



Clarion
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Liturgy as covenant service

Covenant service

Those who say *worship service* also say *covenant service*. Not that these two are completely similar to each other, but in the worship service the covenant of God with His people is always present. When the LORD establishes a covenant with His people, He wants to *live* with that people. He proclaims His Word to that people. He elicits a response from His people. For that reason a house was built for Him in the wilderness and therefore the tabernacle was called the "tent of meeting." Because Israel may share in the merciful communion with the Lord, the poet sings in Psalm 84 that he longs for God's courts.

In addition to the place of meeting, God also established fixed *times* of meeting. On the seventh day there was a holy convocation. This gathering was convened by the priests blowing upon silver trumpets and was considered a festive gathering, as often is emphasized in the Psalms.

The sacrifice of the atonement is central in Old Testament temple worship. On the day which the LORD had determined for this holy gathering, the offering was *doubled*. The assembled congregation was clearly shown that the communion with the LORD was based on the atoning blood. Without the pouring of the blood there is no forgiveness (Hebrews 9:22). The worship service of the Old Testament shows: the two parties in the covenant *meet* each other. On the foundation of the blood of the atonement they exercise *communion*. On the day hallowed for that purpose, the day of meeting, God calls His people *together*.

In the Old Testament, God approached His people with the *glad tidings* of the atonement. He put His Name upon Israel and blessed the people. In the temple God's grace was shown to the people by means of the ministry of the priests. The people also heard about God by means of the *instruction* by the priests.

But also the *second party* in the covenant was active. They approached God with the *incense* of their prayers and came to Him with their *exultant hymns*.

Liturgy

In the New Testament, the word *leitourgia* makes its appearance. This is a Greek word, which actually means: a service for the *well-being* of the people. This service does not concern *private* or *individual* occasions, but refers to the *community*. It concerns the people as a whole, in their totality. We must see the people as a community, organized in the form of a "polis," a city-state.

Our word "liturgy" has been derived from this word; it is the word we also use for our worship services.

But in the first place, this word typifies the *official position and work of Christ, wherein and through which He has completed the Old Testamentic cult, in that He brought the real*

sacrifice and now completes His work as high priest in the real heavenly sanctuary.

After Christ had founded the new covenant, the word (liturgy) becomes an indication of the worship service, such as this takes place in the assemblies of the congregation. The *altar* and the *sacrifice have disappeared*. The atonement has been accomplished. The shadows have been fulfilled. Now it is called a gathering, an assembly of the church, a gathering of the congregation.

The central idea of the New Testamentic worship service is that God and His people meet each other in the assembly of the exalted Christ-with-His-own people, on the day of Christ's exaltation, the first day of the week. Now, whenever two or three — the smallest possible plurality — are gathered in His Name, there He will be in their midst. In the worship service, the two parties of the covenant are together. God is the First. The initiative comes from Him. He calls the gathering together. But the two parties meet each other in the mutual exchange of love. Therefore the congregation is also active: she may pray and sing. But it is response-motivated, as instigated by God, who, as the First One, comes to meet His people.

Not prescribed

"All right," one will say, "but is there anywhere a certain liturgy *prescribed*?" Is it not true that the whole matter of liturgy is actually a matter of *tradition*? That tradition plays such a big role in liturgical matters is shown by the fact that each and every *change* often is considered by many as an *attack* on their spiritual life.

According to our Belgic Confession, Article 7, we confess that "we may not consider any writings of men, however *holy* these men may have been, of equal value with the divine Scriptures; nor ought we to consider *custom*, or the great *multitude*, or antiquity, or *succession* of times and persons, or councils, decrees or statutes, as of *equal value* with the truth of God." Over against the Roman Catholics with their tradition, our *fathers* stated this very clear and maintained it consistently. Tradition does not have the *same value*, nor stands on the same level as the Word of God, let alone that tradition would have the final word. Time and again we have to *test* church matters, also liturgical matters by the Word of God itself. It is also wise that Article 50 of the Church Order says, in the last sentence: "On minor points of Church Order and ecclesiastical practice Churches abroad shall not be rejected." In former days, especially *liturgical matters* were meant in this respect.

I think one is right in saying that *nowhere* in the Bible a complete liturgy is prescribed and that much is based on custom. However, we have to add two things. In the first place: although not *everything* is prescribed in the Bible concerning the liturgy of the church, there is given us a certain basic pattern, from which all liturgy is to be derived. In the second place:

not all customs are wrong. There is also a *good tradition*, which is not to be abandoned without good reason.

Basic pattern

The *basic pattern* of "liturgy" for the church of the New Dispensation is given in the same chapter in which is mentioned the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, namely, Acts 2. After Luke mentions immense growth of the church at Pentecost, he adds in verse 42: "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." As a matter of fact that are four elements, which can be called decisive for the dispensation of the New Testament church. The teaching of the apostles means: the doctrine, taught by the apostles. We could interpret this as: *the reading and preaching of the Word of God*. In the RSV it is not fully clear that "fellowship" is a new element. The Greek word speaks of the communion of saints in a concrete manner, namely, in what later on was called the "offering," or the "collection" in the worship service. In the beginning the believers brought their offerings in natural gifts. In that way the poor were provided for by the rich. The third element is the *breaking of bread*, which is the celebration of the *Lord's Supper*. In the church of Corinth it was preceded by the so-called "agapai," the meals of love. Finally Luke mentions in Acts 2 the *prayers*. It appears that the prayers formed an essential part of the worship service already in the beginning of the New Testament church.

When we oversee these *four elements*, we can say that there is a remarkable *order* in them: *doctrine — communion — sacrament — prayer*. It is the order of Word and answer in God's covenant. First comes the doctrine, the reading and explanation of God's Word, in which the LORD Himself speaks. Then follows the answer of the congregation in the communion of saints: the care for one another. Again the LORD comes with His *promises* in the sacrament, the breaking of bread, and the *answer* follows, in the prayers of God's people, prayers which are at the same time offerings of thanksgiving, and also sometimes in the singing of the congregation.

When we place these elements of the worship service after Pentecost beside the *explanation of the Fourth Commandment* of God's covenant law in the Heidelberg Catechism, we see a remarkable agreement. Lord's Day 38, referring to Acts 2:42, mentions that the ministry of the gospel must be maintained, and continues to say that, especially on the day of rest, I have to diligently attend the church of God, in order to do especially four things:

1. to hear God's Word;
2. to use the sacraments;
3. to call publicly upon the LORD;
4. to give Christian offerings to the poor.

Some are reading in these four elements a certain *order* of worship. The reading and the preaching of the Word of God is the most important part and, therefore, comes first. Then the sacraments follow, as an underlining and affirmation of the Word of God. Moreover the prayers, inclusive the intercessions are mentioned, and finally the response of the congregation receives its place in the Christian charity. There is a clear *parallel* here with what is mentioned in Acts 2, whereby the two parts and the two parties of God's covenant are shown very clearly.

Arbitrary elaboration?

When we now pay attention to the other elements which have received a place in the worship service, it will be clear that they are *grouped* around the four main elements mentioned in Acts 2, and in Lord's Day 38. Of course, a certain *tradition* has been formed here, but that does not mean that an arbitrary extension has taken place. We take our starting

point in the second order of worship as recommended by the Synod of Cloverdale 1983 (Orders of Worship B, *Book of Praise*, p. 582 ff.), because these orders go back to Calvin who himself always pointed to the early church. We follow hereby the 16 elements for the *morning service*.

1. *Votum*. We have here a quotation of the last verse of Psalm 124, one of the Songs of Ascents (Psalms 120-134). These Psalms were sung in processions when the Israelite pilgrims were ascending Mount Zion at the occasion of the three great temple festivals of the Jewish year. Then the people of Israel came to present themselves before the LORD, the God of the covenant, in order to worship Him, to call upon His Name, since their only help was in the Name of the LORD, the Almighty God, who created heaven and earth. Israel was dependent on the active presence of the LORD. The same can be said of God's



people today, who are starting each and every public worship service in dependence on the God of the covenant, who created all things.

2. *Salutation*. When, in the beginning of his letters, the apostle Paul gives his apostolic *greetings* to the congregation he points to the rich promise of God's covenant in which the LORD meets His people with His grace and peace. The apostle John does the same in the last book of the Bible. In the very same way the *salutation* in God's Name to the congregation follows the votum. It is the mouth of the minister speaking words like I Corinthians 1:3, I Timothy 1:2 or Revelation 1:4 and 5a, but, actually, it is the very Word of God Himself; it is the LORD God Himself greeting His covenant people with His covenant promises.
3. *Congregational Singing*. Upon that Word of promise expressed in the salutation there follows then an answer-Psalm from the side of the people of God's covenant. It is clear that this singing has this character of being a response. It is not just an arbitrary song, but an answer to God's Word of promise. I would like to make the remark here that each Psalm in the Bible is to be taken in its entirety. Therefore, it is advisable, if possible, not to sing just one or two stanzas, but the whole Psalm, just as Israel did. Of course, many Psalms are too long, and would take too much time to sing them as a whole, but it is important to stress that the ideal is not only a single stanza but the entire Psalm.
4. *The Ten Words of the Covenant*. They can be taken from Exodus 20:2-17 or Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Already in the Old Testament the reading of the *law* of the LORD was an important element of the worship service, and the same can be said of the synagogue. Also before the Reformation

of the 16th Century, here and there the law of the LORD was read in the worship service, but Calvin brought the law back into the worship service as a regular part of it. Actually, the name *law* is not completely correct, for in Exodus 20 (and also Deuteronomy 5) there is a clear coherence between the promise and the obligation of God's covenant.

First there are the opening *words* of the law, in which the LORD God *announces* Himself. I refer to that one sentence, written in the beginning of Exodus 20 (we hear that *every* Sunday morning in public worship): "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." We have to *bear in mind* what this sentence *means*. It is *not* a mere *introduction*, which has little or nothing to do with the *contents* of God's law, but these opening words are the PROMISE of God, which accompanies *all* Ten Commandments. In this promise, the LORD God *announces* Himself as the God of His *covenant*, who is very *high* and *exalted*, but who, at the same time, bows Himself down in deep *mercy* to His people, and who wants to *show* Himself as the Father of His children.

Therefore, in these opening words we have, right from the beginning, the *twofold* idea, which must be remembered with all God's commandments, namely, that in this promise the LORD announces Himself as the *Almighty*, who is exalted *far above* all creatures, while, at the same time, He announces Himself as the *God of His covenant*, who *magnifies* Himself by His great *deeds* in history, the God of the *communion*, the fellowship in His covenant.

Then the Ten Words follow, expressing the covenant obligations. These Ten Words must always be read in the light of the opening words, God's promise. Therefore, I prefer to speak about the *constitution of God's covenant*, consisting of two part: the promise and the obligation of the covenant of the LORD.

Already for this reason we should not replace this *constitution* of God's covenant by some admonishing parts of letters from the *New Testament*. There are some who prefer this and say: let us read a few parts of the New Testament letters instead of the law from Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5. However, the whole of God's covenant with its two parts is involved! I also do not like to read after the constitution of Exodus 20 or Deuteronomy 5 the *summary* as found in the New Testament, in the words of Christ found in Matthew 22. In the first place, Christ gave that summary in a very special context, in an argument with the *Pharisees*. In the second place, Moses had summarized God's Ten Words in the same way. However, my main reason is that in this summary the *first constituting element* of God's covenant, namely His promise, is not mentioned.

5. *Congregational Singing*. After this Word of God's covenant the answer of God's people follows again in the singing of a *Psalm*. This Psalm must have something to do with that constituting idea of God's covenant. It can be a Psalm in which we confess our sins, because we did not keep God's commandments as we ought to do. It can also be a *Psalm of praise*, because of God's faithfulness in His covenant. If possible, it is to be preferred that a Psalm is chosen in line with the first Psalm, or — when not the whole Psalm was sung — another part of that Psalm.
6. *Prayer*. (In this order of worship it is the prayer that contains, among others, a public confession of sins, as well as a prayer for forgiveness, for spiritual renewal, and for illumination by the Holy Spirit.) We have to be *aware of this nice order*. First of all, the law of the LORD is read to the people, together with the promise of God's covenant.

The life of God's children does not respond to the obligation of God's covenant. But God's people may pray for forgiveness, renewal of heart and *illumination* by the Holy Spirit, who promises to work with the Word of God. Hence this prayer is also an introduction to the reading and the preaching of God's Word.

7. Now follows the *reading of the Bible*. It has been said that one or more passages may be read, related to the sermon, and that this can be followed by *singing*. However, according to the custom of the early church the reading of the Bible and the preaching of God's Word belong together. Our Lord Jesus Himself followed this custom, by reading a passage of Isaiah, and preaching on that Word of God, right away (cf. Luke 4).
8. After one or more passages of the Holy Scriptures are read, there follows the *reading of the text*, and then comes the:
 9. *Ministry of the Word*. This ministry of the Word of God is the proclamation of God's Word which is, at the same time, the explanation of the Holy Scriptures, the *administration of reconciliation*, appropriated and applied to God's people today, in their special circumstances. This teaching and preaching is the first element mentioned in Acts 2 and Lord's Day 38. It also received its position of honour in the whole of the (reformed) *liturgy of God's covenant*. It is and has to remain the main part of public worship service, and it may not be replaced by a short meditation or by a short timely word, the "topic of the day." No, it is to be the living proclamation of God's Word itself. With it the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of God's people. Therefore we may not reduce this preaching, but we have to give it its rightful place. After the preaching of the Word of God follows:
 10. *The Responsive Song* of the congregation: the Word of God is responded to by the people of God's covenant. Also this song may not be an *arbitrary* Psalm or Hymn, but should be such a song which expresses the idea that the Word of God that was heard is to be affirmed by a life which is fitting to God's covenant.
 11. It is at this point that the *administration of the Holy Baptism* can take place. In this way we have a more correct order: the first means of grace with which the LORD comes to His people in His Word, in the administration of this Word. It is followed by the second means, the sacrament.
 12. Hereafter will take place *prayer*, that is, the thanksgiving for the Word of God, as well as the prayer for all the needs of Christendom, the intercessions, also in response to the Word of God and its preaching.
 13. Now the congregation brings her *offerings*, according to what is said in Lord's Day 38, "to give Christian offerings to the poor," and Acts 2:42. Therefore, the collection has a proper, Scriptural place in the public worship service. To offer something for the poor is an integral part of worshipping God.
 14. After the sermon also the *administration of the Lord's Supper* can follow, again as the second means of God's grace in His covenant. It is not correct to speak about a service of the Lord's Supper. The *Form for the Lord's Supper* is not a sermon. It is only an explanation for the people of God's covenant. Also when we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we should first listen to the preaching of the Word of God, the first means of God's grace in His covenant.
 15. In the *closing song* God's people may again give her response to God's grace and praise the LORD with her singing.
 16. Then follows the *benediction*. Just as the people of the Old Dispensation received the Aaronitic blessing accord-

ing to Numbers 6, and as the apostle wrote his farewell to the church of the New Testament, e.g., as in II Corinthians 13, so the congregation receives, and takes home in faith, God's blessing.

In the afternoon service, the *Apostles' Creed* has not the same place as the *Constitution of God's Covenant* in the morning service. We refer again to the order B, as advised by the Synod of Cloverdale 1983. Also the confession of faith fits within the framework of the covenant communion: God speaks and God's people responds. First, in the morning service, there is the Law, or rather, the constitution of God's covenant. It is God speaking His Word. Then, in the afternoon service, in the confession of faith, we have the response of faith of God's people. It is, therefore, a good thing that the congregation herself is actively participating in this act of confessing, for instance by *singing* the *Apostles' Creed*.

Variety

In the beginning of this article we said that there is such a beautiful order in our public worship service, especially as presented sub number B (p. 582ff. of the *Book of Praise*), and that this order which is derived from the order of *John Calvin*. We know that Calvin was in favour of going back to the early church and that he stressed that the church of the Reformation should honour the good customs of the early New Testament church in the times of the apostles and shortly thereafter. In this order, the Word and the response of God's people alternate constantly.

Besides order B, we have order of worship A variety in this sense that in A (p. 581ff. of the *Book of Praise*). This is the so-called "old order." In fact, this order is not so very old; it goes back to the Dutch synod of Middelburg, 1933. I do not want to say that this order A misses the Biblical, covenantal characteristic of expressing the meeting of God and His people in which God speaks His Word and God's people respond in faith, but I want to stress that the best Reformed tradition is given in order B.


"Out of custom or superstition"

Our conclusion is in the first place that we may not do anything in the whole matter of liturgy out of custom or superstition. We all know these words. They are derived from the beginning of the questions asked at the baptismal font. Over against the danger of an act "out of custom or superstition" it is stated that we have to use the sacrament of baptism for the purpose that to us and our children God's *covenant* is sealed.

"Out of custom" is wrong also with respect to the liturgy of God's covenant, but *according to a custom* is not wrong! In the passage of the Scriptures in which Jesus' preaching in the synagogue in Nazareth is mentioned, we read that the Lord "went to the synagogue, as His custom was, on the Sabbath day" (Luke 4:16). That was a good custom! Let us, therefore, continue this good custom, as a Scriptural tradition: to "diligently attend the church of God," "especially on the day of rest." In this respect we can even speak of an "apostolic tradition." This has nothing to do with the Roman equalization of Scripture and tradition, nor with the Roman "apostolic succession," but it is a matter of continuing what, already in the apostolic era, was seen as *liturgy of God's covenant*.

This does not mean that in the liturgy of God's covenant nothing could be improved any more. On the contrary, discussions on the worship service and the customs and traditions in it, are always necessary. We do not need to aim for a *multitude* of liturgical forms, but we ought to have as goal that in our liturgy we remain *true* to God's covenant. Let our liturgy not become a dead service. Not the extent, but the intensity must be our goal. We can also say, let us aim for depth rather than for breadth in our liturgy. K. Schilder said once: "No liturgical forms, just because of tradition." And also: "The Word of life demands living words." Dead forms can lead to the situation in which a congregation is preached to death or, at least, gets tired. But the LORD wants to have a living congregation, living people of His covenant, which is taught by the living proclamation of His Word!

K. DEDDENS



CHURCH NEWS

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* * *

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REV. M. VAN LUIK
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OUR COVER

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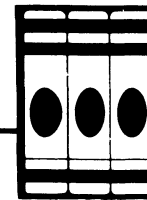
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BOOK REVIEW



C. Van Dam, *The Urim and Thummim 2 volumes* (Kampen: Van Den Berg), 1986, 344 pages.

C. Van Dam, "Urim and Thummim," an article in *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, volume 4* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans), 1988.

It is surely a glaring omission that the doctoral dissertation of Prof. C. Van Dam has never received proper attention in *Clarion*. With this review we hasten to correct this oversight. On the other hand, if there has been a benefit in the delay it is that now we can review not only his thesis, but also his article on this same topic in that prestigious reference work called *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, or *ISBE* for short.

Seeing that the thesis provides us with the fuller treatment of the topic, we turn mainly to it. As has become customary in theses produced for the Theological University in Kampen, it is done in two volumes. The first volume of 186 pages contains the text only; whereas the second volume of 158 pages contains the notes and bibliography. A cursory inspection of both volumes immediately reveals that Prof. Van Dam must have read every conceivable book or article that related either directly or indirectly to the subject under investigation.

As far as the actual contents are concerned, the author begins his study with a historical survey showing how the Urim and Thummim (UT) have been interpreted throughout the ages. He pays attention to both the early and medieval Jewish and Christian understanding, and to the findings from the 16th-20th Century. Regarding our century he makes the remark that "no major study on the UT has been produced in the twentieth century."

Having dealt with the historical, Dr. Van Dam proceeds to the exegetical. He ranges far and wide over the Old Testament (OT) material. In particular, he analyzes the various means of revelation and divination, and the dress of the high priest which contained the UT. In that context he begins to ask questions about the meaning of the terms Urim and Thummim, and about how they (or "it" since the UT may have been a single stone) functioned in their OT environment. In the process he pays special attention to such passages as Numbers 27:21; Deuteronomy 33:8-11; I Samuel 14:41, 28:6; Ezra 2:63; Nehemiah 7:65. As he does so he constantly tests the various theories about the nature and the usage of the UT

to see whether they hold up under the scrutiny of Scripture. Rounding off this section, he deals with the demise of the UT.

In the final part, Prof. Van Dam steps into the world of the ancient Near East in order to ascertain whether it can shed any light on his subject matter. In doing so he studies the culture of Mesopotamia, the Hittites, Canaan, Egypt and Arabia. However, he is forced to conclude that the world of the ancient Near East is unable to elucidate the UT.

Thus far our overview of this thesis. It will immediately be felt that such an overview naturally begs the question, "what conclusions did Prof. C. Van Dam come to? Is he able to state categorically what the UT were and how they functioned?" In the end, he admits that there is no absolute certainty as to how the UT functioned; however, he does offer a new theory. Up until his work, the most common view has been that the Urim and Thummim acted as a lot oracle. This view is discounted by Prof. Van Dam because the terms UT are never used in connection with lot casting and because the length of the answer received as in the case of I Samuel 10:22; II Samuel 5:23ff. are difficult to square with a lot which only gives a "yes" or "no" or "no answer."

Van Dam's own view is that the UT were somehow associated with "light." The Hebrew etymology and vocalization points in this direction. In addition, this light function is tied together with the high priest. As he says, "the use of *urim* by itself as a designation of the UT could indicate that light was a vital characteristic of this oracular means and understanding *urim* and *thummim* as hendiadys with the translation 'perfect light' could be defended. In this line of reasoning one could theorize, in agreement with what is found in Jewish tradition, that a special or miraculous light was somehow involved in the functioning of the UT in order to verify that the message given by the high priest was from Yahweh. In this way 'the judgment of the U' could conceivably have been given. If, when the high priest had taken the UT from the *hosen*, there was no special light worked by Yahweh in close association with the UT, then one could know that Yahweh was not imparting revelation by means of the high priest and the UT. However, in the absence of explicit evidence, this understanding of the UT will remain an unproven theory" (pp. 130-131).

Although this interpretation is theoretic

in nature, it seems to this reviewer that it falls within the realm of definite plausibility. Certainly the "light theory" of Van Dam, if we may call it that, is superior to the lot theory which has held sway until now. It can only be hoped that further study in this direction will give even more substance to this theory.

Taken as a whole, this thesis is a well-researched and closely argued work. Dr. Van Dam has produced an excellent piece of OT scholarship and thus made a real contribution in his field. The fact that he was asked to write the article on UT for one of the foremost Bible encyclopedias in the English language is a positive reflection on his work and the esteem with which it is held in the scholarly community. We commend him heartily for his effort of bringing further clarification to a difficult topic. It can no longer be said that "no major study of the UT has been produced in the twentieth century."

As far as our criticisms go, they are of a minor character. In his *ISBE* article, it would have been helpful if the author had given some more details about his own view of the UT as a confirmatory light in association with the revelation of the high priest. As it now reads, the explanation does not distinguish itself fully from the lot oracle view.

On a different note, and this cannot be laid at the door of Prof. Van Dam, it would be so much more convenient if the Theological University in Kampen would change its policy of separating the text and the footnotes. I realize that this is easier on the author; however, it is a nuisance for the reader. Everytime you want to check out a reference you have to consult another volume. Surely, in this day of computerization it is possible to incorporate text and notes together on the same page with a measure of ease and efficiency.

In closing, we would urge our readers to buy and study these works. The Hebrew has been transliterated and does not present a serious obstacle. If you write Uitgeverij Van Den Berg, Postbus 27, 8260 AA, Kampen, the Netherlands, you may still be able to obtain a copy of the thesis. (Yes, it is written in the English language.) As far as the article is concerned, *ISBE* is published by Eerdmans and can be obtained at any Christian bookstore. The purchase of this massive encyclopedia will improve your personal library beyond measure.

J. VISSCHER



The first word this time is to be a word expressing my thanks to the brother who spotted two dutchisms in the second-last medley and was so kind as to draw my attention to it. I'll do my best to avoid similar mistakes in the future.

Our journey starts today in Armadale, W.A. Although a couple of years ago a considerable part of this Church separated from it to form the Church at Byford, the membership appears to have grown again to such proportions that the Consistory discussed "A proposal to increase the number of elders by two. Some concern has been expressed at the workload of the elders by some. The need to share the work

is felt. Yet there is also the concern that the consistory is becoming too large. Various aspects are brought forward: such as home-visits, forming another congregation, and boundary-adjustments."

Another decision is that "in the future there will be only one collection in each church service. That collection will be: for the 'ministry of mercy'."

This does not mean that Armadale will be completely without a second collection on certain Sundays. "Only six times per year there will be two collections in each service. These second collections will be for Theological Institutions."

— continued on page 256

Farewell evening of Rev. E. Kampen and family

On Sunday afternoon, May 8, Rev. Kampen held his farewell sermon, after being minister of the Word in Houston for four and a half years.

He chose as text for this farewell sermon II Corinthians 13:11. Paul shows in his word of farewell "How to enjoy God's presence. 1. Mend their ways; 2. Heed his appeal; 3. Agree with one another; 4. Live in peace.

On Monday evening, May 9th, the congregation of Houston said farewell to their minister. Our M.C. for the evening was Mr. R. Fennema. We opened with singing and prayer and we read from II Corinthians 4 an apt piece of Holy Writ dealing with the honest and trying ministry of Paul in Corinth.

Stephen Onderwater, on behalf of the Young People's Society, started the program rolling by presenting a photo album of all the members in Houston to the Kampen family. This will serve as a great memory of all the friends made in the Bulkley Valley!

A word of thanks was noted by Onno VandenHoek, on behalf of the Men's and Women's Societies, for the Rev. and Mrs. Kampen's efforts in searching the Scriptures with us.

Our choir sang two lovely pieces: Holy, Holy, Holy and Blessed Assurance. The choir was followed by the children of the congregation. They sang two hymns and recited a poem about a "rich fool."

Next, Mrs. Kampen was presented with a beautiful Delft-blue plate by the Ladies Aid, acknowledging and thanking her for her efforts and dedication.



An organ interlude of Psalm 98, by Cheryl Hansma, followed.

Rev. Berends, from our neighbouring sister church of Smithers, had the floor next. He thanked Rev. Kampen for his work in Smithers and acknowledged Rev. Kampen's dedication and commitment to his ministry in Houston. A more personal note chimed the friendship of the two colleagues and their ability of seeing topics "eye-to-eye."

Another musical interlude followed. Kent Dykstra performed on his violin: "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring," by J.S. Bach, accompanied by the organ.

Grace Fennema and Clarinda Meints succeeded with a poem: "Memoirs of Houston." The Kampen's were presented with a jar of fresh mountain air, fresh country water, a boulder which fell through their car windshield, and many other artifacts relating to comical and forgotten events!

Mr. M. Onderwater, on behalf of the congregation, thanked Rev. Kampen for his diligent and dedicated work amongst us. The Kampen family received a beautiful painting of the area and a burl clock. Rev. Kampen promised us that this

clock will always run on Houston time!

Gratitude was also expressed by the Post-confession class. Rev. and Mrs. Kampen were active members in these classes. Apparently Mrs. Kampen also showed her baking talents, by bringing delicious baking to the classes!

Mrs. Kampen was also active in our school board. Andy Meints thanked her for her efforts and new ideas.

Last, but not least, Rev. Kampen spoke. He reminisced of times past, both good and bad. Rev. Kampen stated that throughout his ministry in Houston, his first goal was always to praise and glorify our Father. His hope is that when we, at the end of the age, sit before the table of the Lamb, his efforts in Houston would have played a small role in bringing the Houston congregation to life eternal.

The evening concluded with singing Psalm 134. Rev. Berends closed with prayer.

We wish the Kampen family much joy and happiness in Edmonton. May the Lord bless your work there — may God's Name be glorified!

CHERYL HANSMA

The Bedforddale congregation has taken out another option on a property. More news next time, perhaps?

Crossing over into our own country, I have to answer a question which was put to me in connection with what I wrote about "sermons on the Canons of Dort" — for short.

First I should like to state that we should not make a big issue out of it and that I answer the questions only because I wrote about this matter in our medley.

Actually, there were two questions. The one was what I thought about it that — to the recollection of the brother — "sermons on the Canons" appeared in the sermon series several years ago. Was that then correct or not?

As far as I can recall I stated nowhere that it would be wrong to prepare and deliver a sermon with the Canons as guideline. There is nothing wrong with it. That answers question No 1.

The second question was: It says that the consistory shall ensure that "as a rule" once every Sunday. . . . If I understood the question correctly, it was assumed that this "as a rule" means more or less: "Usually, but not necessarily always."

Perhaps my brother — and others — recall that during the time preceding the Liberation there was quite a discussion about the decision of the 1939 General Synod to continue itself into the fourth year after its constitution and to have the next general synod convened a year later than was provided in the Church Order.

One of the arguments adduced in defense of this move was that the Church Order stipulated that "ordinarily" a general synod was to be held once every three years. The word "ordinarily" was also then explained as "usually."

Apart from the fact that it said "every third year," it was pointed out that the word "ordinarily" means: that is the rule, the order; it does not mean that it is left in the freedom of persons or ecclesiastical assemblies to follow their own ideas or to let the circumstances and times decide whether it shall be done or not.

The very same word "ordinarily" is also used in the Dutch text of the article from which we have taken over the provision found in the second half of Article 52, and has been rendered by "as a rule."

Besides, the words "as a rule" are placed with "once every Sunday" and not with "Heidelberg Catechism." Even if "as a rule" meant "usually" — but it does not — this would refer to "once every Sunday" and not mean "usually with the Heidelberg Catechism as guide." The above will suffice in reply to the questions received. I did answer them publicly because the same questions might live with others as well. That is the only reason why I mention the matter again.

The Cloverdale Consistory, referring to the fact that some members had left for sister Churches, reassured the congregation: "For those of you who assume that the congregation is becoming smaller, we should point out that quite a few new families are expected to move in during the coming months. For these reasons, too, the Council has appointed a committee to study further growth and development in an attempt to come to some sort of overall plan for the future of the congregation."

Growth is also reported by Vernon. "The A. family will make our number equal to the family of Jacob upon their entry into Egypt, seventy persons in all. Now we don't want to make any further comparisons but it would be nice to see some of the increase in number Israel enjoyed in Egypt. It looks promising."

The consistory also decided to increase the number of elders by one.

The congregation is not all that successful in their search for a new place where to meet for worship. The Chapel they are using is becoming rather small for the growing number,

but thus far they have not been able to find other and more suitable facilities.

Previously we already mentioned the plans to establish a school society for the Okanagan Valley. Now Vernon reports: "A steering committee was appointed. . . . This committee is to do the legwork in setting up a School Society and doing the legal registration of this Society."

Going up to the Bulkley Valley, we first visit Smithers.

"Letter from brother A. re: the handing out of NIV Bibles to married couples. After discussing the letter. . . the consistory decided to hand over a copy of the RSV of the Bible to those who have received an NIV Study Bible on their wedding day, since this version is the one we use in the Church and is one adopted by Synod."

This appears to be a good decision. I cannot understand anyway why consistories would give a translation different from the one we are using in Church. This apart from the objections which I have to the NIV. I also refer to what Prof. Geertsema wrote about it.

There is one point which deserves further attention. I think that the consistory of Smithers said too much when stating that this is the translation "adopted" by Synod. As far as I recall, our synods never went beyond "recommending" this translation and stating that there were no overriding objections to its use in the worship services.

A very worthwhile reminder was given in that "Council members are reminded of the decision that council members will sit in (the) front during congregational meetings."

Oftentimes elders and deacons are just sitting with their wives when a congregational meeting is held, and the chairman of the meeting is sitting there, or standing, with perhaps one or two elders protecting him, as if it were just a meeting of church members which he is chairing.

A congregational meeting is a meeting of the consistory with the congregation, and thus it should become evident that the consistory is there as a body. The brothers should sit together, indeed.

Following the No. 16 east, we hit upon Houston. You cannot miss it, though.

A suggestion was made "to put the manse up for sale and plan to build a new manse on the property in the Avalon subdivision." As I do not know where that "Avalon subdivision" is, I cannot enlighten our readers any further.

One starts feeling mighty important when reading the following.

"A question was also raised as to why it is that when an elder leads the worship services, the words of salutation and benediction are changed from "you" to "us." Perhaps Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene [thanks for using *all* my initials, VO] will be able to pass on some remarks with respect to this question for the benefit of the Churches in his 'News Medley' when he reads this question."

The question itself or rather the point raised in the question merits more attention than can be dedicated to it within the framework of our medleys. Prof. C. Trimp wrote more knowledgeably about it than I could do, and I only deplore it that I do not have the time at the moment to look up and pass on to our readers precisely where they could find it.

Let me say this at this moment: The arguments which are supporting the use of "you" are much stronger than those which favour the change to "us." Is there any *basic* difference when the salutation is spoken by a minister of the Word or when it is done by someone else who has been appointed by the consistory to lead the service? When an elder or even a non-office-bearer reads a sermon, does this sermon come to the congregation with less force and authority than when a minister delivers it? A minister, speaking the salutation, does not bring his own *personal* greeting, and therefore every effort to begin

a service with "Good morning, brothers and sisters" should be banned and condemned. The congregation meets its God, not a minister.

Various articles which Dr. Trimp wrote in *De Reformatie* have been reprinted in a book, *De Gemeente en Haar Liturgie*, which book I certainly can recommend to those among our readers who still understand Dutch.

The one who conducts the service greets the congregation in answer to its confession and this greeting comes from the Lord. I can see no reason why the "you" in this salutation is to be changed.

However, let me not yield to the temptation to start an extensive discussion about the question posed. May the above suffice and show that I read the bulletins attentively. You knew this already, of course.

Following the Number 16 further, we arrive in Edmonton.

The Immanuel Church was preparing for the arrival of the Rev. Kampen who, in the meantime, has arrived. Prices of suitable dwellings appear to be quite steep, and therefore the solution was found in renting for the time being.

The neighbouring Providence Church is preparing for the time when the Rev. VanBeveren has retired. From information in the bulletin it appears that the workload became too much for our colleague and that even the additional eight "free" Sundays per year were not sufficient. Here is indeed a case of being unable to carry the full load and then it is to the benefit of minister as well as congregation not to drag on but to enable the congregation to call one who is able to carry the full burden of the active ministry.

It should have been mentioned in the official note that a classis contracta was to be held to decide about the request for retirement that also the advice of deputies of regional synod was asked and obtained.

In the bulletin of March 27 we read, "Rev. Van Beveren will be absent to attend lectures at the Theological College in his capacity as a member of the Board of Governors."

Was it wise to publish this? The visits to the lectures are supposed to be made unannounced and as a complete surprise. This has nothing to do with suspicion, but with the need to "catch" the teachers and the students in their regular work. It does not appear prudent to publish it in a bulletin before the visits have been made, as the bulletins also reach our College.

"Reporting" on this visit, Rev. VanBeveren wrote, "It appeared that it was my last trip to Hamilton for our College since retired ministers are not wanted as governors." Knowing my colleague a little, I am sure that he wrote this "tongue-in-cheek."

When, years ago, the Constitution for the College had to be drawn up, the provision was inserted that only ministers in active service can be governors. With the adoption of the Act by the Provincial Legislature covering the College, this provision was retained.

Certainly, also retired ministers could make an important contribution as governors. However, when would the time be there then to replace them? The longer one was functioning, the harder it would become to tell him that the time is there to step down. Now no one has to feel offended or slighted or to have the impression as if his work is not appreciated: there is an impersonal and impartial standard: the retirement. Besides, ministers who are retired lose to some extent the direct contact with the matters which are going on in the Churches, as they no longer receive the documents and no longer take part in meetings of consistories.

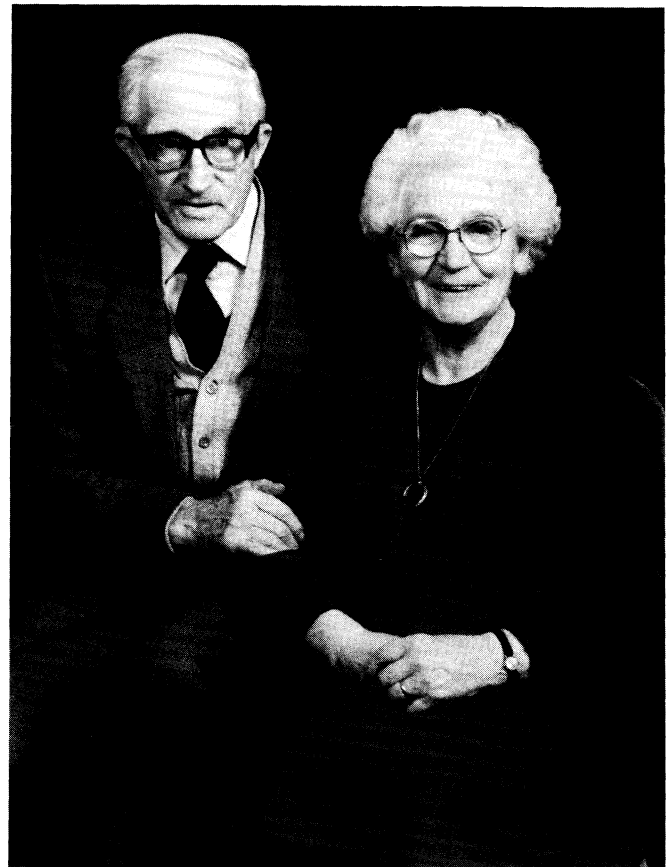
Let's go on.

Some three hundred kilometers to the south we find Calgary.

"Brother A. seems to have been active in gaining potential new members for this congregation. Several young ladies



55th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. G.J. Hofsink immigrated to Canada from Heemse, Holland in 1950, with 3 sons and 1 daughter, and settled in Houston, BC. In 1965 they moved to Smithers where they are still residing at present. They are both in relatively good health and enjoy visiting their children and grandchildren at home or across the country.



from the Netherlands plan to come to Canada in the capacity of nannies for various families in the city."

I also foresee an influx of young men, now that I have made this secret a generally-known fact.

The consistory also discussed what to do with the money "in the church coffers," whether to buy a church building or a parsonage. No decision yet.

"The consistory is still busy with a plan for a sort of conference or, at least, a speech, concerning being 'Reformed' in this day and age. The purpose of this plan is to tackle some of the pressing questions of the day which are being debated in both our federation and other churches of the Presbyterian/Reformed 'family.' There is also the desire to by means of such a meeting promote true biblical unity amongst all who are Reformed. Since we sometimes seem to have a low profile in the community, it was thought that a forum of this nature would

bring us into contact with people of like mind. The Rev. J. Geertsema, editor of *Clarion*, has been approached and found willing to speak. An attempt is also being made to find a speaker of the 'concerned' Christian Reformed brotherhood. The hoped for date is sometime in the latter half of the month of May."

The date is May 27.

Carman is still pondering what kind of a title to give to what is still known only as "The History Book." Apparently my cautious suggestions could not find favour in the eyes and hearts of the compilers. No offense taken. The book will be close to 300 pages, and will contain approximately that number of photographs. What is still badly needed is a picture of the old Dufferin Leader Building. Can anyone outside of Carman help?

The ARPA passed on that "Our M.P., Mr. Jack Murta, has suggested to us that we should continue to write letters, urge the legislators to act, making it clear that we may not and will not forget." This refers to the abortion issue.

A little north of Carman lies Winnipeg. When saying "a little," we speak in the terms of our vast country.

Apparently growth of the congregation is the reason why the consistory decided to add two elders and one deacon to the number of office-bearers. The consistory room is becoming too small now, isn't it?

"Brother A. presented the congregation with a glass panel painting of our former church building on Newton. Brother B. made a frame for it. . . . Received with thankfulness."

Following the Trans-Canada Highway — why is it called the No. 17 in Ontario? — we arrive in Ottawa. The Evangelism Committee would "like to distribute a newsletter in this area once a month. This newsletter would introduce us, have an inspiring (short) message, and invite people to worship with us."

Via Tweed and Belleville we reach Toronto. There the same problem appears to exist which is found not only in ecclesiastical life but also in the world around us: "The Committee of Management reads a letter received from brother A. explaining why the building expenses for the church addition went over budget."

As many Churches did in the past months, so Toronto expected the Church Visitors to show up on a certain date. And, as most Consistories did, so the one in Toronto informed the congregation of it. "Any member of the congregation wishing to address a matter to the Church visitors should inform the consistory in advance of the scheduled visit."

It might be good to remind everyone of it that a church member cannot just inform the consistory that he wants to discuss a matter with the visitors, but that it is only when a member has a controversy with the consistory that cannot be solved, that he has the right to place this matter before the church visitors. There may be members who are not aware of this and show up without having first tried to come to a solution with the consistory.

Brampton agreed with a request "that the congregation remains seated until the announcements are made and then rise for the votum and salutation." The effective date was May 1.

Grand Valley is still pondering which property to choose for a church building. Perhaps they have reached a conclusion by now, but at the moment of this writing I am not aware of any definite decision.

In Fergus the "Property Committee of the Canadian Reformed School Society is in need of a person who is willing to cut and trim 7 acres of grass on school property." Sometimes wealth brings extra problems with it, doesn't it! I know a good solution: get a few sheep or goats and these, together with the groundhogs will do a marvellous job!

What drew my attention in the Elora report was the follow-

ing." Two members for the Committee of Administration are appointed. The names will be released after the appointed members have been contacted."

Sometimes consistories publish the name of a minister they are going to propose to the congregation for call before the meeting is held where the proposal is discussed. And sometimes it even happens that the congregation does not agree with the proposal so that the call is not extended. In the meantime the name has been published and the news spread all over the country, since bulletins are sent left and right. I would urge all consistories not to publish any name of a minister they propose to the congregation unless the congregation has agreed and the call is extended indeed. It will save the consistories much embarrassment, prevent much guessing, and contribute to good relations.

Burlington West comes next.

"A brother asks council re policy who can play our church organ and who is to be contacted in order to become an organist. There is much talent in our congregation that we should encourage." The brother will be answered that requests for playing the church organ for regular practice should initially be addressed to Council (Clerk)."

No wonder that consistory meetings oftentimes last till the wee hours of the morning if all these things have to be brought before it. Is there no committee of administration that has the responsibility and is capable of dealing with this kind of questions? If I were a member of the Committee of Administration I would feel bypassed if a consistory decided that requests for playing the organ were to be directed to the consistory.

At the Burlington-West consistory:

"b. A proposal to discontinue the singing of 'Ere Zij God' after the Christmas service is discussed, voted on and adopted.

"Grounds:

- i) It is not included in our *Book of Praise* so it is not approved by a Synod as a Hymn to be sung during our worship services.
- ii) It is a Dutch Hymn and we claim to be a Canadian Church. All our services are conducted in English and rightly so.
- iii) Whether we sing it in the Dutch or in the unofficial English version, it is just not a good hymn. First of all it is inappropriately repetitious and secondly it is not a good paraphrase of the text."

While agreeing wholeheartedly with grounds ii) and iii), I think that ground i) is incorrect and slightly an overkill.

When something is sung *after* the service has ended, what force of argument has the remark that it is not in the *Book of Praise* and that it is not a hymn approved for use *during* the worship services?? *After* the service we may sing all sorts of songs which are not in the *Book of Praise* if we feel like it, always within certain limits, of course, but this will be realized by all.

Grounds ii) and iii), however, are more than sufficient.

Burlington West's size — 650 members of whom 319 communicant members — brings the warning "Let's try not to lose track of each other." Would make two congregations of a nice and manageable size.

Of nearby Hamilton we mention also at this place the purchase of a building for the Teachers' College. However well the makeshift facilities in the Cornerstone Church building may have served the Teachers' College, nothing is better than facilities of your own which you can furnish and arrange according to your own specific needs. Congratulations!

Via the Lincoln bulletin we understood that "From the Governors' Report we learn that several students have been accepted for the next term at our College." This is the Teachers' College, mind you.

The Lincoln Consistory decided to send a letter to the Free Reformed Church of Vineland in order to re-establish contact.

"The request to establish ground rules for splitting the congregation is not deemed necessary at this time. The consistory decides that ideally the matter of institution will grow out of the need seen by members of the congregation. The church members are encouraged to initiate activity in this direction."

Yes, and then some personal correspondence. Sometimes the brothers or sisters who send the bulletins add a personal note which is greatly appreciated. From Lincoln comes the little note "No, what you read about cash for trash collecting 12,000 was not a printing error. Sounds good, eh?" Certainly, Lydia. Thanks for the confirmation. I know a lady who would love to know how you did it. Want her name and address?

In adjoining Smithville "The Building Committee is working hard at finalizing plans for the proposed addition." Hopefully sufficient lessons have been drawn from the cheap projects in the past. In the long run it costs far more than if things had been done correctly right from the beginning.

Watford is our second-last stop.

At the board meeting of the school society "the education committee informs the board that several inquiries have been entertained from Holland." When not sufficient teachers can be attracted from our own midst, it will be almost unavoidable that the attention is directed towards foreign countries.

This will be the case even more when grades are added or when grades have to be split because the number of students per teacher becomes too large. Besides, "A report from the *ad hoc* Committee for Christian Secondary Education from the school boards of London, Chatham and Watford is received for study." It is, therefore, the more a reason for thankfulness that several students have applied and been accepted at the Teachers' College. Would the same could be said with respect to our Theological College!

We conclude our cross-country trip in Chatham.

The Consistory received a letter from the Women's Societies.

"They would like the consistory to consider organizing a special service for the congregation *on that day* [Ascension Day is meant, VO]. The consistory decided from the very beginning of the institution of the Church of Chatham to commemorate the Ascension on the following Sunday. After discussion the Consistory decided to maintain the previous decision and *not* to grant the request. Ground for this decision was that an evening service is only partly attended by the congregation, while on the Sunday the *whole* congregation can par-

ticipate in the commemoration of this event."

There is a very interesting provision in our Church Order. I fully realize that it refers to matters to be dealt with at broader assemblies, but I am convinced that our consistories would do well if they, too, took it as a guideline for their own discussions and decisions as well.

I am referring to Article 33: "Matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds."

It happens frequently that members ask the elders who come for a family visit to pass on to the consistory the request to do this or that or to change this or that. Oftentimes the consistory discussed the point in question more than once in the past and made decisions about it on more than one occasion.

Perhaps the members are not aware of it that what they ask was object of extensive or even repeated discussion in the past; perhaps they belong to the small group of those who will never quit until they get their way. When office-bearers retire and others take their place, such members see their chance and try again. Who knows, they may get a majority for their ideas now that there are different members in the consistory.

Whatever the case, our consistories will do well by asking first of all whether new grounds have been adduced which would warrant reopening the discussion. If this is not the case, much valuable time will be saved by not even starting a discussion and by telling the member who came with a request: "We have examined the question whether you came with new grounds; since this was not so, the previous decision stands."

The same procedure would have to be followed if one who has become an office-bearer is going to use his position to have something discussed and decided upon in his favour, something which he disagreed with before becoming an office-bearer but which he could not cause to be discussed again at that time.

We should avoid a zig-zag course and a "change of scenery" every time when the membership of the consistory changes.

The same applies when a minister comes to another congregation. It happens quite often that then all sorts of changes are made in liturgy and other respects. Unless he comes with new grounds, the old is better, and should stand.

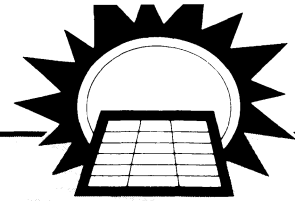
That is my stand.

Cheerio!

VO

The Free Reformed Church of Armadale, Western Australia





"We walk by faith, not by sight." II Corinthians 5:7

Dear brothers and sisters,

Believers are called "children of the promise" (Romans 9:8; Galatians 4:28). Being Abraham's spiritual descendants, we have become heirs of the covenant, and we have received the promises of the covenant.

These promises of God are reliable and trustworthy! For they have been fulfilled in Christ Jesus, our Saviour. Through faith in Him God grants us His obedience, holiness and perfect satisfaction. And with Christ God gives us freely all things. Our every need is taken care of by God in Christ, our Lord.

This is a matter of faith! We are often so occupied by our worries, our physical weaknesses and ailments, so bogged down by our every day problems, that we are in danger of losing the assurance of faith. What we see and what we experience often seems to contradict God's promises to us, His children. That is because our seeing is still imperfect and our vision often blurred. We are still subject to the powers of death and sin. Also we have sometimes trouble to wait for the Lord. He does not always fulfill His promises at the time we want it.

Therefore we have to walk by faith, not by sight. The LORD works that faith and trust in us by His Word and Spirit. Through His Word and Spirit He will also strengthen our confidence. Through faith we learn to see that our afflictions are only temporary. We also learn to acknowledge that they are necessary to make us ready for that eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, which God is preparing for all who trust in Him.

In this life it is that trust in God that gives reality to things which are still hoped for and assurance concerning things which we do not yet see (Hebrews 11:1). Once our faith will become seeing. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God and the fulfillment of all His promises. He does make all things new!

Our birthday calendar for July:

JIM BUIKEMA

"Anchor Home," 30 Rd., RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

Jim hopes to celebrate his 27th birthday on July 4th.

CHARLIE BEINTEMA

401 Park Street
Chatham, ON N7M 3S7

Charlie will be 13 years old on July 20th.

JIM WANDERS

Huronian Regional Centre
P.O. Box 1000,
Orillia, ON L3V 6L2

Jim also will become 27 years of age, but his birthday is on July 28th.

Congratulations, boys!! Have an enjoyable day!!!

Faith is not in understanding;
Faith is yielding to God's will,
Resting on His Word of promise
In assurance calm and still.

Faith is waiting for the answer
Though no hopeful ray is giv'n,
Knowing that the final outcome
Now is clearly seen in heav'n.

Faith is looking through the shadows
To the dawn of endless day,
Singing thro' the gath'ring darkness,
"Christ will lead me all the way!"

Faith is looking unto Jesus,
Trusting where it cannot see.
Faith is resting on His promise
Faith is glorious victory!

Greetings to all of you!

Mrs. J. Mulder

1225 Highway 5 RR1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4



The class reunion: celebrating a heritage

On a dark and dreary January evening in southern Ontario at a John Doe restaurant the class of '63 came together with much expectation to joyously remember the richness of 25 years. Earlier in the season the John Calvin School Society of Burlington had officially celebrated their anniversary. Speeches had been held by the proper representatives and with careful consideration the efforts of parents, boards and staffs had been thankfully recognized. However, those who had been as students part of the initial effort to open a first Canadian Reformed day school in Ontario knew that "only a class reunion" could properly recall the shared experiences and the bonds developed in grade seven and eight. As the class of '63 we experienced all the ordinary common day to day things of life in a reformed community. One is reminded that in His providence His fatherly hand, His power and goodness are indeed beyond understanding and we may content ourselves that we are pupils of Christ, who have only to learn those things which He teaches us in His Word, without transgressing these limits (Art. 13 Belgic Confession).

At a class reunion one recollects thoughts and experiences of 25 years ago. Personal recollection and "before and after" assessments abound. The before and after pictures vividly attest to the physical changes. The greatest change and appreciation recognizable, however, had to be for the young dark-haired man whose marriage we had witnessed, who had meanwhile become grey-haired by way of teaching a generation of students, including students of former students. Some of the maturing grade seven and eight students of '63 had just recently married, others had been married for almost twenty years. Some have their own children in grade seven and eight today. Time had not markedly altered obvious personality traits. The "class clown" as well as the "strong, silent type" still functioned in that capacity. Within the group one could recognize entrepreneurial skills which had developed into successful business efforts. Milk money collection had become bank management. Verbal cajoling had be-



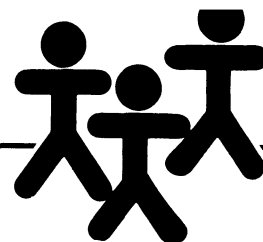
come sales expertise. Some took on the honourable teaching profession. Some served the community as members of school boards and church councils. Some married classmates, others, happily married, moved far away to Western Canada and even Western Australia. Distance did not permit everyone to be present and in a few instances church membership is no longer a bond and unfortunately without that bond being a reality they could not be "reached" but they did leave a shadow.

As we helped each other to remember, tears of laughter abounded. Obvious appreciation for blessings received make class reunions an occasion in which that bond between home, school, church, the communion of saints can be experienced.

Class reunions can be an experience one would wish every student body in our Reformed schools to participate in.

In reflecting it is the words of Micah 6:6-8 that are perhaps most suitable, "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and walk humbly with your God?"

A. WITTEN



Some Interesting Statistics

From a review of education in Ontario entitled "Ontario study of the Relevance of Education and the Issue of Dropouts" by George Radwanski (Winter '88) the following "telling statistics" are selected.

"One out of every three young people in Ontario drop out of high school before having completed Grade 12 (p. 7)."

"The service sector, which comprises all economic activity other than the primary industries and manufacturing already accounts for 73 percent of employment and 70.2 percent of Gross Domestic Product in Ontario and 80 percent of all new jobs are being created in that sector (p. 17).

"By far the greatest employment growth over the past four decades has been in the more sophisticated services: finance, insurance, real estate, services to business management, health care and education. In all these fields, employability is closely and increasingly tied to education (p. 18).

"In the 35-39 age group, . . . male dropouts earned \$19,116, high school graduates earned \$21,714, and university graduates earned 30,103 (p. 19).

"In general, the new requirements seem to place a premium on 'Liberal arts' education at the secondary and even early post high school level, that is in curricula in which the emphasis is placed on teaching broad skills rather than specialized vocational knowledge: reading, writing, arithmetic, capacity to communicate, both verbal and written, capacity to understand broad rather than specialized environments, capacity to identify problems and define solutions for oneself rather than memorize ready-made solutions to pre-assigned problems (p. 23).

"In a survey of Ontario employers . . . in the spring of 1987, two out of three respondents said they believe Ontario children receive a poor or fair education; only six percent of employers described the quality of education as excellent, while 29 percent considered it good. On a scale of 100, employers in this survey gave graduates a rating of only 54 for reading comprehension, 40 for writing ability, and 53 for verbal skills and general knowledge (p. 28).

"Tests of reading skills administered by Humber college to its freshman classes in the fall of 1984, 1985 and 1986 consistently found that at least 40 percent of students were reading at or below Grade 10 level (p. 28).

Not surprisingly some of the recommendations given in the study are:

1. "That the emphasis of educational philosophy in Ontario be shifted from process to outcomes, and that the objectives of education be defined in terms of the acquisition of specified demonstrable knowledge and skills by all children, through the application of pedagogical techniques appropriate to each child's needs (p. 37).
2. That the essential content of education in Ontario for all students be defined in terms of the acquisition of demonstrable knowledge and/or skills in the following areas: English (reading, writing, speaking and listening); clear thinking and effective learning; mathematics; literature; the sciences and technology; Canadian and World history; Canadian and World geography; citizenship; work in society; French; the arts; and fitness and health (p. 53).
3. "That the Ministry of Education specifically prescribe program content and the necessary knowledge/skills outcomes on a province-wide basis, while delegating to local authorities the selection of pedagogical techniques for teaching that content and bringing about the prescribed outcomes for all students (p. 55).
4. "That it be made an explicit and vigorously pursued goal of education policy in Ontario to have all students, except those precluded by severe mental or physical disability, continue in high school until graduation" (p. 61).

In reflecting on these research document findings it would seem appropriate to reiterate that our small Canadian Reformed schools do well to continue to concentrate (as we are!!) on the basic three R's. Let us be so bold as to state that we should not feel inadequate about not pursuing the often expensive "frills" related to "life skills" and "vocational training."

Concerning (public) school dropouts

Further from the "Radwanski" report which examined the "dropout" problem

in Ontario secondary schools we highlight the following:

"Calculations . . . show 31.2 percent of 22 year olds not having completed high school and therefore presumably having dropped out (p. 70).

"Virtually every study ever done on the dropout issue has found a strong link between family background and the likelihood of dropping out. The lower the income level, occupational status and level of education of his or her parents, the greater is the statistical risk that any given student will not complete high school (p. 71).

"The Porter study cited . . . 79 percent of the low-ability but high social-economic status students in the sample remained in school, compared to 71 percent of the high-ability but low socio-economic status students. Even more dramatic was the comparison between similarly high-ability students in the high and low socio-economic status group: 93 percent of the former stayed in school until the fourth year, compared to only 71 percent of the latter (p. 73).

"In the Goldfarb survey . . . fully 40 percent of dropouts lived in single-parent households . . . (p. 74).

"While only 12 percent of students in the highest or Advanced stream leave school before graduation, the dropout rate is 62 percent among students taking mainly General level courses and 79 percent among students at the Basic level (p. 76).

"While a limited amount of part-time work may be helpful in providing an outlet for students' impatience to get into the workplace and earn money, various studies indicate that a heavy load of part-time work during the school year increases the likelihood of dropping out. The dividing line seems to be somewhere around 15 hours a week. The more hours in excess of 15 a student works the greater the likelihood that he or she will drop out (p. 81).

"71.6 percent of dropouts had Canadian born fathers (p. 81).

"Three in five (58 percent) dropouts say they applied a great deal or some effort to their studies, and 41 percent identify themselves as performing extremely or reasonably well at the elementary or junior high level . . . Many complain that it was difficult

finding teachers willing to help with academic problems and that often problems were explained in only one fashion, limiting opportunities for improvement and understanding (p. 84).

"The dropout is well-accustomed to covering up, to misrepresenting himself. Many feel that they were judged by their appearance rather than their ability and spent years in school acting out other people's prophecies. A significant number felt shamed when they did not grasp an academic concept, and pretended they understood subject areas which increasingly confused them (p. 85).

"Perhaps as a result of . . . low self-esteem a dropout tends to be very grateful for any attention shown to him, and loyal to the person who has bestowed this attention. A caring teacher, therefore, can be a crucial factor in influencing the dropout's view of the value of education (p. 85).

"The Goldfarb research carried out for this study found 45 percent of Ontario dropouts primarily citing

school related reasons, followed by work related ones (29 percent) and personal ones (19 percent) (p. 86).

"There is strikingly clear evidence . . . that a sense of having been rejected or ignored by the education system is a key characteristic of dropouts (p. 89).

"Dropouts often do talk about returning to school, but fewer than half of them actually attempt a return and the harsh reality is that graduation is seldom the result" (p. 100).

A few of the recommendations made in the study which seem noteworthy also for our setting are:

1. "That all high schools be required to provide high quality remediation and tutoring services for students who are experiencing academic difficulties (p. 115).
2. "That all high schools be required to make contact, normally through the monitoring or mentoring teacher, with all students who drop out during the school year or who fail to return in the fall, in order to establish the reasons

for their decision, to make a genuine effort to persuade them to reconsider and, if that fails, to explain the opportunities for return at a later date (p. 119).

A worrisome potential is the suggested increase in government involvement in what are essential family responsibilities. Even though a strong link is statistically shown between family background and lack of educational achievement, it is regrettable that it is deemed necessary to recommend: "That all school boards in Ontario be required to provide universally available early childhood education in public and separate schools for children from the age of 3" (p. 126).

Let us not take the blessings of strong family ties and congregational support for each other for granted but continue to exhort one another "to use . . . gifts readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other member" (L.D. 21) and in so doing help our teenagers to employ their God-given talents whether in or out of school.

A. WITTEN

PRESS RELEASE



Classis Ontario South, March 9, 1988.

1. *Opening:* On behalf of the convening Church at Ancaster, the Rev. R. Aasman called the meeting to order and requested that the brothers sing Psalm 43:3, 4. He then read from Deuteronomy 26:1-19 and led in prayer. The Rev. Aasman noted certain items of interest which had occurred since the last Classis and welcomed all present.

2. *Examination of Credentials:* The delegates of the Church at Ancaster examined the credentials and reported that all the Churches were duly represented. It is noted that the Rev. P. Aasman is present in an advisory capacity.

3. *Constitution of Classis:* Classis was constituted with the following moderamen: Chairman: Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, Vice-Chairman: Rev. K.A. Kok, Clerk: Rev. M.H. Van Luik.

4. *Adoption of the Agenda:* After a few additions, the agenda is adopted.

5. *Question Period Ad Article 44 of C.O.:*

A. All of the Churches are asked if the ministry of the office-bearers is continued and whether the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured. All the Churches answer in the affirmative.

B. The Church at Grand Rapids asks the advice of Classis concerning the minis-

try-at-large project. Classis advises the Church at Grand Rapids that: i. they are to refer to the advice of Classis Ontario South, September 12, 1984; ii. in line with Article 6, C.O., the minister-at-large should be bound to one Church; iii. it is the calling of each Church to gather those estranged from the Reformed faith in the manner each Church deems fit, and; iv. these matters should be put before the supporting Churches in a meeting of the Church at Grand Rapids with these Churches and not at Classis.

Classis sees no further need for advice at this time.

C. Two Churches requested the advice of Classis concerning cases of discipline. Advice was given.

6. Reports:

A. Certificate of Release from Classis Ontario South: The Church at Ancaster submitted a proposed draft of such a certificate. After minor amendment, this is adopted. The Church at Ancaster is charged to finalize this certificate and to deposit sufficient copies in the archives of the Church at London.

B. Concerning the Appeal to the Previous Classis: the Classis adopts the report of the committee concerning this appeal. The Classis does not accede to this appeal and will apprise the brother who submitted the appeal of its decision.

C. Church Visitation: The report of the

Church visit made to the Church at Ancaster is read.

7. Appointments:

A. The next Classis will be convened (D.V.) on June 29, 1988.

B. The convening Church for the next Classis is the Church at Attercliffe.

C. The proposed moderamen are as follows: Chairman: Rev. G. Wieske; Vice-Chairman: Rev. M.H. Van Luik; Clerk: Rev. J. Van Rietschoten.

D. The next Classis is set to meet at the Church at London.

8. *Personal Question Period:* The delegates make use of this period. The Rev. R. Aasman notes that the Fund for Needy Churches is borrowing money to meet its responsibilities. He urged that payments be made promptly.

9. *Censure Ad Article 44, C.O.:* With thanksgiving, the chairman declared that this censure is not needed.

10. *Adoption of the Acts and approval of the Press Release:* The Acts were read and adopted. The Press Release was read and approved.

11. *Closing:* The chairman requested that the delegates sing Hymn 61:1, 5, 6. He then led them in prayer. The Classis was closed.

For the Classis,
K.A. KOK, vice-chairman, e.t.



Hello Busy Beavers,

Let's start with the story Busy Beaver *Jessica Beintema* sent in for you. She called her story:

Jonny Learned Something New

One day when a little kitten named Jonny was sleeping, his mother said, "Jonny, wake up or you won't get any breakfast."

So Jonny sleepily got out of bed and got his bed made and his fur combed. Then he went downstairs. His mother had his cat food all ready. His little baby sister was getting fed by Mom and Dad. Jonny thought his little sister Lucy was getting all the attention, so he said,

"May I be excused?"

His mother said, "Why sure. I don't see why not."

So Jonny went out to the backyard and cried. Then his dad came out to the back and he said,

"Why are you crying, Jonny?"

Jonny said, "Because you don't love me."

"What!" said Father. "I love you more than anything."

"You do?" said Jonny. "But . . . I thought you love Lucy more than you love me."

"No," said Father. "Lucy needs more attention because she's only a baby and she needs all the love she can get, okay Jonny?"

Jonny nodded. "Yes. I understand now."

They both went inside, and they had their breakfast.



From the Mailbox

You're really enjoying spring, I see, *Margaret Dewitt*. You're right. It's a gorgeous time of year. Thank you for the lovely poem, Margaret. Keep writing them! Maybe you'll share another with us sometime?

Hello, *Jane Schulenberg*. I was happy to hear from you again! I see you mean to keep those Busy Beavers really busy! Keep up the good work. Are you enjoying spring, too, Jane? And does your school have a track and field day. Be sure to let us hear!

TRACK AND FIELD DAY!

Does your school have a Track and Field Day?
What is your favourite event?

Are you training already for your Track and Field Day?

Do you know why it's so important to train?

Only one person gets that *first* ribbon. How should everyone else feel?

Write and tell us about *your* Track and Field Day, Busy Beavers.

Here's the address:

Aunt Betty
c/o Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2J 3X5

Quiz Time!

BIBLE QUIZ: "I REMEMBER WHEN . . ."

All of a sudden you think of something! Maybe it was something important or maybe not so important. In the numbers below, Bible people are remembering things. Can you match the happening to the right person?

I REMEMBER WHEN:

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. My father made a garment for me. | (a) Joshua |
| 2. I made a riddle from the lion and bee. | (b) Joash (Jehoash) |
| 3. I lived with my family back in Ur. | (c) David |
| 4. I strolled in the field and first saw <i>her</i> . | (d) Peter |
| 5. I was so thirsty in the wilderness. | (e) Samson |
| 6. The king chose me for his queen, no less. | (f) Elijah |
| 7. Two men stayed calm in a mighty quake. | (g) Isaac |
| 8. The widow made me a little cake. | (h) Abraham |
| 9. I longed for a drink from the Bethlehem well. | (i) Keeper of a prison |
| 10. The wall of the city finally fell. | (j) Esther |
| 11. The lame man, cured, leaped for joy. | (k) Ishmael |
| 12. They crowned me king — I was just a boy. | (l) Joseph |

(See answers)