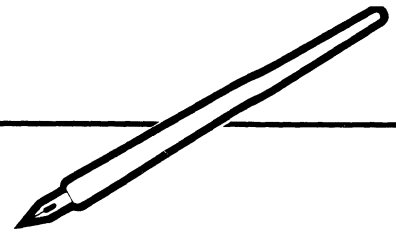




Clarion

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A new season of (school) work

Redeemed daily in our work

The holidays are over. The summer has almost gone. Schools have started again. And so has a new season of congregational work. It is remarkable that the September month begins with Labour Day. Many labour in the darkness of unbelief for themselves, for this passing life. The labours of those who, through faith, are in Christ are done in the light of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: in the service of God the Father, our Creator; in the light of God the Son, our Redeemer, and in the light of God the Holy Spirit, who sanctifies our life and work through the blood of Christ and through His holy power.

It is a marvellous thing to be granted to start a new season of work, after Labour Day, in this faith, in this light of grace in Christ. He reconciled us to God. His blood is the blood of the covenant that cleanses from sin. His Spirit is the Spirit of holiness who directs the life of those who believe to God and His service.

In Ephesians 6:5-8 the apostle Paul exhorts Christian slaves "to be obedient to those who are your earthly masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of heart, as to Christ; not in the way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same again from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free."

Paul proclaims Christ Jesus as the great Redeemer not only for the life which is to come, but also for this life in all its different aspects. Thus Christ is also the Redeemer of our daily work, even if we experience it as slavework. Indeed, when we do not (ac)know(ledge) God, do not reckon with Him, nor serve Him, and when we have no place in His kingdom and covenant, have no bond of faith with Christ through the Holy Spirit, our life is in darkness, and in vain is our daily work, yes, all that we do. It disappears in everlasting death. But when we live through faith in Christ and when so our life is dominated by Him as our King and Priest and Prophet, our life and our labours will bear fruit into everlasting life.

This is a gift of grace. It is a gift promised in God's covenant. But it is a promise which we have to appropriate, make our own property, through faith, which is not our own doing, but the work of the Holy Spirit. Since it is a promise, God wants us to believe also this promise and receive this gift with a believing heart, in great joy of faith. Paul says: whatever your work is. A lawyer in his office, a doctor and a nurse in the hospital, a businessman in his business, a farmer on his farm, a housewife in her house, they may all do their daily work in the light of Christ, in joyous faith, according to Paul's message. This counts also for teachers and students in school.

This knowledge of faith can help us as believers. When the work is hard and difficult; when it is always the same and dulls the mind, when we get tired of it, or when it seems slave work, because our employer, in our eyes, acts as a slave driver, the faith that we may see our work in the light of Christ, that it is as for Him, to please Him, can help us to keep going. And when we receive the added bonus that we can choose our own daily work, and besides it, receive satisfaction in it, and when we prosper in our work, also then it is a blessing to work out of faith, that our daily work is for Him who bought us with His blood. It will prevent us from seeing our job, our work, as a goal in itself or as a means to build up our own treasures here on earth.

Living in this faith in Christ, while doing our daily work, gives the believers also the motivation to do their utmost. It causes them to aim at doing a good job, even under difficult circumstances. Believers want to please their Lord and Saviour with their work. Parents at home and teachers in school give an example of such a life of faith to their children, their students, when they simply show that they do their hard daily work for Christ. Children in the covenant who have such parents and teachers, and who see and hear this gospel, are privileged.

Another school year

Entering a new school year means for us starting another year of Reformed education for the children of the congregation, children of the covenant. There are two aspects which I would like to focus on: the object and the means, or: the students and the fees.

I start with the fees. They are the means through which it is possible to have and maintain our Christian schools. I have seen a few budgets for the coming school year. The final amount of what was expected as expenses was not down, but up, even quite a bit. A large part of the increase is for salaries. In my opinion, that is good. I touched this point a previous time, in connection with the need for teachers. I received some reactions. It showed that some teacher-fathers had to look for a different occupation because the family could not make ends meet with his salary. Prices are rising. It is therefore good that the salaries are raised as well.

There is the other side as well. Also for the members of the school societies life becomes more expensive all the time. They have to provide the income. Government support is not received in all provinces, and is often not much. From many members the school(s) receive close to, or more than, five hundred dollars every month. For many this is not easy. Yet, they realize that hiring teachers for the children of the congregation(s), the covenant, means making it possible for them to do

their work. Therefore, the higher budgets were adopted without much trouble.

To be concrete, at the last meeting of the Guido de Brès High School the budget rose by twelve percent to quite a bit above the million dollar mark. When, nevertheless, no real objections were raised, and the budget was simply accepted, this made me still and thankful. It went through my mind that this was only the budget of one of our schools. If we were to add all the school budgets together, we would come to an enormous amount that must be above the five million.

Is it not amazing that our good and gracious God grants us the means to do this, besides all that is brought together for the church and what is connected with it? We can only say: He has tremendously blessed us in the past and is blessing us tremendously at the present. The words of David, spoken when he and the people had given large amounts for the building of the temple in Jerusalem (I Chronicles 29:10-18), are very applicable for expressing our gratitude (I have added italics a few times; and please read the "I" of David as if it was the "I" of our King Jesus, whose people we may be):

Blessed art Thou, O LORD, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty; for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come from Thee, and Thou rulest over all. In Thy hand are power and might; and in Thy hand it is to make great *and to give strength to all*. And now we thank Thee, our God, and praise Thy glorious name.

But who am I, and *what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly?* For all things come from Thee, and of Thy own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as all our fathers were; our days on the earth are like a shadow, and there is no abiding. O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building Thee a house for Thy holy name *comes from Thy hand and is all Thy own*. I know, my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness; in the uprightness of my heart I have freely offered all these things, and now I have seen Thy people, who are present here, offering freely and joyously to Thee. O LORD, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, our fathers, *keep forever such purposes and thoughts in the hearts of Thy people, and direct their hearts toward Thee*.

How sad a thing it must be, when someone has to say: the above does not apply to me. I did not take any part in it. God did not give this willingness to offer in my heart, because I was not interested and I did not want to be involved. I let my brothers and sisters contribute on their own, while I rather kept for my own pleasures and conveniences the money which God provided. How sad it is, indeed, when this gift of amazed gratitude for the Lord's work in the heart, this work of joyful willingness to offer for His cause, cannot be ours, because we were not willing. How poor are we, when we miss both the willingness to offer, as well as the gratitude for it as God's gracious work in our heart.

May the gratitude of faith to the great Provider of both the willingness in the heart and the means in the hand continue to motivate us. May He grant that we labour on in faith.

The students

The object of the schools is the Reformed school education of the children of the church. I could also say: children of the covenant. For me it is basically the same. Both words, church and covenant, are mentioned in Heid. Cat., Q. & A. 74, "Should infants, too, be baptized? Yes. Infants as well as adults belong to God's covenant and congregation . . ." As a congregation, a church, or also a federation of churches, we form

a body with members who all belong together and have the calling to practise this belonging together in mutual help and care. This is very clear from, e.g., I Corinthians 12. We are (called to be) for each other a hand and foot and ear and eye, and so on. This belonging together as one body has its foundation in Christ, who is the Head. The church is His body.

The same concept of unity and belonging is included in the word covenant. Covenant is the relation which God establishes with His people, and so with all the members of that people personally and individually. The covenant is not a relation which God establishes individualistically, with each believing soul separately. Therefore, covenant includes also the relation between those who belong to the people. In that covenant relation they are to take care of each other and help each other.

Applying this to the young members of the church or the covenant, we can clearly see our common responsibility. Children are, first of all the responsibility of the parents to whom they are entrusted. But, belonging with their parents to the church, to the covenant, they are a responsibility also of the church, or the covenant people. Together we seek to live by the principle that we should help each other to give, as much as we can, a Reformed school education within the communion of the church(es).

He who has the children has the future. Spiritually strong and faithful children, well-trained in the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of His Word as this is confessed by the churches, will mean strong and faithful congregations. The Reformed school has as goal to support and build the church. Such spiritually faithful and knowledgeable children will also grow up to pillars of righteousness in the society in which the congregation(s) live. This is another goal of Reformed school education: teach them to acknowledge the LORD in every aspect or sphere of life, and in that way, build up the society to which they belong as well.

Is this a nice ideal? Do we fail in realizing it? This is a topic apart about which I hope to write later. For now I would like to stress the enormous task which we place on the shoulders of our teachers. It demands constant study to teach the different subjects in a biblical and Reformed manner. Not only must the teacher thoroughly know, and have a grasp of, the subject matter, not only must he be grasped by his subject so that he can teach it with enthusiasm, he must also have insight into what the Word of God teaches with regard to what he is teaching and be full of Spiritual and Reformed enthusiasm to show the riches of the biblical view and the Spiritual application of what is taught for a Christian way of life on that specific point.

It is obvious that our teachers cannot fulfil this task in their own power. They need the constant guidance of God's Spirit and Word, while living and working in a close faith relationship with Christ. They need the constant awareness and motivation that they do their labours for the sake of Christ and His church. They also need the continuous prayer of the parents that God may grant them His help. Praying parents are supportive parents, not negative-critical and condemning onlookers.

What is written here is meant to be a tribute to our hard-working teachers, the not less labouring parents and their helpers in the communion of saints who maintain and support the schools, and above all, it is meant to be a word of gratitude and a prayer to our faithful God. Gratitude for what He has given, prayer for His indispensable further blessing.

A new (school) work season is ahead before us. May God, for Christ's sake, grant us that, as parents and supporters, as teachers and as students, we all work in the faith that it is all for Him, may He grant us insight and wisdom so that we perform our labours in accordance with His will, and may He bless those labours for Him in His grace.

J. GEERTSEMA

The Arminian Controversy and the Synod of Dort²

After the death of Arminius, his cause was taken up by Johannes Uitenbogaard, the court preacher, and by Simon Episcopius, a student of Arminius and later professor of theology at Leiden. In 1610, under Uitenbogaard's leadership, the Arminians met in Gouda and prepared a Remonstrance (hence their name, Remonstrants). They first rejected certain Calvinist positions and then stated their own views in the Five Arminian Articles:

1. election conditioned on foreseen faith;
2. universal atonement (that Christ died for all men and for every man, so that He merited reconciliation and forgiveness of sins for all through the death of the cross; yet so that no one actually enjoys this forgiveness of sins except the believer);
3. the need for regeneration if man is to be saved (here they seemed to be orthodox enough, but, as it later appeared, this was understood in such a way as seriously to underestimate the depravity of human nature);
4. the resistibility of grace ('but with respect to the mode of this grace, it is not irresistible'); and
5. the uncertainty of the perseverance of believers (in respect of this article the Arminians shortly came openly to deny such final perseverance) (deWitt 11; P.Y. deJong, Appendix C, 207 ff.).

These articles were signed by forty-six ministers.

In the following year, the Calvinists responded with a Counter-Remonstrance. In seven articles, the Reformed confessions concerning the doctrines of grace were restated. In 1611, a conference was held at The Hague, the "Collatio Hagien-sis," but no agreement was reached.

The political leaders of the United Provinces could not remain outside of this controversy. The support of the members of the Reformed Churches was necessary to achieve their political aims. The statesman van Oldenbarnevelt, Advocate-General of Holland and Friesland, and Hugo Grotius, a most learned scholar, statesman, jurist and theologian, sided with the Arminians, advocating peace and toler-

ance. They favoured a republican confederacy of states rather than a federal state headed by the monarchy. This latter concept was championed by Maurice of Nassau, Stadtholder and military leader of the Republic.

Maurice remained neutral until 1616. Then at the urgings of his cousin William Louis, Stadtholder of Friesland and of Sir Dudley Carleton, the English ambassador, he sided with the Counter-Remonstrants. He worshipped publicly with them in The Hague in 1617.



Johannes Uitenbogaard

Prince Maurice's support of the Counter-Remonstrants tipped the balance in their favour. However, under the leadership of van Oldenbarnevelt, the States of Holland and West Friesland reacted with "De Scherpe Resolutie" (The Sharp Resolution). It stated the following:

1. No National Synod would be convened.
2. All former resolutions concerning ecclesiastical matters have to be completely maintained and executed.
3. The local magistrates receive the authority to engage special militia (waardgelders).

4. Appeal of objections against actions of the local magistrates is not allowed to any Courts, save the States itself. (Faber, et al. 30)

This resolution, especially the forming of a special militia, was regarded as revolutionary: a threat to the law and order of the land and the start of civil war. Maurice declared that a split in the state was now inevitable.

On November 11, 1617, Maurice and the States-General decided that a National Synod would be convened on November 1, 1618. Letters were dispatched to the provincial deputies. Maurice, with his troops, disbanded and disarmed the special militia in several cities of the recalcitrant provinces. Van Oldenbarnevelt and some of his fellow leaders were imprisoned on the charge of treason against the state. The resistance was broken. Maurice convinced the States of the remaining provinces to allow a National Synod to be held.

The stage was set for the Synod of Dort to convene. It was unique in that it was the only synod of an ecumenical character in the history of the Reformed Churches (Schaff 514). At the urging of James I of England and others, invitations were sent to the foreign Reformed Churches. The States-General sent letters to his Royal Majesty of Great Britain, James I, to the deputies of the Reformed Churches of France, to the Electors of the Palatinate and Brandenburg, to the Count of Hesse, to the four Reformed Republics of Switzerland, to the Dukes of the Wetterau, and to the Republics of Geneva, Bremen, and Emden. In these letters they were asked to send to Synod:

Some of their Theologians who were outstanding in learning, godliness, and wisdom, who with their counsel and judgment might diligently labor to still the differences which had arisen in these Netherlands Churches, along with the Delegates of the Netherlands Churches, and might again bring peace to those Churches (Hoeksema 101).

The foreign delegates were invited to lend

credence and more weight to Synod's decisions.

And since the Remonstrants did not appear to think much of the judgment of the Netherlands Churches, and had always attempted to convince the people that they had no other views than did the Reformed Churches, therefore the States-General also saw fit to invite from all Reformed Churches from neighbouring Lands, Principalities, and Republics certain theologians outstanding in godliness, learning, and wisdom, in order that they should support the delegates of the Netherlands Churches by their judgments and counsel, and that thus these differences, having been investigated and judged as by a common judgment of all Reformed Churches, might be laid to rest more certainly, expeditiously, firmly, and with greater joy (Hoeksema 93 ff.).

November 13, 1618, the National Synod of Dort was convened by the States-General, who underwrote all the costs.⁵ The Synod consisted of 84 members and 18 secular commissioners. Of these, 58 were Dutch delegates from the particular (provincial) synods and the rest foreigners,⁶ who also had the right to vote.

After a prayer service, the foreign delegates were led by their host delegates to the "Kloveniersdoelen" (the Arquebusiers Armoury), where all the meetings were held.⁷ The Moderator (Praeses) was Johannes Bogerman, a Friesian from Leeuwarden. The first official business was the taking of the oath:

I promise before God, in whom I believe, and whom I worship, as being present in this place, and as being the Searcher of all hearts, that during the course of the proceedings of this Synod, which will examine and decide not only the five points and all the differences resulting from them but also any other doctrine, I will use no human writing, but only the word of God, which is an infallible rule of faith. And during all these discussions, I will only aim at the glory of God, the peace of the Church, and especially the preservation of the purity of doctrine. So help me, my Savior, Jesus Christ! I beseech him to assist me by his Holy Spirit! (Klooster 57).

All the members were divided into eighteen separate committees: the representatives from the various provincial synods each formed one, the Walloons another, theology professors another, and each foreign delegation constituted a separate committee. On each question that came before Synod, each committee framed an individual answer, which was reported back to Synod as a whole. The written opinions were handed over to the "moderamen" (officers), who collated them

and prepared a final judgment. This judgment was either regarded as resolved at once or an approbatory vote was taken to that effect. It was not a convenient method but undeniably thorough, and was therefore followed to the end.

The principal item on the agenda was the Arminian controversy. The political commissioners, on behalf of Synod, would invite the best-known and most learned Arminians personally to come to Dort. The summonses were sent, twelve in number. Before travelling to Dort, the Arminian leaders conferred in Rotterdam. They chose officers, intending to present themselves as a kind of countersynod. They would deal with Synod as a party in the controversy, after which the Government, with the advice of the foreign delegates, would give its verdict. Their main line of defense would be to attack the Contra-Remonstrants as blasphemous fanatics, concentrating on the supralapsarian⁸ ideas of Gomarus.

Simon Episcopius was their spokesman, seated opposite Bogerman. On the second day, an incident occurred which was typical of the sessions as long as the Arminians were present. Episcopius made a long oration, learned and eloquent, but, as many thought, impertinent. He cast aspersions on Synod, on the States-General, and on Prince Maurice. When asked to supply a copy, he first refused, claiming his copy was illegible. He then complied, but this rendering omitted all the passages dealing with political authorities.

The battle continued. The Remonstrants persisted in denying Synod's authority to judge over them. They wanted to speak to Synod as one party against another. At most, they would look for a settlement by majority agreement, after which the members would be free to submit or not. Bogerman replied that Synod had been legally convened by the States-General, an argument which should have been convincing to the Remonstrants, who held that the government had the highest authority, also in church matters.

It became a long and tiresome struggle. When asked to put their objections to the Confessions into writing, the Remonstrants refused. When Bogerman asked each one of them if they acknowledged the Remonstrance of 1610 as truth, they all remained silent. They demanded that the doctrine of reprobation be handled first, rather than election, so as to make as odious as possible the teachings of the Counter-Remonstrants. Stalemate.

One can appreciate the plight of the Arminians. As Dewar claims, they were "predestined" to defeat (Dewar 108). They were not about to yield. Their only alternative was to obstruct procedure as much as they could, cast their opponents in a bad light whenever possible, and attempt to put as good a face as possible on their own position.

During the month of fruitless effort to deal with the matters at hand, Bogerman conducted himself with patience and calm restraint, which many found remark-

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able. Everyone realized this could not continue. In closed session, Synod deliberated what action to take: concede to the Arminians' demands or send them away and determine their opinions from their writings? The political commissioners attempted to persuade the Remonstrants to comply. At last it was decided to order them, in the name of the Government, to comply or negotiations would cease.

On January 14, 1619, Bogerman asked Episcopius and his followers for their answer. They replied that they would not submit to Synod. Historians have often faulted the "Praeses" for his conduct on that dramatic day. In exasperation, he declared,

The foreign delegates are now of the opinion that you are unworthy to appear before Synod. You have refused to acknowledge it as your lawful judge and regarded it as an opposing party; you have tried in everything to have your own way; you have despised the decision of Synod and of the political commissioners; you refused to answer questions; you declared the credentials to be invalid. Synod has treated you with gentleness, but you have been lying from beginning to end, as one of the foreign theologians remarked. With this eulogy we will let you go. God will keep his word and he will bless the Synod. In order that we will not be delayed any longer, you will be sent out. Depart: Go! (Faber et al. 35).

The Arminians arose and left, but not before Episcopius answered, "We will with Christ be silent about this. God will judge between us and this Synod" (Faber et al. 35).

The members of Synod, especially the English delegates, wondered whether it would not have been wiser if Synod itself had made a form of dismissal, rather than leave it to the indignant improvisation of Bogerman. The English, in particular, wanted to abide by their royal mandate, received at New-Market in October of the previous year. King James had urged them to show unity among themselves, to keep Scripture and Anglican Doctrine, to avoid controversial doctrine and urge the Dutch Divines to do the same, to act as mediators between the disputants, and to use moderation in everything.

The chairs and tables of the Arminians were put away. Synod now began to examine their opinions from available writings, concentrating on the Five Articles of the Remonstrance of 1610. The reading of the various judgments of the eighteen committees concerning these Five Articles took place from March 7 to 21 and from March 25 to April 16. The Canons were formulated in ninety-three separate articles. These were signed by

all the delegates on April 23, 1619, and solemnly promulgated in the Great Church on May 6 before a large congregation. Three days later, after six months of deliberation, the foreign divines departed, leaving the Dutch members to convene for another twenty-six sessions to deal with further national matters.

The Synod of Dort has been labelled the "persecuting Synod." It is quite true that two hundred Remonstrant ministers were deposed from their office. Of these, a total of eighty were banished, nearly seventy agreed to be silenced and refrain from their ministry, and forty, upon conforming to the decisions of Synod, were restored to their office. It is also true that the political leaders of the Remonstrants



Johannes Bogerman

were arrested. Van Oldenbarnevelt, declared guilty of treason, was beheaded on May 14, 1619. This prompted the grim joke from Diodati, the delegate from Geneva, that "the Canons of Dort had shot off the Advocate's head" (Dewar 115). But, the error of those who advocated and practised what would now be considered persecution was a general error of the age.

One must not forget that these Dutch churches were bound by two confessional statements, the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. The Arminians, while having pledged to abide by these statements of the Reformed faith, at the same time advocated deviation from them. It was they who, in the years previous to Synod, had been intolerant towards those wishing to maintain the doctrine of the church. Ministers, deposed for deviating from the standards, were maintained in office by the magistrates, while those who adhered to them were ejected

by these same magistrates. The Counter-Remonstrants were deprived of the use of their buildings for worship. Dort did not suppress all other religions other than Reformed. Holland tolerated the Pilgrims, the Lutherans, the Anabaptists, and even the Roman Catholics, although they were not to erect public places of worship.

The Arminian ministers were deposed, and one could argue that they were not treated as equals at Synod, but this does not necessarily mean that Synod was intolerant. The question is rather whether the Reformed Churches, as confessional churches, had the right to enforce these confessions, and whether they had the right to deprive of office those who deviated from these confessions in their teachings. The actions of Synod were directed against church members, even office-bearers, who were doing just that while still under oath to uphold the confessions. It is true that a person's duty to scriptural truth transcends his duty to the teaching of the church. If such an occasion should arise, one should act openly, even to the point of renouncing one's obligations and vows.

DeWitt is adamant in his judgment of Arminius and his successors:

Arminius and his successors were oath breakers; and to avoid the consequences of this offence, they in effect withdrew themselves from the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts, while claiming to continue as faithful members of the Church, and placed themselves under the protection of the secular power. (p 10)

He goes on to say that a man is rarely honest enough to withdraw himself, if his views become incompatible with the confessions of the church, but instead attempts, "by means of a strange line of casuistical reasoning," to convert the church to his own understanding of the truth (deWitt 10).

Yes, we should get excited about the Synod of Dort! Because of this Synod, the Reformed Churches received a valuable confession, an authoritative exposition of scriptural Calvinistic theology. In essence, the Arminian Controversy represented an attack upon the sovereignty of God in the matter of man's salvation, and exalted instead the role of man in his own salvation. The Canons of Dort acknowledged, reaffirmed, and glorified God's sovereign grace. If we truly understand what happened so long ago in that old Dutch city of Dort, we will do the same, thankfully acknowledging that it is our faithful Saviour who gathers and defends His church, in spite of all heresies. Then in thankfulness we will also live and abide by those confessions, to the praise of His glory.

S. VANDERGUGTEN

The total cost exceeded 100,000 guilders. Each delegate received a daily allowance (Schaff 513). DeJong in Appendix E and F, p. 213 ff., lists all the members of Synod. The Bremen delegates were excused due to their advanced age. The French delegation was prevented from attending by order of the King.

The desks and benches had been covered over in green cloth; ink wells, sand-pots, paper, and pens were provided for each member. Numerous candlesticks and three great chandeliers provided illumination — it is said that twenty-four pounds of tallow were consumed every evening for the lighting. There were also two large galleries for spectators, capable of accommodating four or five hundred. Throughout the long winter a fire burned continually on the hearth, and in addition each member was furnished with a "stoofje" or foot-warmer, filled not with coals but with glowing lumps of clay so as to avoid the gaseous fumes which would otherwise cause headaches (DeWitt p. 13). There was a difference of opinion between the infra-lapsarian and the supra-lapsarian members of Synod. The point at issue was the question: "Who is the object of election?" The Arminians taught the believer was, making faith the ground for election. All members of Synod rejected this. Infra-lapsarians, many of them foreign theologians, regarded fallen man as the object of God's election or reprobation. The supra-lapsarians taught that God's decree of election came in logical order before His decree to create man, so that uncreated man was the object of God's predestination. Synod upheld the infra-lapsarian view, not saying

"anything more of God's decrees than can be plainly read in Holy Scripture" (Faber et al. 36).

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In Memoriam of sister Geraldine Selles

The LORD our God has taken to Himself our sister Geraldine Selles in the early morning of this day, Friday September 16, 1988.

It is only fitting to thank publicly the Father of lights for what He granted to our community in the life of our sister Selles.

Twenty years ago, when Synod Orangeville 1968 decided to establish an own training for the ministry, the Selles family lived in the manse of Chatham, Ontario. As a young lady she had begun the work of a minister's wife in the rural manse in Waardhuizen, but later moved via Steenwijk to a luxurious house in Voorburg, close to the government seat in The Hague. Then in 1952 her husband and she joined the postwar stream of emigrants to Canada to help them in the struggles and difficulties of adjusting to a strange land, while raising her own family, blessed with the birth of seven children.

When I look back at the last twenty years of her life, I remember vividly how in December 1968 she helped to persuade her husband to accept his appointment as professor of New Testament. Then already she showed me enthusiastically her homework for a course in the French language. It prepared her for her later function as teacher of French in the Hamilton District Christian High School and in the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College. How she loved teaching French!

In the beginning period of our College sister Selles was president of the League of Women's Societies in Ontario. It was in this capacity that she inaugurated the Women's Savings Action. The action was meant to bring together by way of nickels and dimes monies that expressed the love of the sisters in our congregations for the Theological College. This money was to be used first for curtains and kitchen utensils, then for teaching aids, but especially for the purchase of theological books and journals.

As a minister's wife sister Selles knew the significance of a library. She organized a circle of dedicated helpers, wrote newsletters, and at the yearly convocation reported joyfully the results. Since we planned the set-up of a library building — the garage of our first home, in Queen Street — the Women's Savings Action built up some capital. If I am not mistaken, their sum of \$125,000 made the purchase of our new building feasible.

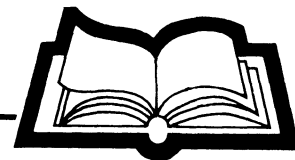
Even a week before her death sister Selles was present — be it in a wheelchair — when at the convocation her message was read. The Women's Savings Action increased its yearly contribution from \$10,000 to \$15,000.

We thank the LORD God for the faithfulness with which she has helped our professor emeritus L. Selles during the many years of their marriage and with which she has cheerfully employed her gifts for the well-being of our College community.

May the Father of lights comfort our brother, his children, and grandchildren. We look forward to the day that death will be abolished and completely swallowed up into the victory of our Lord Jesus Christ, I Corinthians 15.

J. FABER





“Therefore to this day the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh, because He touched the hollow of Jacob’s thigh on the sinew of the hip.”

Genesis 32:32

The Touched Thigh

At the close of the account of Jacob’s wrestling match with the Angel who appeared in the form of a man the writer notes that a custom developed in Israel because of this event, a custom which continues among the Jews to this day. So significant was the meeting with the divine messenger that it is remembered in one of the most basic of aspects of Israel’s life. An especially desired portion of meat is deliberately not eaten as an act of remembrance. This was a place touched by the LORD Himself!

The New Testament does not mention this custom at all. In fact, it is not mentioned anywhere else in the Bible. Jesus pronounced all foods clean, Mark 7:19. And Peter’s vision in Acts 10 was also an indication that in the New Testament the distinction between clean and unclean foods had fallen away. But does this event still have its significance in the new dispensation? And why was this such a remembered event?

The custom becomes clearer to us when we recall that in Israel the thigh was the symbol of strength and power. The sword was normally girded on the thigh. The thigh was especially the symbol of procreative power. So Abraham tells his servant to put his hand under his thigh when he swears an oath to properly perform his master’s orders, Genesis 24:9. The same word is also used as an euphemism for a woman’s ability to conceive and bear children in Numbers 5:21,22.

Jacob was undoubtedly aware of this as he was touched by the angel. For in the conflict with the Angel of the LORD — a conflict of weeping and tears, cf. Hosea 12:4 — he came to realize that he would not be an immediate inheritor of all the promises. He would not gain equal status with Esau as a powerful and respected warrior in the region. He would not emerge as a triumphant victor over his brother. He would receive the victory, but only in weakness. The promise would only be partially fulfilled in his own lifetime. The thrust of the fulfillment belonged to the future, and to the generations following him.

As the sun rose upon him, Jacob walked into a new dawn and a new day. He was a changed man! He knew he had received the blessing and could count on the victory in his family. But he also learned that his victory could only come by God’s power, and without his own strength. That is what the touch of his thigh by God told him. The victory would not come through his own strength, and also not through his procreative power. The victory in the line

of his descendants would come from one who would come forth from him, but who in actual fact did not belong to his descendants. The one born out of him would be born by a *divine power*, a breaking into the line of the generations by a special divine intrusion. And as it was here, so it would only be a divine touch — a touch of the womb.

Indeed, this is the way God manifests His victory in Israel, and this is the way Israel also receives a share in His victory. God Himself brings the Saviour into the world. And — as Jacob learned in his wrestling match with the Angel — Israel could only share the inheritance in this victory by faith! For Jacob had to learn to rely not on his own strength, but on the strength of the one who calls into existence the things that do not exist, and brings to nothing the things that are.

So even though we observe no special custom, the touch of Jacob’s thigh has lasting significance for the church. Indeed, in Christ, it all carries over into the New Testament age. Christ won His triumph in weakness. Through humiliation, suffering and death He attained the victory! And so He continues with His apostles. To Paul He says: “My grace is sufficient for you; my power is made perfect in weakness,” II Corinthians 12:9.

We are taught here that with all the rich treasures we may receive in Christ by faith, we are still a limping people. In other words, we can never presume to do anything in our own strength or power. We can never insist that our way is the best way to establish and ensure God’s reign in this world. He establishes it in His time and His way, through His power alone — with ourselves as His instruments. And like Jacob, we must continually have our hearts and eyes set on the promise and its fulfillment. We must fight for the promise as he did! Yet we know that we, too, cannot expect immediate fulfillment or great gains. We only make a small beginning in this life — limping as we go!

And yet the LORD goes forward manifesting His glorious power in the world. He is pleased to manifest that power in the weakness of His church. He is pleased to show His heavenly treasures in earthen vessels — if only to accentuate that the transcendent power belongs to Him and not to us. Therefore, with every weakness we may go forward in confidence. In Christ we may share the victory. Blessed are those who have on their side the Mighty One of Jacob!

J. DE JONG

John Calvin: a man of compassion²

Care for the poor in Geneva

This teaching of generosity to the poor was not just an intellectual or theological exercise for Calvin. He wanted to have these principles worked out in the society of Geneva when he was pastor there. The *Ecclesiastical Ordinances* which he drafted in 1541 were adopted by the city council of Geneva. These ordinances had detailed directions defining the role of the church diaconate and how it was to be funded. It is in this document that John Calvin's understanding of God's mercy to the poor comes alive.

He points to the ancient church as the role model for distributing monies to the poor (Theol. Treatises 64). He also instructs the deacons to run the hospitals (some for the poor and indigent) and also the *plague* hospital (177). W. Fred Graham cites evidence that the diaconate did not always run smoothly. However, these concerns would be presented to the town council and dealt with, with dispatch (103). (The instance related is brought to the council by "M[onsieur] Calvin, minister.")

Medical care for the needy was established in Geneva when the "ecclesiastical ordinances" were passed in 1541. Those who ran the hospitals were to be paid out of the city coffers. By 1569, "Ordinances Concerning the Estate of Medicine, Pharmacy, and Surgery" were passed.

Besides the doctors appointed for the large hospital and for the poor refugees, each doctor is required to visit the poor sick in the quarter in which he lives, being required by charity. (Graham 104)

In his development of care for the poor, Calvin tried to apply his Scriptural insights and his compassionate heart to a difficult situation. Graham estimates that in the twenty years from 1542 to 1561 the city of Geneva had an increase in population of 100%. This was due to the flood of refugees that were pouring out of France (105). Calvin believed that all should be able to work and so began to create employment and industries for the refugees. This compassion was in marked contrast to events in Paris. Graham reports that

in France it was not "War on Poverty" but "War on the Poor." In Paris the poor were chained together and driven as if slaves. Being a beggar was reason enough to be whipped (98). It was because of Calvin's understanding of the ethics of property that in Geneva the situation was much different.

In his essay, "John Calvin's Concern for the Poor," M.H. Woudstra comments on Calvin's 1554 sermon on Job 31:16-23. As he observes, Calvin teaches that "we may give to the poor but if the heart is not touched with compassion it will be of no avail. We should have a 'humane heart' " (9). It is our giving from a "free heart" that God accepts as a sacrifice of sweet savour (9). However, Woudstra does note Calvin's instruction "[that t]he Holy Spirit does not wish to take away discretion from almsgiving so that men would have no regard for how their goods were used" (9-10). In his teaching on almsgiving Calvin tries to find a balance between generosity and responsible use of God's good gifts. The almsgiver may examine the situation to see if those benefiting from his generosity are in need or simply impostors attempting to gather all to themselves. This examination may not be a cover for niggardliness, however. Calvin also teaches that the giver of alms may expect unthankfulness, yet the Lord will recognize the gift (10).

Calvin's teaching of generosity tempered with responsibility led to the development of Geneva's sumptuary laws.

God's good gifts and sumptuary laws

As was pointed out above, Calvin believed that the Christian could enjoy God's good gifts. This led to a charge that his was a religion of total self-service. These charges can be shown to be absolutely untrue by reading 3.10.4 of ICR. John Calvin maintained the right (privilege?) of private property, (2.8.45 408-409) but denied the right of its abuse. He taught that one ought

to indulge oneself as little as possible; but, on the contrary, with unflagging effort of mind to insist upon cutting off all show of superfluous wealth, not to

mention licentiousness, and diligently to guard against turning helps into hindrances. (3.10.4 723)

It is in light of such comments that sumptuary laws in Geneva were passed. This type of law was being passed throughout Europe to control the spending of money and also to keep each person within the confines of his own class. In Geneva, however, these laws were part of the battle against poverty. In the preamble to the 1558 *Ordonnance somptuaire* the council claims that the law was to stop

such superfluities which engender many evils and nourish gluttonous pride, then bring poverty, high cost of living and are the cause of the destruction of many; moreover the principle is that God is greatly offended. (Graham 110)

Graham notes that the sumptuary laws were enforced with impartiality and that several leaders of the council and consistories were fined and punished. Upon reflection Graham claims that the attempt of Calvin and the other pastors was futile, for many flouted the laws and continued to live the life they had led before. One consideration that Graham does not include in his assessment of the reasons for the sumptuary laws is the level of social service the diaconate was giving to the poor. If the city coffers were to supply the poor with their needs, perhaps some laws concerning eating, drinking, and gambling had some merit. The laws may not have changed the morality of the citizens but they did show a clear consistency with the thought and writings of Calvin.

Usury

Calvin also had insights into the workings of economics. It is his understanding of "usury" that interests us here. Calvin was part of a society that had forbidden the lending of money at interest for 750 years (since the council of Nicaea in 775). During that period many laws were passed against usury but as many ways around the law were found. It is in this context that Calvin brings new insight into society. Taking interest on loans was officially



banned by canon law, but in practice was accepted by the community. In Geneva prior to the Reformation, interest rates were set at 5% per 3 months (Bieler 55).

By 1544 Calvin had "formulated a doctrine about lending money at interest" (55). According to Bieler, Calvin had been set free from the traditional views held by the medieval theologians. Calvin was no longer bound to the traditional views of the past and so was free to develop his own biblical ethics concerning the lending of money (56).

Turning to Scripture, Calvin found many instances in which the lending at interest was forbidden. These would have been the same passages to which canon law appealed; yet Calvin's interpretation was new, even revolutionary. Calvin allowed for the lending of money at interest. By applying new hermeneutical insights Calvin learned that the banning of usury was in relation to lending to the poor. God, according to Calvin, does not want His people to be tightfisted to the poor. In his commentary on the law Calvin interprets the ban on interest in Exodus 22:35 to be a command of charity to the poor and not a total ban on taking interest (Comm. Last Four Books of Moses, vol. 3, 126). In his commentary on Psalm 15:5 Calvin asks the question "Whether all kinds of usury are to be put into this denunciation, and regarded as alike unlawful" (Comm. on Psalms, 212). Again, Calvin points to the role of the rich and the necessity of kindness to the poor but goes on to say that a total ban on interest is not what the psalmist is advocating. If there is a total ban, the man in need of money, who will be sinning by borrowing money, will be "rendered bolder by de-

spair, and may rush headlong into all kinds of usury . . ." (212).

However, Calvin cannot cast off the perception of the moneylender as a terrible man. He agrees with Cato that a moneylender is not much better than a murderer, for they are both "bloodsuckers." It is because those who lend money tend to turn to evil and lose all compassion for their brothers that God forbids usury (213). Calvin realizes that the lending for investment is different from lending to the poor. Therefore, he allows moneylending on a limited scale for the sake of developing business capital (Bieler 56).

Throughout his teaching on usury Calvin is painfully aware of the sinfulness of man. At every turn of phrase he points out the terrible dangers of lending money. Moneylenders turn into greedy and heartless men who will lend only to the rich, for they know they will receive a return on their investment. When lending to the poor, the moneylender plunders and devours them (Comm. on Psalms 213).

Calvin's teaching on usury is one of temperance and kindness. It is a teaching that dealt with the growing industrialization of the European city and the need for capital but still kept the biblical teaching on usury in sight. This teaching was one of compassion for the poor and steeped in a love for the neighbour.

Conclusion

If we examine John Calvin's own writings, he comes to life in a way that most commentators have ignored. Even among followers of John Calvin there is a misinformed view of the man and his life. For those who want to know and understand the theology of John Calvin

must get to know the heart and soul of this compassionate man. Calvin's love for humanity and his compassion for the downtrodden is a trait seldom spoken of today. We are fed a never ending stream of references to "stern old John Calvin" (Scotchmer 318), even though he was a man who said of himself, "You know the tenderness or rather the softness of my soul . . ." (Stauffer 45). It is this tenderness which permeates the whole of Calvin's theology and ethics and which is evident in all his writings, whether personal, theological, or ecclesiastical.

J. VAN POPTA

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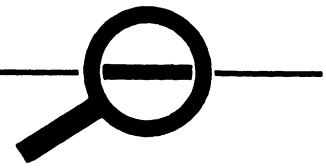
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Toward a Reformed league in the CRC?

The readers of *Clarion* are aware that there is a paper published by concerned Christian Reformed Church (CRC) members, *Christian Renewal*. The August 22, 1988 issue contained, as an insert, the third issue of again a new publication from and for those concerned members, *grass-roots*. This new publication gave some interesting information. The heading of the first article reads: "CRC 'concerned' convene Summit Meeting." The article says:

On Monday evening, July 25, 1988, representatives of a number of organizations, institutions and publications committed to the defense, preservation and promotion of the orthodox Reformed faith and concerned about the direction of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) met together in Sarnia, Ontario for their first "Summit Meeting."

The Summit Meeting was convened by organizers of the proposed council-based "Christian Reformed Alliance" (CRA).

For some months now, a number of CRC councils of Classis Hamilton (Ontario, Canada) have been discussing the possibility of forming a loose coalition of like-minded churches/councils who are concerned about the *direction* of the CRC. Identifying the "disease" as the "new hermeneutic," councils discussing the potential formation of the CRA are particularly concerned about two *current* "symptoms" — women in office and evolution/creation.

Pointing to the decision of the 1987 CRC Synod to appoint a new study committee to reexamine the "Headship Principle" (the adoption of which by the 1984 CRC Synod forbids the ordination of women to the offices of minister and elder and severely restricts the role and function of women deacons), the continued agitation by a small but vocal and well organized minority (led and supported by professors at Calvin Seminary) for the ordination of women and the refusal of the 1988 CRC Synod to take decisive action regarding the views of several professors of Calvin

College relative to the matter of evolution and creation led to consideration of the formation of the CRA — whose purpose is to provide "... advice, comfort and strength ..." for those churches and councils "... who are opposed to the current trend ..." Emphasizing that it is committed to staying and working within the walls of the denomination and serving her best interests, the CRA proposes "... to form an unofficial, informal cohesion or network of churches that will work together in informing each other of what they are doing and will also seek for effective avenues to counter the present unwholesome trend in the Christian Reformed Church."

Hereafter follow the names of four ministers in Hamilton, Ontario, and vicinity, who are involved. We are also informed that "The Committee of Concerned Members in the Christian Reformed Church" was represented (mostly from Michigan), and that there were representatives from the "Consistorial Conference." The article goes on to say:

The importance of the meeting was significantly enhanced by the "unofficial" representation of a number of other organizations. It was noted that several of those present at the meeting serve on the Boards of Mid America Reformed Seminary, the "Reformed Fellowship" (publishers of *Outlook*) and *Christian Renewal*.

The purpose of the meeting was to become familiar with the history, program and structure of each organization, determine if there was any duplication in effort and consider the possibility of joint or complimentary action.

It was the unanimous and enthusiastic conclusion of those present that the cause of the orthodox Reformed faith in the Christian Reformed Church would be best served by united action — and delegates pledged themselves to further consultations.

What is the purpose of this "united action" with which "the cause of the orthodox Reformed faith in the Christian Reformed Church would best be served"? It is to

form a "council-based 'Christian Reformed Alliance'." "Council-based" means: it is a matter of consistories (elders and deacons together) and, probably in this way, congregations which follow their office-bearers. In other words, we have here an effort to form a league or alliance of orthodox Reformed councils and congregations within the CRC. It is like the "Reformed Alliance" ("Gereformeerde Bond") in the liberal Dutch Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk in Nederland).

I can understand these concerned members. They notice that the "new hermeneutics" disease, the modern, existential approach in the interpretation of the Scriptures, is leading the CRC in a liberal man-guided (man instead of Scripture), man-centered, direction. They lament this development because they love their church. They do not want to leave their "sick mother," as a liberalizing church is often called. They try to cure her from within by their medication of united, concerned, action. The capsule through which this medication is to be administered is the Reformed Alliance within the CRC, following the example of the Reformed Alliance in the liberal Dutch Reformed Church.

However, is this the correct way? Let me first point to a little more Dutch church history. Many concerned members in the Dutch Reformed Church, in particular in the province of Friesland, did not join the Secession in and after 1834. They considered such a separation the wrong action and accused those who seceded of unfaithfulness. The objections and accusations were published in a Frisian Church Monthly. In 1856, three ministers of the Secession, the Revs. K.J. Pieters, D.J. van der Werp, and J.R. Kreulen, all in Friesland, responded and wrote an *Apolo-gy* (Defence) in which they dealt with the question: "Is the Secession in the Netherlands, from the Dutch Reformed Church organization, as this presently exists since 1816, from God or from men? This question [is here] seriously and impartially investigated and answered according to the Word of God and the doctrine of the

Reformed Church expressed in its Standards.”

Chapter IV of the book deals with the question “Whether it is possible that the true confessors of the Reformed Church can live in church fellowship with those who openly, in doctrine and life, deny the doctrine of this church as this is contained in its Confessional Standards.” The last chapter provides a specific refutation of the accusations against those who seceded. It is not my intention to give here the arguments on both sides. I only intend to point at this parallel in the Dutch church history.

In 1866, the Rev. Helenius de Cock, son of Hendrick de Cock, wrote a booklet with the same purpose of defending the Secession. He had waited “patiently,” but “in vain” for a revised, second edition of the “Apology.” He wrote in the preface, “The attacks which our church had to suffer these last months from several sides made me execute this decision even sooner than I first had in mind.” The heading of chapter IV reads, “Is a secession from the Dutch Reformed Church necessary, or is staying our duty?” The next chapter deals with the question, “Can the Secession, as it exists in our country since 1834, be justified?”

Twenty years later, in 1886, under the leadership of Dr. A. Kuyper and others, a second secession took place in the Doleantie. In particular many Reformed Frisians followed him. Also at this time such a separation was seen as obedience to the Word of God and the confession of the church, as this had been pointed out, among other things, in the two publications, mentioned above.

Now the concerned CRC members can reason: look at the church that came from the Secession and the Doleantie: the synodical (once) Reformed Church in the Netherlands. What do you see? An apostate church! Separating appears to have no lasting result. Apostasy is the final outcome, anyway. Therefore, we can conclude that God does not bless seceding.

The concerned can further point to the Reformed Alliance (Gereformeerde Bond) within the Dutch Reformed Church (Hervormde Kerk) as an alliance of local churches which still struggle to adhere locally to the Reformed faith. The reasoning can now be: the fact that such congregations still exist within the liberal Dutch Reformed Church and that they did not succumb to liberalism shows that God has given His blessing to them. In other words, God’s blessing is not with those who secede from a liberal church, but with those who stay in it.

This reasoning is not my imagination. It came from the mouth of one of the concerned CRC members. It needs some critical comment. Should the concerned CRC

members go this route? Is this reasoning correct?

In the first place, looking at the synodical (once Reformed) Church in its present apostate condition and drawing the conclusion from it that God’s blessing does not rest on seceding, falls short in many ways, to say the least. This reasoning does not take in consideration that the Lord has greatly blessed both Secession and Doleantie, not only in the Netherlands, but also abroad. The CRC itself is an offspring. There are also the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk in the Netherlands (in Canada: the Free Reformed Church) and the liberated Reformed Churches (in Canada: the Canadian Reformed Churches). These two church federations, through the grace of God, have so far maintained a faithful adherence to God’s Word and to the Three Forms of Unity, which is a fruit of Secession and Doleantie. (This is reason enough to strive for further contact to come to full unity.)

Besides, when one looks at the synodical churches, he should also consider that there was another secession in the Netherlands, the Liberation in 1944. In the early forties, the synodical churches adopted an unscriptural doctrine and bound all the members to it, casting out many truly Reformed members who could not accept such a binding above the Scriptures to a wrong doctrine. This act of the synodical churches was disobedience. Those who liberated themselves from the synodical decisions went the way of obedience. Those who stayed in the synodical

church went along with disobedience and made the wrong church choice. The present apostate condition in the synodical churches is not the result of Secession and Doleantie, but of not adhering to its principles.

Further, if these concerned CRC members seek to come to a united action which follows the example of the Reformed Alliance in the Dutch Reformed Church on the basis of the reasoning: when we see adherence to the Reformed confessions within a liberal church, we can conclude to the presence of God’s blessing, and therefore such a blessing shows us the way we have to go, we basically have a form of situation ethics. The situation becomes the norm. What is seen as an act of God in history becomes the guide for action, not the revealed will of God, written in the Scriptures and summarized in the confessions of the church. That is why such reasoning falls so seriously short.

Other questions should be asked and answered: If one wants to speak of God’s gracious blessing in these congregations, was that because they stayed in a liberal community, or was that in spite of their staying there? Further, what harm has it done to the congregations of the Reformed Alliance that they stayed in the liberal Dutch Reformed Church? How many children and families were influenced by the liberalism of the whole, in general? Does God’s Word teach us to unite in one church, that is, in the communion of saints, both truth and lie, orthodoxy and liberalism?

Must we not conclude that North-American children of the Secessions in 1834 and 1886, as well as in 1857 (the start of the CRC through secession from the Reformed Church in America) take over the reasoning of the opponents of their fathers and, herewith, deny their own history? Is such reasoning not a denying of what the fathers saw and defended as an act of obedience of faith, which is obedience to the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures?

Is it not biblical to seek true unity in confessional faithfulness, rather than a fellowship in which Reformed and un-Reformed stay together with all the consequences for the next generation(s)? History can teach us, but God’s Word and the Confession of the Church should remain the norm.

This is not written for the sake of criticizing others. I sympathize with these concerned brothers in the CRC, and seek to give them a helping hand with my remarks. May the Lord bless them with wisdom and insight so that they see what pleases Him, because it is in accordance with His Word.

J. GEERTSEMA



CALLED to the church at Grand Valley, ON and to the church at Orangeville, ON

REV. W. DEN HOLLANDER
of Winnipeg, MB

* * *

ACCEPTED to the church at Houston, BC

CANDIDATE W.B. SLOMP
of Hamilton, ON

* * *

DECLINED to the church at Bedfordale, Western Australia

REV. P.K.A. DE BOER
of Carman, MB



Classis Ontario North, June 17, 1988 at Burlington-West

1. *Opening:* On behalf of the convening church at Ottawa, Rev. G. van Popta requests the delegates to sing from Psalm 25:1,2, reads Matthew 5:1-12 and leads in prayer.

Rev. van Popta welcomes the delegates, especially the deputies of Regional Synod East, Rev. R. Aasman and Rev. J. Van Rietschoten.

2. *Credentials:* The credentials are examined by the delegates from the church at Orangeville. The credentials are found to be in good order. All churches are lawfully represented by *primi* delegates.

The churches of Elora, Grand Valley, Guelph and Lower Sackville have one instruction each. The church at Orangeville has three instructions.

3. *Constitution of Classis:* The classis is constituted.

4. *Appointment of officers:* The officers suggested by the previous classis are appointed: chairman, G. Nederveen; clerk, J. Mulder; vice-chairman, R. Gleason.

Rev. Nederveen reminds the meeting of the following *memorabilia*: Rev. Cl. Stam has declined calls to the churches of Hamilton, ON and Hoogeveen, the Netherlands. Rev. C. Olij was called home to be with the Lord in Dec. 1987. Rev. D. DeJong was recently hospitalized but seems to be recovering nicely. The church at Lower Sackville's call to Rev. E. Kampen was declined. Rev. J. De Jong declined his call to the church at Neerlandia, AB.

5. *Adoption of Agenda:* The agenda is adopted.

Prior to working through the various points of the agenda, the meeting goes into Closed, Restricted Session (Acts, General Synod, 1983, Art. 45.4).

The release of Rev. M. Werkman from his office of minister of the Word is approved by the meeting with the concurring advice of the Deputies of Regional Synod East.

6. *Reports:*

a. A report from the treasurer, br. H. DenBroeder, is read and received. The bank balance per Jan. 1, 1988 was \$4,139.80. The classical contribution is \$4.50 per communicant member.

Since Classis Ontario North is now meeting in Burlington-West instead of Toronto, br. DenBroeder tenders his resignation. The meeting honours this resignation and appoints br. J.J. Poort from the church at Burlington-West, per Sept. 1, 1988.

b. From the church at Brampton a report dealing with the inspection of the Ar-

chives is read and received. The Archives will now be kept in Burlington-West and the church at Burlington-South is appointed as the church to inspect the Archives.

c. From the church at Toronto for the auditing of the books of the treasurer is read and received.

d. A report of a church visitation held at the church at Burlington-East is read and received.

e. A report of a church visitation held at the church at Toronto is read and received.

f. A report of a church visitation held at the church at Elora is read and received.

g. A report of a church visitation held at the church at Burlington-South is read and received.

h. A report of a church visitation held at the church at Orangeville is read and received.

i. A report of a church visitation held at the church at Guelph is read and received.

7. *Question Period according to Art. 44 Church Order:* The meeting goes into closed session to deal with the request of a church for advice. An advice is given and the meeting is no longer in closed session.

Another church asks advice in a matter. After some discussion an advice is given.

8. *Proposals or Instructions of the churches:*

a. A proposal by the Committee appointed by Regional Synod East (Oct. 15, 16, 22, 1987) is discussed. The following proposal is made and seconded: Classis Ontario North advises Regional Synod not to proceed with dividing into three classical districts since it is considered premature. This proposal is adopted.

b. A proposal by the church at Ottawa dealing with the same matter mentioned in "a" above need not be dealt with since it was nullified by the proposal which was adopted.

c. (1) The churches at Elora and Orangeville request pulpit supply one Sunday per month. The following arrangement is decided upon:

Elora

July 31 - P. Feenstra; Aug. 21 - G. van Popta; Sept. 18 - D. DeJong; Oct. 16 - J. Mulder; Nov. 21 - R. Gleason

Orangeville

July 24 - J. De Jong; Aug. 28 - R. Gleason; Sept. 25 - Cl. Stam; Oct. 23 - P. Feenstra; Nov. 27 - G. Nederveen

(2) The church at Grand Valley requests, in light of the release of Rev. M. Werkman, that Rev. P. Feenstra be appointed as counsellor (Art. 45 C.O.). The meeting grants its request.

(3) The church at Guelph advises the meeting that Regional Synod East will be convened, D.V., on Wed., Oct. 19, 1988 in Fergus. The meeting takes note of this advice.

(4) The church at Lower Sackville requests that Rev. J. Mulder be appointed as temporary counsellor during Rev. D. DeJong's holidays. Classis concurs.

(5) The church at Orangeville requests that Rev. Cl. Stam be appointed as its counsellor. The meeting grants this request.

9. *Correspondence received:*

a. A letter from the church at Orangeville requesting financial support for Mrs. C. Olij is read and discussed. Classis unanimously approves the stipulations in the letter. Effective per Jan. 1, 1988 the assistance from Classis will be \$3.67 per communicant member and from the church at Orangeville \$47.08 per communicant member.

b. A letter from the church at Guelph, re appointment of Church Visitors (Art. 46 C.O.), states that contrary to the C.O., Classis Ontario North (Sept. 18, 1987) appointed all eight ministers in the classical resort to complete the work of Church Visitors. After some discussion the following motion is made, seconded and carried: Classis takes the letter from the church at Guelph for information and requests Guelph to resubmit the letter at the Sept. '88 Classis at which appointments of Church Visitors are made.

c. A letter from br. E.K. from Burlington-West is read. Classis declares this letter inadmissible on the following grounds: (1) it is not evident that the matter addressed in this letter could not be finished in a minor assembly (Art. 30 C.O.) and (2) the letter is not a clear appeal according to Art. 31 C.O.

10. *Appointments:*

a. Convening church - Toronto; place - Burlington-West; date - Sept. 16, 1988.

b. Suggested officers: chairman, Cl. Stam; clerk, G. Nederveen; vice-chairman, J. Mulder.

c. To examine in Church History - G. van Popta.

11. *Question Period:* No one makes use of the question period.

12. *Censure according to Art. 44 C.O.:* Censure does not need to be exercised.

13. *Adoption of Acts and Press Release:* The Acts and Press Release are read and adopted.

14. *Closing:* Rev. Nederveen thanks the delegates to Classis for their participation, requests them to sing Psalm 25:5,6 and wishes them a safe and an uneventful arrival at their point of destination.

R. GLEASON

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Hello Busy Beavers,

Fall is here!
And one Busy Beaver had
some GOOD IDEAS on:

FUN things to do in FALL!

1. Rake a pile of leaves and lie down beside it head down and ask someone to cover you.
2. Rake some paths clear. Then, using the leaves as walls, play tag or have races on the clear paths.
3. Rake a pile of leaves as big as you can. Each person take a side of the pile, then wiggle through like worms until you meet. Talk to each other. See how dark it is. Then wiggle back out again!
4. On a windy day pick a tree with lots of leaves. Stand underneath it and when the wind blows try catching the leaves. Count every leaf as a dollar. See how much money you can make!
5. Rake a big pile of leaves. Taking runs, jump into it. But make sure there are no sticks or sharp objects in it.
6. Use leaves as walls, making trails, build the pattern of a house (same idea as #2). You can make as many rooms as you like!
7. Make up your own games, and have fun!

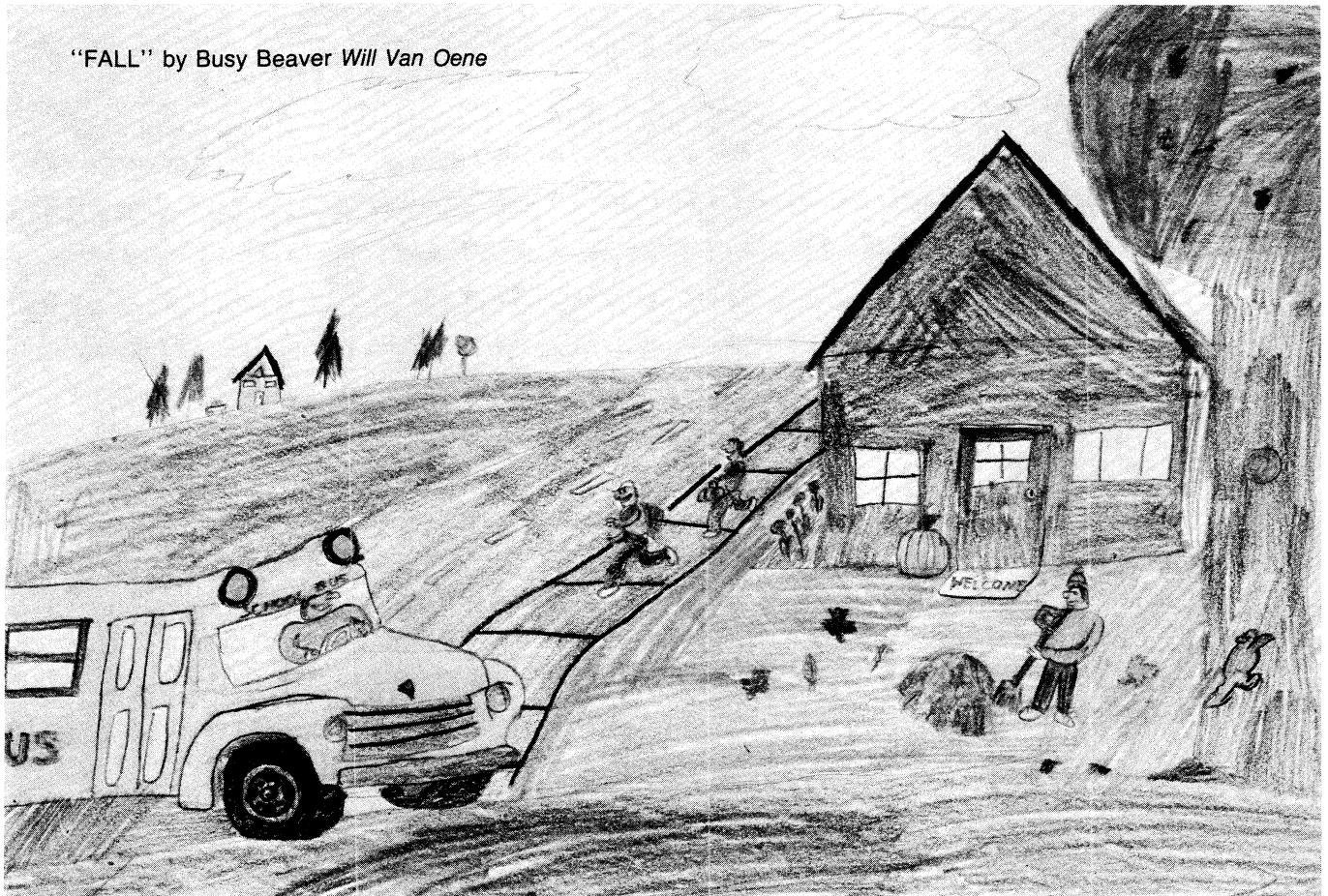
To all the Busy Beavers celebrating an October birthday we wish an especially happy birthday and many, many happy returns of the day! May our heavenly Father bless and keep you all in the year ahead.

Here's hoping you have a super day with your family and friends!

October

Agnes Timmerman	1	Laura Aasman	21
Robert Van Middelkoop	1	Cheryl Vande Burgt	21
Karissa Veldman	5	Marilyn Vande Velde	22
Vanessa De Jong	6	Sharon Devries	26
Kim Vis	7	Bryan Eelhart	28
Erin Siebenga	17	Henry Moesker	29
Yvonne Van Egmond	17	Tonya Beintema	30
Anne Van Laar	18	Denise Elliott	31
Will Van Oene	20		

"FALL" by Busy Beaver Will Van Oene





From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Angela Dykstra*. I see you're a real Busy Beaver already, sending us a puzzle! Keep up the good work, I hope you enjoyed amping with your grandparents!

I'm sure sorry to hear about your dog, *Sheila Wierenga*. ut you had good news, too. Will you write and tell us about our horse? Maybe you can draw a picture! Bye for now, Sheila.

Sounds to me as if you spent quite a bit of time swimming, *hanna Bartels*. You must be getting to be a good swimmer! Thank you for the picture and the letter, Shanna. Write again soon.

Congratulations with your new cousin, *Laura Aasman*! He is one lucky baby to have big cousins like you and your sister. Are you happy to be in school with your friends, Laura?

Thank you for the puzzle, *Edie Alkema*. Good idea to keep those Busy Beavers busy! You could look in last time's *Little Magazine* and this one, too, Edie, for a pen pal. Lots of success! Maybe you could write more than one!

Yes, I do like your picture *Daniel DeGelder*. Keep up the good work! I see you had an exciting summer, too. And now it's time for fall fun. Have you tried some of the FALL FUN GAMES yet, Daniel?

I'm sure proud of your part to make your grandparents' anniversary such a memorable day, *Alida Knol*. Did you see the request for pen pals in last time's *Clarion*? And today's *Little Magazine*? You're right, Alida, money is a temptation. But don't worry there'll be lots of time for that AFTER you finish school, don't you think? Will you write and tell us what you did to help out at the big dinner party you had at your home?

TONGUE TWISTERS

from Busy Beaver *Rachel VanderPol*

A big baby buggy with rubber buggy bumpers.

A big black bug bled black blood.

She sells seashells on the seashore.

Fuzzy wuzzy was a bear fuzzy wuzzy had no hair. Was fuzzy wuzzy fuzzy?

Quiz Time!

CODE QUIZ

by Busy Beaver *Edie Alkema*

40 16 10 24 30 36 8 18 38

26 50 38 16 10 32 16 10 36 8

D - 8 O - 30
E - 10 P - 32
H - 16 R - 36
I - 18 S - 38
L - 24 T - 40
M - 26 Y - 50



DOUBLE PUZZLE

by Busy Beaver *Laura Aasman*

First fill in the numbers.
And then — fill in the code!

A 1+2= _____

F 2+3= _____

G 8+0= _____

N 2+2= _____

I 5+4= _____

L 1+1= _____

H 2+4= _____

T 3+4= _____



What part of night do knights hate?

_____!
4 9 8 6 7 5 3 2 2

WORDSEARCH

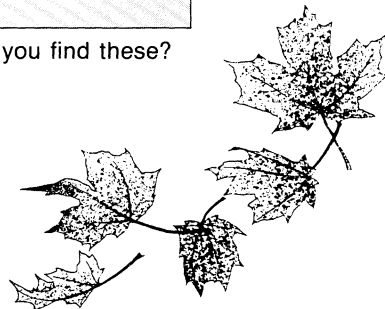
by Busy Beaver *Angela Dykstra*

B T O C I R P A
A G P H S A P O
N R E M R P F R
A A A U L E R A
N P R E Q A U N
A E S P R C I G
I W I K Y H T E
T A S M U L P S



Fruit is good for you. Can you find these?

oranges banana
pears apples
plum apricot
peach fruit
kiwi
grape



Busy Beavers we need some PEN PALS!

Who will exchange letters with:

Edie Alkema (age 10) or *Alida Knol* (Age 12)
80 Olive Street RR 4
Grimsby, ON Shelburne, ON
L3M 2C7 L0N 1S0

When I read those FUN things to do in FALL I felt like raking up ONE GREAT BIG PILE OF LEAVES!

How about you?

Have you tried the "leaves games"?

I'd love to hear which one you like BEST!

Love from your
Aunt Betty