity is just one of many man-fabricated religions. (CN)

SPAKENBURG

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands will have some general deputies for the financial support of students (Art. 19 C.O.). This was decided by the general synod of Spakenburg after many hours of discussion. (ND)

This is a sad decision, as it not only promotes centralization, but also loosens the bond between a student and his home church, which bond is of primary importance. The more "general" the deputies, the more impersonal the support and the more a hierarchical development is advanced.

SPAKENBURG

The General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands rejected a proposal to appoint general deputies for the mission. Synod declared that the Particular Synod of Drenthe which had made the proposal did not prove that the matters which it wished to see in the hands of general deputies could not be finished in the minor assemblies.

Unfortunately synod rejected an amendment which proposed to add as a ground for its refusal to appoint general deputies, that the care for the propagation of the gospel among the nations in the present situation is not a mandate to the general synod for which, according to Art. 49 C.O., it had to appoint deputies, but to the local churches which, according to Art. 24 C.O., cooperate to this end region-wise. (ND)

SPAKENBURG

The general synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands decided to appoint deputies for contact with the Christian Reformed Churches (Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerken) in the Netherlands. Synod adopted a proposal by the moderamen (officers) to this effect. (Was there no proposal from the churches? Is a synod allowed to adopt a proposal by some of its members? The moderamen acted in this respect as a committee reporting on the correspondence with the various synods of the Christian Reformed Churches.)

Twenty years ago deputies were discontinued and since then there has been only an exchange of letters between the synodical assemblies of both groups of churches.

The main ground for the proposal was: "Holy Scripture urges us to seek ecclesiastical unity with all who, with us, by one Spirit worship one Lord and confess the same faith, in order that all may let themselves be gathered together by the Lord Jesus Christ in the unity of the true faith."

UTRECHT (ANP)

More than one-quarter of the Roman Catholics in the Netherlands no longer consider themselves Roman Catholic. According to the statistics of the Roman Catholic parishes, 38.1 per cent of the population of the Netherlands was believed to be Roman Catholic. However, a recent poll shows that only 28 per cent of the population regard themselves Roman Catholic. (ND)

CHURCH NEWS



DECLINED to the Immanuel Canadian Reformed Church at Edmonton, Alberta:

REV. W. DEN HOLLANDER
of Winnipeg, Manitoba

AMSTELVEEN (THE NETHERLANDS)

Indonesians living in the Netherlands have formed a new denomination in part to express cultural differences with the European Dutch citizens. The Church, the Gereja Kristen Indonesia Nederland (Indonesian Dutch Christian Church, GKIN) was formally established July 7, 1985, and has established five congregations and a number of house gatherings.

The church has also some theological differences with other churches in the Netherlands, and thus have refrained from joining an established federation. Nor have they affiliated with any Indonesian federation, since they are permanent Netherlands residents. The church is bilingual, using both Indonesian and Dutch. (RES NE)

AMSTERDAM

Abraham Kuyper's distinction between the church as institution and the church as organism or body is no longer necessary for church work, according to a study committee of the (Synodical) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. Already in the late nineteenth century, Kuyper's ideas led to the creation of Christian social organizations in the Netherlands that were separate from the institution of the church. The task group "Church and Welfare" prepared a report for discussion at the general synod which concluded that these distinctions should not be held on to. It was in any case, the report noted, not an official position of the church, although it was admitted to have had a great usefulness and impact until the 1960s. The committee noted that society has changed greatly and that the church had become involved as institution in many areas of society, particularly through the expanded role of its diaconal agencies. (RES NE)

MOSCOW

The Russian Orthodox Church is not planning to extend an invitation to the pope of Rome to come to Moscow next year for the celebration of the beginning of the Church in Russia one thousand years ago. The Metropolitan of Kiev and Galicia, Filaret said that the support which the Vatican gives to the unofficial church

in the Ukraine which has ties with Rome is the biggest reason for this refusal. (ND)

ATHENS

The Greek premier, Andreas Papandreou and the head of the Greek-Orthodox Church, Archbishop Seraphim have reached an agreement concerning the expropriation by the government of church-lands. This agreement ends a conflict between the church and the government which earlier in the year led to demonstrations and protest marches.

In the beginning of April the Greek Parliament adopted a law which compelled the church to transfer 130,000 hectares for distribution among poor farmers. (ND)

CANADIAN SCENE

Minister of State for Immigration Gerry Weiner has announced that immigration levels for 1988 will be raised from 125,000 people to 135,000.

These new levels include a total of 21,000 refugees (up 4,000 from 1987) of whom 13,000 will be government-sponsored refugees.

Along with the new immigration targets, the Department of Employment and Immigration released a list of 110 occupations that qualify a prospective immigrant who wants admission under the so-called "independent" class. At the top of the list are executive and specialized secretaries, followed by sales and advertising managers, non-supervisory graduate nurses, financial officers and motor vehicle mechanics.

NASHVILLE, TEN. (RNS)

A Memphis church was expelled from an area Southern Baptist association October 19 after it riled conservatives by selecting a woman pastor.

The vote was held behind closed doors by about 400 messengers, or delegates, to the annual meeting of the Shelby (County) Baptist Association, which encompasses 120 churches in the Memphis area.

"The reasoning that was given is that it is not part of the Bible that women can have authority over men," said the Rev. Nancy Hastings Sehested, newly appointed pastor of Prescott Memorial Baptist Church and the center of the controversy.

Prescott Memorial's day-to-day operations will not be affected by its expulsion from the association, an organization which is designed to share information and programs. There are 68 such autonomous Baptist associations in Tennessee.

According to Southern Baptist policy, the decision to call a minister is left up



to each local church. No church body can tell a congregation what to do in Baptist tradition. (CN)

WASHINGTON (RNS)

Moves by the Vatican to restore legal standing to archbishop Marcel Lefebvre and his banned following of traditional priests have stirred concern in many quarters of the U.S. Roman Catholic Church.

The Vatican announced October 17 that it would appoint a personal representative of the pope to begin a process of reconciliation with the rebel archbishop, the international symbol of resistance to church reforms over the past generation.

Unless Archbishop Lefebvre gives in on basic doctrinal issues, embracing him and his movement "would be an unfortunate message," said Roger Van Allen, a Roman Catholic scholar at Villanova University in Philadelphia. "This would be a message of some rolling back of Vatican II. I frankly think it's outrageous."

Officials in Rome have denied they are backtracking from reforms, saying they only seek to correct subsequent "abuses" of Vatican II. (CN)

GENEVA

The 1987 grants to 55 groups from the Special Fund to Combat Racism of the World Council of Churches total 539,000 U.S. dollars.

More than half the amount goes to four groups active in Southern Africa. Swapo, the main group fighting South-African rule in Namibia, is to receive 115,000 for "humanitarian assistance. . . to the Namibian displaced people both inside and outside Namibia."

Three groups working against white-minority domination in South Africa share 155,000, with most (110,000) going to the African National Congress, for refugee assistance. The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania is to receive 35,000, also for work with refugees outside South Africa.

The South African Congress of Trade Unions is to receive 10,000 for publicity/information work. (CN)

(RNS)

An evangelical educator says the recent televangelism scandals came about in part because evangelicals have failed to speak out publicly against false doctrines promulgated by many broadcast preachers.

The Rev. J. Robertson McQuilken, president of Columbia (S.C.) Bible College, said in a recent letter to constituents of his school, "We have failed to expose publicly and unremittingly the false doctrine many Christian leaders ignorantly or shamelessly propagate to the great distortion of the gospel among believers and unbelievers alike. And it is these very false doctrines which have set man up for the failed behaviour of recent months."

As one example, Dr. McQuilken said, "the 'prosperity gospel' is no gospel at all. It should be called what it is — a 'bad-spiel.' To say that those who have genuine faith will unfailingly experience health, wealth, success and freedom from trouble is doubly wicked. It is wicked for holding out an unbiblical hope to hurting people, and it is setting them up for a load of guilt (the guilt of inadequate faith) to be added to the heavy load of suffering they already bear, should God not see fit to deliver."

The Bible College president advised that "if you receive a letter from a person with millions on his mailing list and he gives you the impression he knows you personally and prays for you individually, you have heard from a false prophet. If such a person creates crises periodically to pressure you into giving, threatens harm to himself or his ministry should you personally not respond, he does not speak on behalf of a God who never manipulates or deceives." (CN)

Refreshing to hear such sounds!

VO

Handicapped children

This article is written in an attempt to help people deal with parents who have received a handicapped child from the Lord.

Also how to help them, in the best way possible, when that child is taken back by the Lord. It is in no way meant to be critical, but from experience I can write that even your best friends feel so helpless in these situations.

Parenthood is a blessing from the Lord. What happens if the child does not appear to be healthy at birth? A healthy baby is so often just taken for granted.

What happens if we find out shortly after birth that in fact many things are wrong with the baby and . . . according to the medical profession, life expectancy is very short?

How do friends, relatives, office-bearers etc., deal with a situation like this?

How do they approach the parents, if they do approach them at all?

Parents have an awful lot to deal with in the first few days. They need time to digest everything but they so much need the support and prayers of their brothers and sisters in the Lord. There was the expectations to be able to hold and love the child. Now this long awaited baby is taken away by nurses and doctors, placed in an incubator and all possible kinds of tests and/or operations are performed.

Mom feels lost, as it were.

To be on a maternity floor with new mothers with their babies is not easy. She has worked hard during labour and delivery and she has no reward. The flowers, baby outfits, toys and cards do not come. People are afraid to congratulate the parents but forget that this is still a new baby, a covenant child of the Lord, as a matter of fact a very special child for which parents can be congratulated.

The Lord has given them this child with a special purpose. What this purpose is they do not know right away.

Even phone calls at this difficult time are scarce. The doctors have difficulties approaching the parents because somehow they feel responsible.

No matter how the child is, it is a precious gift from God, in fact a very special

gift for which they are thankful. With God's help they can accept this child as a gift out of His hands. They are proud parents and nothing hurts as much as being left alone, ignored by friends who are afraid and this is so understandable but so wrong. Parents want to talk about their baby, they want to "show off" their baby. They want to call the baby by its name. It hurts for them to hear people talk about the baby, being afraid to say its name.

What friends can and should do is not stay away. Go and visit, call, talk about him or her and give the parents the opportunity to talk. Bring the present you had planned for the baby, send or give the card.

Do not, in any case, tell the parents not to get too attached to the baby. This is an impossibility. How can any parent detach him- or herself from a child, how much more a Christian parent from a covenant child of the Lord? This child is so totally dependent. This child needs the parents in such a special way and . . . there might not be a tomorrow for the child. This of course is true in any case but parents of a handicapped or very ill child live in this awareness each day. Don't ever say (if it's the case!) you have at least healthy children at home or — you can always have another baby.

No child can be replaced. They are all unique. Tell the parents you are thinking of and especially praying for them.

Look at and hold the child if at all

possible. Do not shy away even if the baby is not "cute" or "attractive." Nothing hurts as much as being ignored in these difficult days. Very much the same is true for the help friends can offer after the child has passed away. Do not make the parents live up to some expected form of grieving.

Of course they would have loved to keep the child but everyone deals with the loss of a loved one in his or her own way. Do not make them feel guilty by telling them they are so cold or cool. Do not forget the Lord gives so much strength and comfort in these difficult times. But statements like: "you are so cool," can be extremely harmful. Parents love to talk about their child. Do not be afraid to bring back memories. The child is always in the parents thoughts. Let your genuine concern and caring show. Just be available. Don't ever tell the parents: "it was to be expected" or "I know how you feel" unless you do.

We as Reformed people have the great comfort from our heavenly Father that the child is eternally with Him and is perfect there. We can deal with such a "loss" in gladness. We may not mourn. The setbacks and sad times are coming and perfectly normal, but again don't ever comment on how she should feel under these circumstances.

Don't let your friends grieve alone.

There is, no matter how much they loved the child, a feeling of guilt for whatever they did not do and should or could have done.

Reassure them. There can be a feeling of tremendous isolation. Just tell them you're thinking of them. A loss of a certain goal in life is very much the case, especially if the child needed a great deal of time and care.

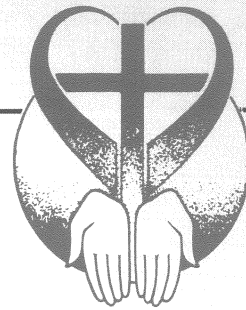
Help them to rearrange their lives but do not push them into all sorts of activities. They need time and the Lord Himself will work in them and with them.

As brothers and sisters in our Lord Jesus Christ we can do such a service to each other. To experience such a communion of saints is extremely comforting.

R. BAX



1987 Annual report



CRWRF

It is easy to list facts and figures on world hunger and homelessness. It is much harder, however, to visualize the faces behind the figures and to truly empathize with those who are suffering. As you read this Annual Report, try to see beyond the statistics to the people they represent. Give thanks with us for the lives we were able to touch in '87, and pray for those involved in our work that it be done, also in the year ahead, with wisdom and true Christian compassion — to His glory:

In 1987, your gifts were channelled to meet the following needs:

Health Care Unit, Busan, Korea

Our support continues for the excellent work done by the two nurses in the slums of Busan. A recent report by Mr. Haah who visits the project for us, indicated that besides the daily work of health care, nutritional instruction, and evangelism outreach in the community, the nurses are also involved in intern train-



One of many fast-growing tree seedlings in the nursery Michael Madany supervises — part of the effort to expand local diet and production of ever-scarce fuel

ing. Yun Park, in particular, often has students from the Gospel Hospital observing her. Mr. Haah writes, "Evidently Yun has gained a respectable reputation from the hospital's school, acknowledging her long experience at this care unit." We are pleased to have such dedicated people working on our behalf.

Achego Children's Home, Kenya

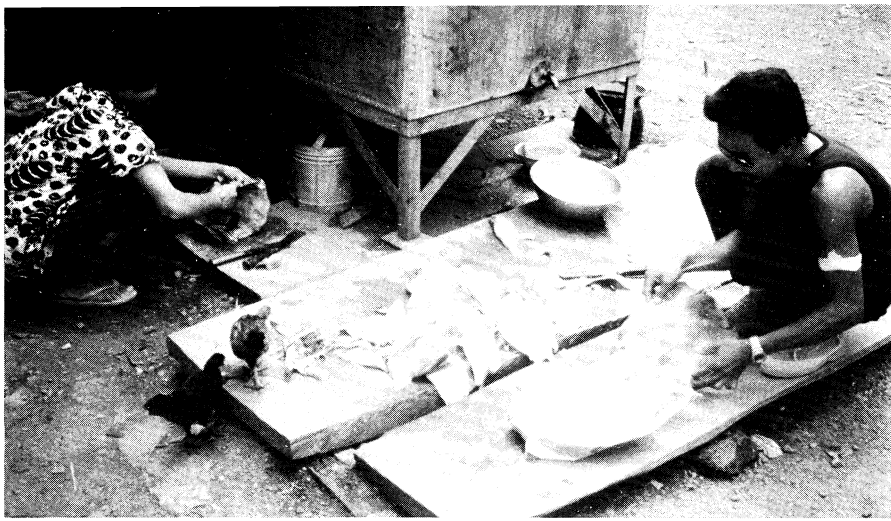
The new manager, Mr. James Randa is proving to be very capable, a fact that we note with gratitude, particularly since reports over the past year had indicated concern that our home was not up-to-standard in some areas. This was largely because the previous manager was only involved on a part-time basis due to other commitments. Things have significantly improved over the past six months with diet, bedding, clothing, and renovations all receiving required attention. Recent reports indicate that the children are happy and well and enthusiastically involved in a variety of new activities after school including choir, knitting, gardening, community service projects, and cooking. We have even received letters from all sixty children. These have been passed on to our schools whose support of Achego is always greatly appreciated.

Somalia

The Madanys continue to serve a leprosy colony in this tiny, impoverished East African country, while at the same time preparing for their new assignment fifteen kilometers away. The Range management project Michael initiated will begin next spring, pending final approval by the Somalian government. The project's main goal is to increase production of fodder for cattle and thus contribute to the production of a most valuable commodity: milk. We are impressed by the practical benefits of this well-thought-out plan and by the Madanys' desire to be a Christian witness. Our \$10,000 contribution will assist in set-up costs for the project.



(Somalia) Oetje Madany examines the feet of a woman suffering from leprosy. Specially made foot gear helps protect against further loss



(Thailand) Part of the camp's meal rations are being prepared. The U.N.H.C.R. provides food; ZOA provides all medical services and training

Christian Blind Mission International

We sent a one-time gift of \$1,000 to this group which works selflessly among the blind and handicapped in many third-world countries. This gift will finance cataract surgery and eyeglasses for fifty people, a small price to pay for such a precious gift as restored sight!

Mozambique

This southeast African nation has long been plagued by poverty and poor government. Now, as escalating civil war causes further disintegration of societal structures, famine has become an added burden. Hundreds of thousands have left their farms and livelihoods in fear of armed marauders, seeking safety in other parts of Mozambique or in neighbouring countries. Food to help these people survive, and agricultural packages to enable them to begin supporting themselves again when it is safe for them to return home are a measure of our compassion. These are channelled through World Vision which works through its own personnel and church leaders there.

ZOA Aid to Refugees — Thailand

Health care at Ban Vinai involves much routine work, but also unexpected labour. An outbreak of cholera caused concern recently with close to 400 people requiring hospitalization. The numbers affected are thankfully diminishing.

Education and training of new workers, as always, requires much attention partly because those so trained are often the first to apply for resettlement in the west. Helping the 45,000 Laotian refugees at Ban Vinai is a beautiful work, but one not without daily difficulties and concerns. Our prayers are needed for the expatriate workers, for the Hmong people who must live in such confined quarters, and especially for the Christians among them, that they may be a shining light in their community.

Afghan refugees

Regular gifts and special Thanksgiving collections (Thank You!) have enabled us to provide food and temporary shelter to a few of the millions who have fled to Pakistan for safety. It is estimated that an unbelievable 40% of Afghanistan's sixteen million people have either died or been forced to leave since the Soviet invasion in 1979. Sadly, the conflict shows no signs of abating. Your gifts are therefore still welcome for this worthy cause.

Conclusion

This report, of necessity, does not allow for many specifics. Hopefully, any questions you have are answered in regular *Clarion* articles which generally focus on only one project at a time. Slide eve-

nings provide additional opportunity for clarification. However, please feel free to contact C.R.W.R.F. at anytime with questions or concerns. We welcome your input and support.

Let us collectively strive to soften the suffering of others in Christ's name, remembering that in doing so, we honour our Creator.

He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker, but he who is kind to the needy honours him.

Proverbs 14:31

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF
PO BOX 797
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y7

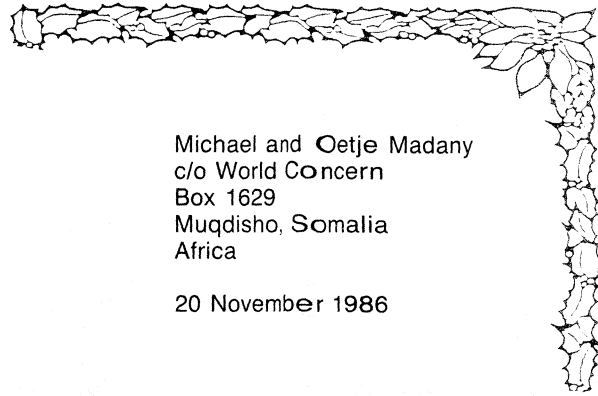
All gifts are gladly received. Donations of \$10.00 or more will be issued a receipt for tax deduction.

Christmas is a celebration of Immanuel: God with us. It is a time to ponder anew the faithfulness of the almighty God, who so loved the world that He gave His only beloved Son — to be born as a baby — that whosoever believes in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life!

The following account of how the Madanys (who are supported by CRWRF) spent Christmas '86, serves as a timely reminder of the true source of our celebration's gladness.



(Thailand) These Hmong children at Ban Vinai Camp have dressed up in colourful traditional garb



Michael and Oetje Madany
c/o World Concern
Box 1629
Muqdisho, Somalia
Africa

20 November 1986

Dear family/friends,

Maria celebrates Christmas a bit differently than you. I'll try to describe how she will remember this special day in her remote village in East Africa and you can compare it with your own customs.

One unique feature of Maria's Christmas celebration is that she will probably be alone for it. No one else in her small riverside village finds the day an occasion worthy of rejoicing. The other villagers have other religious celebrations of their own and these take place on other days. They know vaguely of someone called Jesus the Messiah, but, according to what they have been taught, this person was just a prophet. Maria's husband shared her faith, but since she was widowed three years ago, this tall, sturdy 76-year-old woman has had to do all her worshipping by herself. The only exceptions would be the rare visits from the new foreign Christians working in a nearby region or an occasional contact with some of the scattered remnant of national believers in the vicinity.

Just imagine for a moment that it is Christmas Day and that you are driving with us down the bumpy dirt road to Maria's village. The first thing that you'd notice from a distance is the nearly total canopy of coconut palms shading the settlement. Maria's compound looks like the others — a yard enclosed by a stick fence and containing several small buildings of stick and pole construction, plastered with a mixture of mud and cow dung. We'll park our car near her gate — a small door made of flattened cooking oil tins. Let's knock on the door and wait for this remarkable woman to come and greet us.

Maria is naturally eager to welcome guests — especially brothers and sisters in the faith — and tears roll down her cheeks as she hugs and kisses us. We are ushered into the open door of the sitting room (in the main building of the compound). After sitting on the low chairs she has placed for us, your eyes will slowly get accustomed to the rather dark interior of this room. As your eyes glance

about the room, you notice a 1961 Sunday School calendar on the wall, with pictures depicting various Biblical scenes.

The fact that our visit is a little unexpected is bemoaned by Maria. "If only I had known, I would have killed a chicken and cooked it up with a big plate of rice. That's how we used to celebrate Christmas back in the old days when the missionaries were here." She goes to her bedroom, and, after rummaging through an old wooden box, she finds an envelope full of old photos of scenes from the past — churches, missionaries, local congregation members, feasts at Christmas and Easter. Following these recollections of Christmas past, Maria addresses herself to observing Christmas present. We are presented with cups of tea and two small loaves of bread, with profuse apologies for the humble fare. "If only I had known . . . are you sure you can't stay all day so I can fix a proper feast?"

After taking care of our physical needs, Maria returns to her bedroom and re-enters carrying the same wooden box that she had taken the photos from. Setting the box on the low, rickety table, she opens it to display her most prized possessions: a Bible, a hymnbook, Martin Luther's catechism, and some magazines — all written in one of the three languages that Maria speaks.

Now Maria tells us that she reads her Bible each day, along with much singing and praying — it's all part of her routine for daily living. While she is literate (quite unusual for a woman in that district), she actually doesn't need a hymnbook, since she has memorized countless hymns. After showing us her treasure, Maria sits down and begins singing in a clear, high voice. You will immediately recognize the tune of the first song, although the words sound unfamiliar. Invariably, no matter what time of year we may visit her, Maria begins with "O come all ye faithful" in her native tongue. It must be her favourite and the carol assumes a special significance on this bright, warm Christmas day.

Other carols and hymns follow, interspersed with testimony, praise, and petition to the Father of our Incarnate Lord. You will likely find yourself reflecting on the nearness and companionship this isolated woman feels with Jesus Christ. Maria's material condition is reasonable by local standards, although for folks like us, conditions are far less comfortable than what we are accustomed to. While we listen to these joy-filled words of praise, you may wonder if Maria fears for the future. After all, she has no surviving children and her situation seems vulnerable. But, when you ask her, you'll get the same answer I heard many months ago: "Jesus will help me — I pray to Him all the time." Simplistic, you may think, but when you're with Maria, you sense that you're with someone living very close to God. Her joy, her singing, her entire attitude vividly display the work of the Holy Spirit.

As we get up to go, Maria follows us from the dark, cool, interior of her home into the tropical heat and brightness of outdoors. She is sad at the brevity of our visit, but nonetheless glad we came. She follows us to the gate where we are greeted by a crowd of curious, friendly youngsters that have been admiring our Toyota (especially the mirrors). Maria calls out blessings as we begin to drive off and then turns and walks slowly back to her room.

So — now you have seen a celebration of Christmas quite poor in tinsel, trees, decorations and presents. Insignificant in terms of economic impact. Yet observing Maria at this time does help one to sense the true dimension of the much talked about "Christmas spirit." We hope that you and your family will be able to worship the Prince of Peace at this festive time, knowing that this sister on the other side of the globe is also singing carols.

In Christ,

Canadian Reformed Teachers' College

Hamilton, Ontario
News update June - September 1987

Graduates

We could look back to a most enjoyable Graduation day: another nine students had completed their studies of which eight were able to accept a teaching position in one of our schools. The College started another school year 1987-1988 with 17 students. It is anticipated that another seven College graduates will be ready to take on teaching duties in September 1988.

Building plans

The withdrawal from sale of the Hamilton Mennonite Church was a disappointment to the Board and the Building Committee. However, we received a document from this church giving us the first option to purchase their property in the event of a future sale. In the meantime the Building Committee is under instruction to find suitable "own" accommodation for the College.

Finances

As the year drew to a close, the treasurer's anxiety rose as well — see his

report. However, he was also able to inform us of a donation received from the Golden Jubilee Committee (Publishers of the book "... *And We Escaped*," written by Rev. VanDooren). Further, the news that the School Board of the John Calvin Schools in Armadale, Western Australia requested associate member status was most gratefully received. Their support will certainly help the College. Contributions have also been received from the John Calvin School in Albany, Western Australia. All in all, the College is receiving world-wide recognition and support, and we pray that this support may increase during the coming year.

Public relations

The contact with the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies in Ontario will be reestablished by means of representation at the meetings of the LCRSS. An advertisement has been prepared for publication in *Reformed Perspective* and for use by governors in order to make the College better known.

Faculty activities

Mr. A. Witten reported on his successful trip to Alberta and Manitoba. He was able to assist the schools, and generate wider publication of the College and its need for support from all congregations. It is hoped that these visits will also strengthen and promote Reformed education across Canada. Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen completed a translation of *Kerkgeschiedenis I and II (Church History)*, written by Rev. P.K. Keijzer. This is a textbook for College students, and will be available to schools and other interested parties by the middle of 1988. In addition, a collection of articles has been compiled under the title "Thinking Christianly About Education," as a textbook for the course in the Foundations of Education. Interested parties are invited to contact the Principal of the College. The faculty has been commended for the great amount of work which has been put into the constant growth and improvement of your College.

CRTCA Executive

Luke 1:76-79

And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare His ways, to give knowledge of salvation to His people in the forgiveness of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, when the day shall dawn upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.



CANADIAN REFORMED TEACHERS' COLLEGE
HAMILTON, ONTARIO

Again we present to you our financial report for the book year 1986-1987. You will notice that we needed to borrow \$585.07 from the savings account in order to make ends meet. The main beneficiary of the increase in assets is the Library, which by now has grown into a formidable resource centre, not only for College faculty and students, but also for teachers and schools.

The table "Membership Contributions and Donations" shows where the moneys came from. A special "thank-you" to the Women's League! We went through another year without too

many problems, although at times your treasurer was forced to urge all for more support. We gratefully acknowledge the donations to the building fund: the National Board decided in its February 1986 meeting to instruct the Building Committee to prepare plans for a future building. May the Lord also bless these efforts and give it into the hearts of all our church members not only to support the daily operations of the College, but also to donate generously to the College's building fund.

JAN GELDERMAN
Treasurer, CRTCA

MEMBERSHIP CONTRIBUTIONS AND DONATIONS

	Contributions	Donations
Brampton	\$ 1,973.50	\$ 730.00
Burlington East, South, West	14,530.00	6,395.00
Fergus	2,222.50	
Guelph	380.00	
Orangeville	2,540.00	
Ottawa		500.00
Chatham	5,170.00	87.58
Church Collections		714.87
Hamilton and Ancaster	12,492.25	115.00
London	1,480.00	1,302.00
Smithville	9,192.00	60.00
Attercliffe (See also Smithville)	2,000.00	1,000.00
Lincoln (See also Smithville)	2,200.00	
Watford	1,295.25	130.00
Carman	10,236.00	35.00
Neerlandia	7,500.00	1,284.90
Winnipeg	7,700.00	
John Calvin School — Chilliwack	6,000.00	
Abbotsford (See Chilliwack)	200.00	
Will. of Orange School (Cloverdale)	19,980.00	
Cloverdale	750.00	1,671.40
Houston	400.00	
Smithers	7,595.00	
Women's League Ontario		757.77
Albany, Western Australia	359.76	
Armadale, Western Australia	3,652.00	

REVENUE 1986-1987 AND BUDGET 1987-1988

	Actual 1986-1987	Budget 1987-1988
Student Fees	\$ 34,785.00	\$ 34,000.00
Membership	119,748.26	126,725.00
Donations	14,783.52	22,604.00
Duplication	199.55	
Miscellaneous	1,918.80	
From Savings Account 1986	585.07	
Total Revenues	\$172,020.20	\$183,329.00
Donations Building Fund	10,000.00	

FINANCIAL STATEMENT 1986-1987 AND BUDGET 1987-1988

Organizational Expenses	Actual 1986-1987	Budget 1987-1988
01. Travel Board	\$ 452.00	\$ 1,000.00
02. Travel Annual Meeting	1,099.10	2,000.00
03. Administration Board	420.90	1,000.00
04. Public Relations	0.00	800.00
Total Organizational Expenses	\$ 1,972.00	\$ 4,800.00

Operational Expenses		
05. Salaries and Benefits	\$136,872.41	\$151,229.00
06. Building and Furniture	5,935.00	7,000.00
07. Practicum Teaching	4,480.00	4,500.00
08. Library	11,902.37	8,500.00
09. Supplies and Stationery	0.00	2,000.00
10. Administration College	2,874.55	2,000.00
11. Travel Staff	3,261.20	1,500.00
12. Travel Students	2,393.65	0.00
13. Graduation	835.86	700.00
14. Duplication	1,493.16	600.00
15. Miscellaneous	0.00	500.00
Total Operational Expenses	170,048.20	178,529.00
Total Organizational Expenses	1,972.00	4,800.00
Totals Actual and Budget	\$172,020.20	\$183,329.00

Assets August 31, 1987

Balance Savings Account	\$ 8,029.75
Library	53,173.00
Office Equipment	3,944.50
Total Assets August 31, 1987	65,147.25
Total Assets August 31, 1986	50,976.00
Increase	\$14,171.25

Commencement 1987

Guido de Brès High School



The class of '87. Back row (left to right): Stan Tenhage, Alexander van Barneveld, Clarence Togeretz, Paul Sloots, Paul Kuntz, Bill Buist, Arnie Schulenberg, Ed Reinink, Andrew Douma, John Bos, Gord Heres, Gerald Schoon, James Komdeur. Third row: Gord VanWoudenberg, Jackie Post, Cynthia Stoffels, James Lof, Ray Kampen, Ed Ludwig, George Alkema, Brian Vanderhout, Hennie Gansekoele, Teresa DeBoersap, Irene Kampen, Nancy Hutten, Gord Van Egmond. Second row: Dorothy Kieft, Kirsten Helder, Elaine Vandenbos, Ingrid Van Veen, Margret VanderVen, Henrietta Huinink, Miriam Bosma, Jeanette Harke, Wilma DeJager, Margaret Vandermaarl, Harriet Gelms, Krista Elzinga, Rita Zietsma, Darlene Lodder. Front row: Julia Wanders, Jennifer Linde, Linda Oostdyk, Veronica Post, Annelies Geertsema, Angelina VanderVelde, Nicole Vanderlaan, Connie Vandooren, Diane Vandenhaak, Katherine Dykstra, Deanna Stegenga, Denise Sieders, Cecile VanWoudenberg. (Not present: Margaret Van Middelkoop.)

Which word is better in this context, commencement or culmination? If you were to ask the graduating class, they would probably say culmination. After all, this day, October 16, was dedicated to the celebration of their successful completion of four years of high school. Their success during these years was of course dependent on the LORD's blessing, but also involved a great deal of hard work. That task was now over, and what remained was recognition of accomplishment.

As is our custom at Guido, the cele-

bration began early in the evening with a dinner for the graduating class, their parents, and board and staff members. Good food and warm fellowship were enjoyed by everyone, but especially by the "grads." Many of them hadn't seen each other since last June, and they had catching up to do. For staff members the dinner furnished an opportunity to see the grads before the evening ceremony. What a change had already taken place! Young men and women they were now, with a new confidence, a new maturity that was reflected even in their dress. On

that score, sophistication was the order of the day. After dinner a group picture marked the last time that the class would be a unit, unless they organize a reunion!

The graduation ceremony was conducted in the nearby Bethel Gospel Tabernacle, since that beautiful building has ample room for the large number of interested people, parents, and grandparents who attend. For the parents of the grads, the emphasis is certainly on the "culmination" of a school career. In fact, to many it is a climax to be recorded on film. As graduate accepts his diploma, a

proud relative steps forward to snap the picture. Some may regard this as cluttering an otherwise orderly procedure; most would consider it a parental right!

A second highlight of the ceremony was the main address given by Dr. F.G. Oosterhoff. She had addressed every previous graduating class, but this time her speech was lent a special quality by the fact that the class she spoke to was the last to graduate under her principalship. So the address was a memorable one with its theme taken from the epistle of James, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only. . . ." (James 1:22). Dr. Oosterhoff stressed that pure doctrine is essential to the Christian. We are exhorted to search the Scriptures, learning more and more about our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Then we will also see how He reveals His love and concern

for us. His word is able to save our souls (James 1:21), and so we must be people of the Word, believers who understand and practise that powerful principle of the great Reformation, *Sola Scriptura*.

Added to this, however, is James' admonition "be doers of the word." That means that we actively seek our salvation in Jesus Christ, and more than just giving mental agreement, we must show the fruits of faith — the doing of the LORD's commandments. Here, the speaker rightly noted, we must also bring in the virtues which the apostle Paul listed in Galatians' fifth chapter: patience, kindness, joy, and peace If we do that, by God's grace, then we will be salt with savour, a light on a stand, and readable letters. Then our deeds, which speak so much louder than words, will have value for eternity.

The graduation program featured other highlights, including fine choral singing, awards, and Ed Ludwig's frank valedictory address. For the graduates the evening was not quite over. They spent the better part of an hour in a long reception line happily accepting the congratulations of friends, relatives, family, and teachers.

The ceremony marked the conclusion, the culmination of these graduates' work at Guido de Brès High School, but it also signalled commencement. Now they were becoming "doers of the word" in their new places of work or studies, outside the comfortable walls of their old school. May a gracious LORD bless them in their doing.

G. ALKEMA

HYMN 17

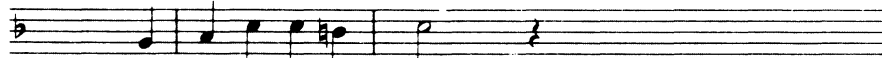
Winchester Old

Luke 2: 8 - 14

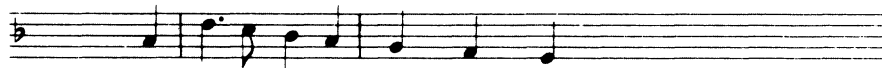
Este's Psalter, 1592



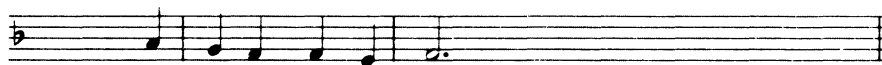
1. While shep-herds watched their flocks by night,



All seat-ed on the ground,



An an-gel of the Lord came down



And glo-ry shone a-round.

2. He said to them, "Be not afraid,
For I have come to tell
Good news of great and wondrous joy
For all of Israel.

Silver Anniversary

John Calvin School, Burlington, Ontario

October 7, 1987 was a very special day for the members of the Canadian Reformed School Society of Burlington, Inc. On this day we celebrated that the Lord made it possible to open our doors on September 7, 1962 for the first students.

It is rather interesting that we had a first grade student who in 1987 took her son for the first time to the school she attended. As a matter of fact, this young fellow, Nicholas Roza, son of Linda (Sikkema) Roza assisted in the tree planting ceremony in the afternoon. The flag was raised and we all sang "O Canada." The auditorium was packed with all the students of both our schools together with a large number of parents, grandparents and guests. Speeches were held by Mrs. F.J. VanderBoom, Chairman of the Board, Mr. J.A. Roukema, Principal of John Calvin School; Mrs. C. Van Halen, Principal of Covenant Christian School, and Rev. R. Aasman, a former student. There was a six-foot decorated anniversary cake which was cut by Miss A. Wierenga and Mr. P. DeBruin. Needless to say, it all went after the ceremony was over! The rest of the afternoon was filled with an "open house," where we all could see teachers and students in action in their classrooms.

The highlight for this celebration was "an evening to remember," held in Wellington Square United Church. This was organized by the Silver Anniversary Committee on behalf of Board and Membership. The processional consisted of the available students of Grade 1 in 1962 and the current Grade 1 students of both our schools. It was not surprising that the latter greatly outnumbered the first!

The first speaker was the first principal, Mr. W.F. Horsman. He was introduced by the Chairman who read his 1961 letter of application. Br. Horsman admitted that he did not remember a word of it! He did not remember much of the first year neither. He did not remember



Staff members Mr. Peter DeBruin (Grade 8) and Miss A. Wierenga (Grade 1) cutting the cake

anyone complaining about teacher-pupil ratios, even though two teachers had over forty students in their room. "We were all young and idealistic, and even though we had learned about the total depravity at catechism classes and from the pulpit, we still felt that somehow Canadian Reformed children could not be as bad as they turned out to be. We should not dwell upon our hardships of our early years, but should be happy that for twenty-five years there has been a school in Burlington where children learn why and how they can serve God and their neighbour."

The keynote address was given by Rev. G. VanDooren, a past Chairman of our School Board. He compared the opening of our school with "those fathers" who gave their sweat and blood in the 19th century in Holland for the freedom and right of Christian education.

He reminisced about the beautiful time of preparation for the opening in 1962. And in bringing into focus our present with two schools, he asked the question: "Are we, the younger generation of the same mood and motivation as our fathers were in the fifties and sixties?" He asked whether still all our children are attending our own schools as it was back in 1962. The Lord demands from us that we give our children a truly Reformed education. Rev. VanDooren closed with the well-known words of Psalm 127: "No enterprise can have success, unless the LORD decides to bless." We then sang Psalm 127 together.

The student choir entertained us under the direction of Mr. P. DeBruin with: "The Lord is my Shepherd" and "How Great Thou Art." Mrs. Toni Kampen played the piano.



Nicholas Roza — Grade 1 student and Mr. John Hofsink (board member) tree planting

Mr. Henk Buist, in his usual comical way, took us down memory lane in a rhymed version called "Reflections."

Mr. J.A. Roukema, our new Principal for John Calvin School talked to us about the future of our schools and thanked the parents and grandparents for the rich heritage passed on to us. It is our prayer that we may receive the Lord's blessing in the same measure.

The Principal of our new Covenant Christian School, Mrs. C. Van Halen took us on a tour through our school and noticed the singing in all our classrooms. The singing of Psalms was already propagated by John Calvin. Psalm 8 makes mention of the importance of our singing children.

The Chairman of the School Board, Mrs. F.J. VanderBoom found it difficult to speak. Everything was already said by previous speakers! She reminded us of the first love when we had started, with the Lord's blessing, our own school. We should go back to this first love and

never forget it, in our progress, in our support and our prayers for the school in the future.

The closing remarks were made by Rev. D. DeJong, and he led us in thanksgiving prayer.

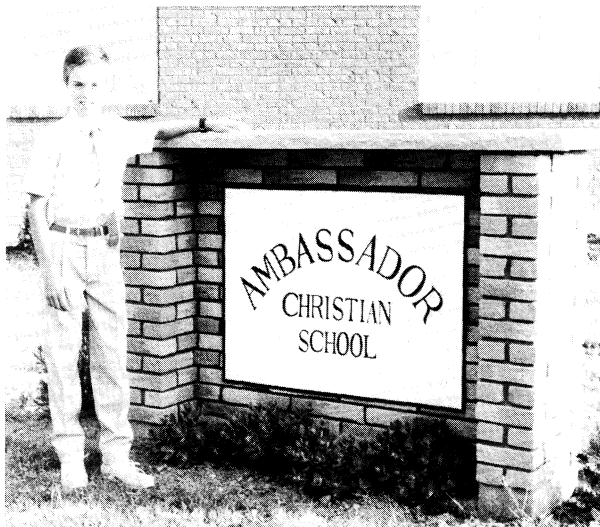
The church was filled to capacity with parents, students, teachers, graduates and members of John Calvin. The "boys" of Grade 8 of 1962 performed the usher duties. Mr. J. Van Huisstede played the beautiful pipe organ. Mr. Harpert Vanderwel videotaped the event. The social hour, held in the auditorium of John Calvin School gave many former graduates and students an opportunity to talk about the good (and bad) they had experienced in our school.

In looking back, we were all thankful to our covenant God, who took care of us in the past twenty-five years, and who guarantees us His help in years to come, if we are faithful to Him.

ARIE J. HORDYK

Ambassador Christian School

Watford, Ontario



Grade 8 graduation. June 26, 1987. One student, Hinrik Nap pictured here in front of the school



In September the school opened its doors to three Grade 1 students. From left to right: Sheila Nap, William Dokter, Deanne VanGorkum, and their teacher; Miss a. Van Spijker. Present enrollment is 22.

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

Various telegrams were exchanged between Assen and Utrecht, but it was felt that using the wires was not the most appropriate manner of communication in this important and serious matter. Thus Dr. Kuyper and Dr. Van den Bergh were delegated to go to Kampen to give further oral comment on the decisions of Utrecht regarding the changes in the Draft accepted by Kampen; possibly also to sway the mood and vote of the brethren.

The two brothers took the train to Kampen, but due to delays they arrived only towards 10:00 p.m. The rumour of their coming had spread through the city and as a result every available place in the church building was occupied.

From the words of the delegates it became evident that the two opinions were almost irreconcilable: there was the point of the "different methods of reformation" and, especially, the point of the Theological School as the Churches' own institution.

After prayer by Docent Van Velzen all non-members of Synod left. It was well past 1:00 a.m.!

A closed session followed. During the closed session Drs. Kuyper and Van den Bergh requested Synod anyway to appoint deputies, even if it could not accept the changes proposed by Utrecht, in order that they who wished to continue working towards a union might know whom to contact.

The brothers were informed that such deputies had already been appointed, upon which they left "wishing the brethren Godspeed."

Meanwhile the session continued.

The result was that Synod decided not to rescind its decisions regarding the change of articles.

This decision was made by a vote of 32 against 8.

At four in the morning the chairman, Rev. Gispens, closed Synod.

It would be wrong to assume that this Synod locked the door altogether.

Deputies had been appointed and they were to send the Draft-Act plus adopted amendments and appendices to the consistories, accompanied by a further explanation.

In case two provincial synods requested this, the Frisian provincial synod was to convene a general synod earlier than provided in the Church Order.

Synod Utrecht was informed of these decisions.

What was the reaction of the Synod of Utrecht?

This Synod was in session again on January 22, 1889.

Dr. Kuyper reported on their visit to Kampen and read the letter received from the Synod. Agreeing with the report of deputies, Synod Utrecht, stating

"that complete agreement has been reached regarding the point that it is our duty and the command of God to unite, as well as regarding the principles and the formulation of the principles;

"that further agreement has been reached regarding eleven of the fourteen points;

"that the fact that the effort has not succeeded in achieving right away already agreement in formulation in two points about which we still differ, mutually has filled our hearts with sadness;

"decides before closing, to inform the Christian Reformed Church that the Netherlands Reformed Churches remain prepared at all times to resume negotiations about the two remaining points, on the basis of what mutually has been adopted;

"and delegates for possible negotiations of this matter Dr. Van Goor, Van den Bergh, Kuyper, Rutgers, and Rev. Sikkel."

A Serious Threat

Dr. Ph.J. Hoedemaker has been mentioned before.

He had accepted the position of Professor at the Free University at Amsterdam, but gradually became alienated from Kuyper and from the Doleantie. We met him at the door of Frascati, when he refused to sign the declaration required of all who wished to attend the Congress which was held there on January 11, 1887.

The alienation continued, and the end was that Hoedemaker resigned his position, thus creating a vacancy at the Free University in the Department of Theology.

Who would become his successor?

In January 1889, Kuyper mentioned the possibility of an appointment at the Free University in a letter to Dr. H. Bavinck. Bavinck was, therefore, warned beforehand that soon he might be faced with a very difficult decision.

It was not the first time that he was considered for such a position. The first time he had been appointed shortly after his promotion on June 10, 1880. At that time Bavinck had declined the appointment, only to accept a similar position at the Theological School in Kampen in 1882.

Now it was tried to get him for the second time, but this time it was more serious and dangerous.

Was it another stage in the battle between the Free University and the Theological School, a battle which would last for many decades, be it not always openly and noticeably?

One of the Kampen students wrote to his parents, "This is something that Kuyper pulled off with his political tricks. I wished the guy were I don't know where."

It was certain that the appointment, of which Bavinck was informed on March 26, made a bad impression on the people of the Christian Reformed Church. Many saw in it an effort to sink the ship of the Theological School by depriving it of one of its most learned professors, thus to remove one of the obstacles for a merger.

The Board of Governors informed the membership of the appointment on April 12, 1889, and wrote, "In the name of all their fellow-members they (the president and the secretary, VO) express the wish that our highly esteemed brother may feel fully free to decline this appointment and to gladden them and all our Congregations by continuing the bond with the School in Kampen.

The danger was realized, as may also become clear from the following part of an article in *De Bazuin*.

"In our opinion, it would have been desirable if the appointment had not been made especially in these days of controversy and tension about the ecclesiastical union

with the Netherlands Reformed Churches. We know that now it is explained in a manner which is not very suited to diminish the prejudice against a union. Being used to the assertion that whatever comes from that side is merely political calculation, it seems to us that the appointment at this stage of the ecclesiastical life and from the Free University at least is no proof of politics. However, many have another opinion about that. We would have wished that Messrs. Directors had understood that they were not allowed to try taking Dr. Bavinck away from us, even if it were only in order to spare the heart of the brothers. We believe that we express the feelings of the whole Christian Reformed Church in the Netherlands when we utter the heartfelt and fervent wish that Dr. Bavinck not leave the Theological School and decline the appointment."

The urgent pleas were heeded and the prayers were given: Dr. Bavinck declined the appointment.

A little more than ten years later he received again an appointment at the same Free University and, together with his colleague P. Biesterveld, he accepted this time, taking along a large number of students.

However, that is something of the future.

"You Tell Us"

As matters stood now there was an impasse.

Would it become a dead-end road?

Not really.

The Christian Reformed Synod decided to appoint deputies and also to have the Draft-Act, accompanied by an explanatory memorandum, sent to the congregations.

When stating that it was to be sent to the congregations, we are not to understand this as if the congregations and not the consistories were to consider it and to take decisions about it.

In the first place we are to bear in mind the terminology in use with the Christian Reformed Church: the singular "Church" was used for the federation, while for the local Churches the term "Congregation" was in use. Thus, when it was decided that the Act plus Memorandum were to be sent to the congregations, the local Churches are meant, not the congregations in the sense of "the members together" as if the decisions were to be made in a congregationalist way by the membership instead of by those who governed the Churches, i.e. the consistories. This is a point to bear in mind also for later, especially when we speak of the reaction of some to the union of 1892.

In the second place: the terms "congregation" and "consistory" were used alternately, from which it may be evident that it was not the intention that congregational meetings should discuss these matters in order to come to a decision "at that level."

On the other hand, there were the Netherlands Reformed Churches which had appointed deputies for contact, if further negotiations should be desired by the Christian Reformed Synod.

There was, therefore, the possibility of further contact and of a working towards a union.

Synod Kampen of the Christian Reformed Church had decided that the congregations should be heard first so that via classes and provincial synods the whole matter could be put on the docket of the next General Synod.

This took time. Besides, could it be expected that the deputies would be ready within a couple of days or even weeks?

These deputies wanted to send a well-considered explanatory memorandum to the consistories. To this end they asked legal advice and even sent a delegation to the Minister of Justice. In July 1890 they were finally ready with their work and the documents were sent to the Churches.

There is no doubt about it that in many consistories these submissions received extensiver attention. Yet, there were no requests by two provincial synods to convene a general synod earlier, even though it was known that a general synod of the Netherlands Reformed Churches was to be held in Leeuwarden in June 1890.

The Netherlands Reformed Churches had decided to have their next Synod in Leeuwarden, since it was known that a Christian Reformed Synod was to be held there as well. It was hoped that both synods could be held simultaneously, so that, perhaps, a union could be achieved.

Understandably, the Netherlands Reformed Churches were more or less disappointed when the Christian Reformed Church appeared to be in no hurry. Their Synod was held from August 18-29, also in Leeuwarden.

This fact may have made the Netherlands Reformed Churches a little humbler as well and may have rendered them more prepared to take the objections of the Christian Reformed brethren more seriously into consideration.

June 24, 1890, the second Provisional Synod of the Netherlands Reformed Churches opened in Leeuwarden. Dr. Kuyper was chosen as its chairman.

Already on June 25 the matter of the relation towards the Christian Reformed Church came into discussion.

The first point of the report was: The Provisional Synod try, if the negotiations to come to a merger with the Christian Reformed Church have broken off, to get them going again."

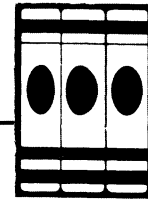
Synod was convinced that the present separation was sinful and led to sad effects, and that therefore it was not permitted to wait another year and to approach a future synod.

It was decided, therefore, to approach the deputies of the Christian Reformed Church, suggesting a base for the negotiations.

Another decision was: to send an extensive communication to the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. In this communication the

"Synod feels compelled to express its painful disappointment which your silence has caused it . . . There is not even one brotherly word at least to explain to us the reason for such a serious disappointment. No deputy on your part took up any contact, not a single letter was received from you."

— *To be continued*



Henry T. Hudson. *Papal Power: Its Origins and Development*. 2nd printing. Hertfordshire: Evangelical Press, 1983. 133 pages.

The dust has settled, if you can call it that. The papal tour earlier this year to South America did not receive a great deal of publicity. Likewise his latest trek through the U.S. (his 36th major voyage since 1978) with a whirlwind stop in northern Canada (a leftover from 1984) was low key as a crowd-pleaser when compared to his earlier travels. Perhaps the novelty of this pope's globe-trotting is wearing thin. What is not wearing off, however, is the pope's staunch view of papal authority and of the Roman church as the teaching church. In that way this latest trip leaves reverberations which will be felt for a long time to come.

An interesting book was published in 1981 after the pope's first major tour of North America in 1979. This book bears the title "*Papal Power: Its Origins and Development*." It is still available and I recommend it to all since it casts a clarifying light on the stand John Paul II takes on all his journeys.

Henry T. Hudson wrote this book out of curiosity and concern. Curiosity, because during several years in Italy he experienced the influence which the Roman church exerted on the Italian population, of which 94% belong to that church. He became aware of the influence of that "enormous religio-political organization" in the life of the average Italian which "can accompany him, step by step, from birth to death, assuring him a good job and a steady career, protecting him from the envy of rivals, procuring for him, at times, worldly success, fame, political power and wealth" [p. 3].

He wrote it out of concern because in spite the fact the people there live "sotto i Papi," that is, under the pope's (influence), he noticed a disconcerting paradox. He writes, "On the one hand, there was a powerful ecclesiastical system permeating most facets of Italian society and supposedly representing the church of Christ upon earth, and on the other hand, a quality of life which appeared to contradict so much of that for which Christianity stands" [p. 6].

As the title implies, this book is really a concise history course about the development of the papacy, which he covers in five chapters. It is by no means boring literature.

In the first chapter he reviews how

Matthew 16:8 is the kingpin on which the tradition of the papacy is built, but shows from history that "the whole idea of universal authority, let alone apostolic succession, was far from accepted even 600 years after the Lord spoke the words to Peter" [p. 12]. In a lucid account Hudson reveals how much the tradition of Rome is rooted in the historical struggle between emperors and popes.

Chapter two deals with the development before the Reformation. In this chapter he deals with some of the historical forgeries which were produced to give the papacy the support of antiquity. He also explains how Rome came to view its use of the two swords based on Luke 22:38.

Chapters 3 and 4 give a detailed description of Luther's revolt against papal power and the development of the Roman church after the Reformation. The Council of Trent (1545-1563), which was Rome's reaction to the Reformation, receives ample attention. During that council the place of Tradition over Scripture was secured. A quote from Pope Pius IV (1559-1565) bears this out: "I acknowledge the sacred Scripture according to that sense which the Holy Mother Church has held and holds, to whom it belongs to decide upon the true sense and interpretation of the Holy Scriptures. . ." [p. 79].

It was not until 1846, however, before Pope Pius IX (1846-1878) settled the question of papal power by declaring his

infallibility in matters dealing with faith and morals. This is also the man who, on the basis of his claim of infallibility, proclaimed eight years later the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary. Incidentally, this is a dogma which the present pope John Paul II, promotes wherever he goes. In fact, his motto is: Mary, I am totally yours.

The doctrine of the infallibility of the pope was overwhelmingly endorsed at Vatican Council I in 1870. In all fairness, not all who attended this council backed the papal infallibility motion. Hudson added as an appendix to his book the very passionate and valiant speech of Bishop Strossmayer opposing this papal claim. Nevertheless, papal power was confirmed at Vatican I. One of the documents makes this declaration, "The first condition of salvation is to keep the rule of the true faith . . . in the apostolic see the Catholic religion and her holy and well-known doctrine has always been kept undefiled . . . This see of holy Peter remains ever free from all blemish of error . . ." [p. 89].

Hudson rightly draws this conclusion: "In certain respects, the content of this document represents a concise statement of what is the end result of the centuries long development of the doctrine of papal power . . . The doctrine could hardly be considered a tradition handed down from the beginning of the Christian faith" [p. 90].

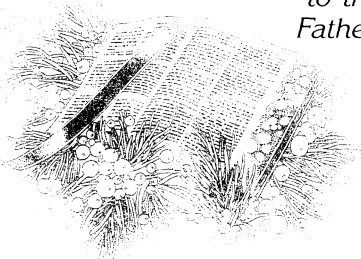
In his final chapter the author deals with Holy Scripture and the papal claims and finds no grounds for them on the basis of any Scripture passage.

Important is therefore his summary view with which he puts it all in clear perspective when he writes, "That the papal claims do go beyond Scripture cannot be denied. Herein lies the difficulty in testing the truthfulness of papal claims. For one thing, it involves an excursion into a sort of forbidden no man's land between history and theology." This he calls the logic of "circular reasoning." Says he, "From the Roman Catholic point of view, the truthfulness of papal claims rests upon the authority of papal claims. Stated differently, papal claims are held to be true, because papal authority claims to be true. In this context, further discussion is obviously useless" [p. 110].

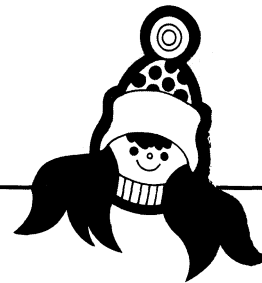
How true this is. But that does not make reading of this book useless. In fact, I heartily recommend it.

Ephesians 2:17,18

And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.



G. NEDERVEEN



Dear Busy Beavers,

Some people say Christmas is the *best* time of the year. Just look at all the sparkling lights. Listen to the Christmas music everywhere. Look at all the decorations. And everybody's thinking of special food!

Yes, Christmas *is* a very special time of the year.

But is Christmas, just food and decorations and lights and gifts?

Of course not!

We know better!

Just look at the name of this special day — *Christmas*.

The name says it all. Christmas is all about *Christ*!

God gave His Son — for us.

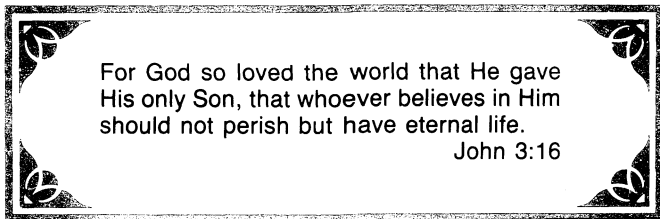
And Jesus gave His life — for us.

That's how much God loves us.

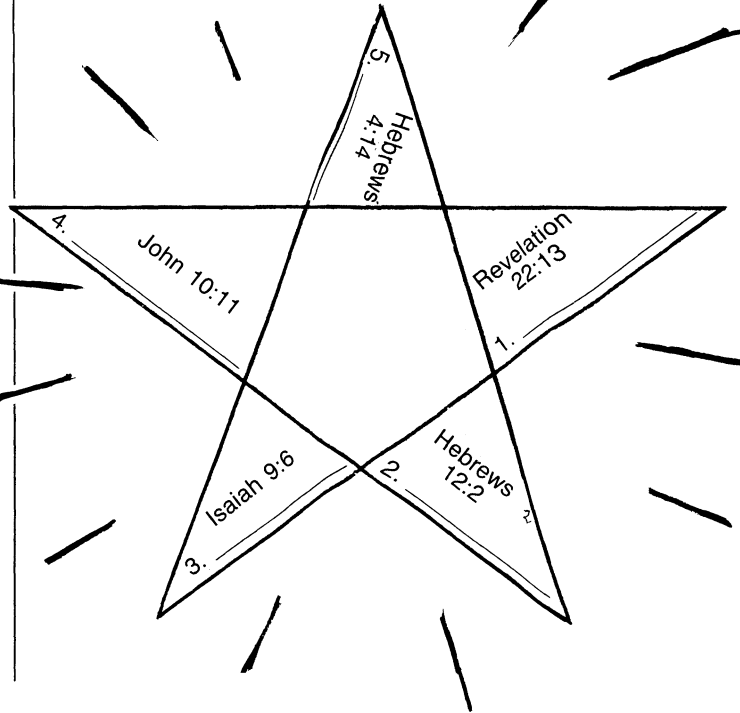
That's why we can celebrate Christmas, the birth of our Saviour with *Joy*.

Because we want to show our thankfulness to our heavenly Father for His *great gift*.

"Let our living be thanksgiving."

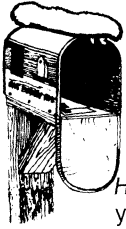


"THE BRIGHT MORNING STAR"
Find the names of the Saviour.



Gifts

- For by grace you have been saved through _____ . . . it is the _____ of God. Ephesians 2:8
- Thanks be to God for His _____ gift! II Corinthians 9:15
- For the wages of sin is _____, but the free gift of God is eternal _____ in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:23
- . . . our Lord Jesus Christ who _____ Himself for our sins to deliver us . . . Galatians 1:4
- My _____ I give to you. John 14:27
- And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you shall receive the _____ of the _____. Acts 2:38
- . . . preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable _____ of Christ . . . Ephesians 3:8
- . . . remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, "It is more _____ to give than to _____." Acts 20:35
- As each has _____ a gift, _____ it for one another, as good _____ of God's varied _____. I Peter 4:10
- On the first day of _____ week, each of you is to put something _____ and _____ it up, as he may prosper, so that _____ need not be made when I come. I Corinthians 16:2
- God loves a _____ giver. II Corinthians 9:7



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Rebecca Hovius*. We are happy to have you join us! Thank you for the riddles and puzzle. Keep up the good work!

(And the neat writing.)

And a big welcome to you, too, *Kim Vis*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! How did you enjoy your birthday party at Ontario Place?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Karen Bartels*. We hope you will really enjoy joining in our Busy Beaver activities. Write again soon!

Welcome to the Club, *Janice Berends*. I can see why you like climbing trees! But what do you do in the winter? Thanks for the puzzle, Janice.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Alan Hofsink*. I see you went on some exciting holidays, both last year and this year! Thanks for the puzzle, Alan. Write again soon.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Angela Breukelman*. Will you write again some time, Angela, and tell us about yourself and your family? Bye for now.

And a big welcome to the Club to you, too, *Diana Flokstra*. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy your riddles! How is your puppy doing?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Daniel DeGelder*. Will you write again sometime to tell us about yourself? Or maybe you'll tell us in a picture? Hope you have a happy birthday!

Welcome to the Club *Leanne Beukema*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! Thank you for the picture and the puzzle. Please send me your whole address and then — I'll send you your membership card!

I see you and your friends are still having a great time,

Alice Van Woudenberg. Keep up the good work! I enjoyed your picture, Alice. And what are your plans for the Christmas holidays?

Hello, *Christine Lodder*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thanks for the puzzle! I'm sure you'll enjoy the ones the other Busy Beavers sent in too.

Did you colour that sticker yourself, *Mary Breukelman*? Have you got your membership card in a safe spot, Mary? Bye for now.

I can see you had a very good birthday, *Esther Bergsma*! How did your grandparents from Holland enjoy their visit to Canada? I hope your teacher is better!

Did you get your recorder already, *Mary-Anne Moes*? How are you doing in learning to play it? You're a lucky girl to have your friend live so close by, Mary-Anne! Thank you for the riddles!

Thank you for your letter and puzzle, *Anna DeVries*. I'm curious about the poems you wrote at school about the Reformers, Anna. Would you share them with the Busy Beavers?

I enjoyed your poems, *Tonya Beintema*. Shall I save them for our next poetry contest since they were too late for our last one? Keep up the good work, Tonya. I'm looking forward to another letter from you!

Hello, *Geraldine Feenstra*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the puzzles to share with the Busy Beavers. Bye for now.

Thank you very much for the two pictures you sent, *Jennifer Siebenga*! It was hard to decide which picture I liked best. But I think it's the one with the three girls!

I see you're making speedy headway in the world, *Peter John Sikkema*! And getting some good rest in between! Thank you very much for an interesting puzzle. I hope we have room for it soon. Bye for now.

Poetry Corner

WINTER

Soon after fall the snow will come
And it will bring you lots of fun!
First shovel the driveway, then make a fort,
You can pretend you're a judge in court.

By Busy Beaver *Hannah Helder*

THE CAT FROM OUTER SPACE

There was a cat from Space.
He had a funny face.
He had a collar that glowed,
The next day he bowled.
He moulded a space ship,
And sat on a potato chip.
The potato chip broke.
He put on a cloak,
And acted like a king all year!

By Busy Beaver *Billy Dekker*

Quiz Time!

Christmas

CODE QUIZ

By Busy Beaver *Donna Pieffers*

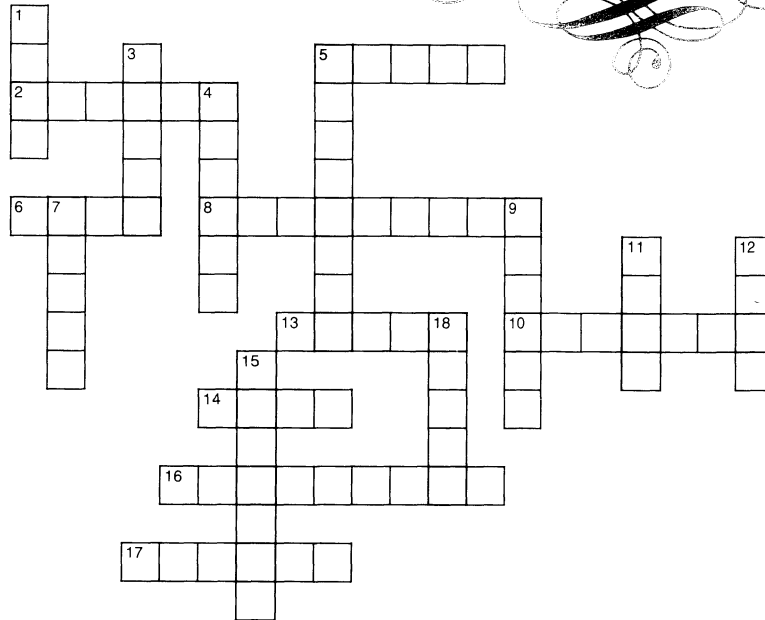
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E-6	H-18	Y-8	N-17	P-9	W-16
G-12	I-2	L-11	S-3	C-10	

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CROSS WORD PUZZLE

By Busy Beaver
Yolanda Van Spronsen

Christmas



Across

2. Luke 2:13 — A multitude of _____ were singing.
5. The Old and New Testament form the _____.
6. Another (short) name for Christmas.
8. Jesus was born in this small town.
10. This angel came to Mary.
13. Matthew 2:11 — The third gift of the wise men.
14. "Where is He born _____ of the Jews?"
16. Luke 2:8 — The _____ were out in the field, keeping watch over their flock.
17. _____ was Mary's husband.

Down

1. Matthew 2:2 — The wise men saw a _____ in the east.
3. He is our Saviour.
4. Jesus was born in a _____, because there was no room in the inn.
5. December 25th is Jesus' _____.
7. A common saying: "_____ Christmas!"
9. Luke 2:7 — Mary wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a _____.
11. _____ was Joseph's wife.
12. Matthew 2:11 — The wise men's first gift.
15. These men saw a star in the East.
18. This king sent the wise men. Matthew 2:7

CODE QUIZ

By Busy Beaver *Alida Knol*

(Maybe you have heard this text sung as a song in Handel's "Messian.")

1-L	5-R	9-I	13-A	18-A	22-P	26-K
2-W	6-D	10-S	14-Y	19-E	24-G	27-V
3-T	8-F	12-N	17-M	21-H	25-O	28-U
						29-Q

13 1 1 2 19 1 9 26 19 10 21 19 19 22

21 13 27 19 24 25 12 19 13 10 3 5 13 14

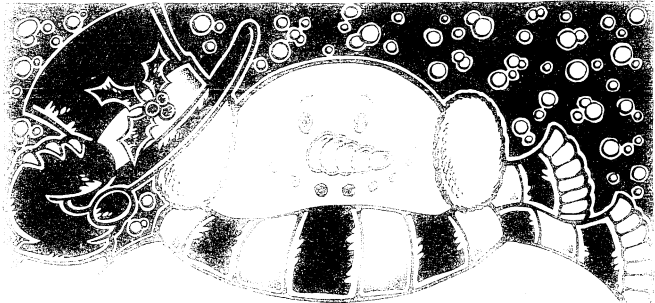
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3 25 21 9 10 25 2 12 2 13 14 13 12 6

3 21 19 1 25 5 6 21 13 10 1 13 9 6 25 12

21 9 17 3 21 19 9 12 9 29 28 9 3 14 25 8 28 10

13 1 1 { 9 10 13 9 13 21 R T D }



Winter WORD SEARCH

By Busy Beaver *Mariet Nap*

W I N T E R W S V W X M W Z I N
 I N P Q C S N O W S U I T P Q R
 F C I N I K B L K O O T N W Z E
 R S L T C O L D S S N E T T I M
 A Q S N O W I P F Q R E S T S U
 C F P H I N Z M R O T N V K L R
 S C D A N O Z H A T O S O U U Q
 N W H I T E A I C H B F S V S P
 M S N L L F R O S T B R I G H T
 R A C N O Q D N I W O E H Q R N
 O F R E E Z E S I J G E V A N W
 T N M O O D I K S K A T E S I Z
 S C Q R N O P S T U N N V W Z L

Find: ice scarf bright
 cold winter hat slush
 blizzard wind white skates
 snow snowsuit storm skidoo
 frost mittens hail freeze

MATH SEARCH!

By Busy Beaver *Geraldine Feenstra*

Find:

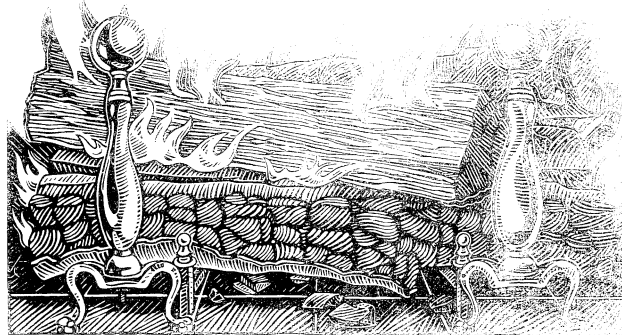
5 4 6 7	2 9 1 3 5 6 2 9 0 4 1
7 4 3 2	4 3 5 4 6 7 7 4 9 8 7
4 3 1 2	9 0 0 2 1 3 4 6 2 6 4
5 0 1	8 6 5 8 5 2 1 5 0 5 3
9 3 8	2 7 3 2 7 6 8 0 6 1 2
5 4 0 6	0 9 1 8 5 4 0 1 0 8 4

January is just around the corner!

We all join in wishing the Busy Beavers celebrating a January birthday a very happy and thankful day with their family and friends. Many happy returns of the day, too!

And above all, may the Lord, our heavenly Father bless and keep you all in the year ahead.

Lois Helder	4	Rita Wubs	14
Kerri-Ann Spoelstra	5	Carl De Boer	15
Vicki Roodzant	6	Michelle Meyer	17
Christina Vander Velde	7	Shelleen Bos	18
Anna De Vries	8	Cornelius Leffers	18
Alan Van Raalte	8	Kelly Kleefman	19
Hinrik Nap	10	Mary-Lynn De Boer	24
Teena Buzeman	11	Shauna Dehaas	24
Michael John Mans	11	Marguerite Kleefman	24
Marika Linde	13	Sarah Vanderzwaag	25
Marjorie Barendregt	14	Krista Ellens	28
Julie Stieva	14		



One Busy Beaver wrote:

"I am looking forward to Christmas when we can celebrate Jesus' birth. Have a happy Christmas and a very, very good New Year."

Dear Busy Beavers, very best wishes to you all for a blessed Christmas, and also a very happy holiday from school!

I just got some bookmarks (with stickers!) for a reward for you for sending me the answers to the *Gifts* quiz.

I'm looking forward to hearing from lots of Busy Beavers! Bye for now.

Lots of love to you all from your Aunt Betty

