



Clarion

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The first verse¹

God's Word starts off with those impressive words in Genesis chapter one. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." What a powerful and deep opening word of divine revelation! There is nothing else like this in the so-called creation stories of man's imagination. This is revelation! For that reason this opening verse continues to speak so directly to man today.

In the beginning

"In the beginning" The context indicates that this is the very first beginning, the start of the world when time itself began. Before this beginning, before creation, there was no time, only eternity. God was. He is eternal and His existence is here presupposed. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God" (Psalm 90:2). God is without a beginning and without an end. We cannot understand eternity, for we are finite, created beings. We cannot reach out with our minds and comprehend the situation before time started.

When we read "In the beginning" in Genesis 1, we can also think of John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." The Word is a designation of the second person of what we call the Trinity, namely, the Son. He was with God the Father in the beginning. The designation "God" often refers to the Father in the Old Testament and that is the case here. In Genesis 1:2 we read about the Holy Spirit. "The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters." The triune God was there in the beginning, active in the work of creation (cf., e.g., Hebrews 1:10; Colossians 1:16; Psalm 33:6; Isaiah 40:12-14).

God created

It is noteworthy that the subject of the Hebrew word for "create" is always God and never a human being or a false god. God is the only One who creates. The context makes it clear that this work of the creation of heaven and earth did not consist of making something out of what already existed, but it brought into being what did not exist. (In this connection it is interesting, although not decisive for this understanding, that the verb "create" is never used with a preposition or accusative of the material from which God creates.)

Elsewhere Scripture elaborates on this creation work of God, which our Confession describes as creation "out of nothing" (Belgic Confession, Art. 12).² We read in Psalm 33:9, "He spoke and it came to be; He commanded and it stood forth" (cf. v.6). Similarly Psalm 148, referring to the heavens, says, "He commanded and they were created" (v.5; cf. Isaiah 48:13).

The heaven and the earth

In Hebrew, the word for heaven is always in the plural and therefore one can also translate "the heavens and the earth." The heaven(s) and the earth are the totality of creation. This is everything. "Heaven(s)" must here therefore be understood in as broad a sense as possible. Even today, despite our twentieth-century perspective, we, as creatures living on earth, think of the universe as "heaven and earth."

This phrase also points to the unity of creation. It is used everywhere in Scripture where the one creation work of God is referred to (e.g. Genesis 2:4; Psalm 121:2; II Peter 3:7,13). Although heaven and earth are clearly distinguished, yet there is a close bond between them. Whether one thinks in the first place of the earth's atmosphere, or outer space or heaven as the dwelling place of God, it is true that whatever happens in the one is of importance for the other. This is of course especially true of heaven as the abode of the LORD.

Although this too is part of God's creation work and is included in Genesis 1:1, this chapter does not further inform us of the creation of the angels or give any details about the place where God has His throne (cf. Psalm 14:2; 103:19). The concern of God's revelation in Genesis is the world and what is seen from it.

Genesis 1:1 and false philosophies

The opening verse of Scripture is foundational to so much that it is clearly a passage of great significance whose importance does not diminish with the passing of the years. When the message of this verse is heeded, its relevance becomes clear also in exposing false philosophies and ideas for what they are. Some important ones can be mentioned.

This verse refutes atheism, the belief that God does not exist. Notice that the Word of God does not start with arguments for the existence of God! Scripture simply affirms it. "In the beginning, God" We do not need to prove God's existence. We may start from that fact (cf. Romans 1:18-21).

Also polytheism, the view that there are many gods is opposed by this passage. God (and not gods) "created the heaven and the earth." One can think here of Isaiah 45:18. "For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (He is God!), who formed the earth and made it . . . : 'I am the LORD and there is no other.'" Thus God said in the second word of the covenant "you shall have no other gods before me!" (Exodus 20:3).

Genesis 1:1 likewise leaves no room for materialism. This belief can be defined as holding that "physical matter is the only or fundamental reality and that all being and processes and phenomena can be explained as manifestations or results of

matter” (Webster). Consistent materialism therefore maintains that matter is eternal and only what we can see, handle and touch is really important. The existence of God and the soul of man are denied. The first verse of Scripture, however, shows that God alone is eternal and that He brought matter into being.

Pantheism is also refuted. This philosophy equates God with the laws and forces of the universe. Indeed all things are considered partakers of the one divine essence. Pantheistic thinking is sometimes evident from the manner in which battles for a better ecology and environment are fought (cf. the sacredness of the environment etc.) and it is basic to the growing New Age movement.³ But, God is clearly distinguished from creation in Genesis 1:1 and therefore cannot be identified with it in any way. He is Creator and stands above and beyond creation which is His handiwork.

It is obvious that Genesis 1:1 is a very important verse and a clear and correct understanding of it is crucial. But how does verse one relate to verse two? That question is for next time.

C. VAN DAM

¹ This article is the first in a series selected from lectures delivered on a popular level. Most of the material has been revised for publication, and in keeping with the nature of *Clarion* footnotes have been kept to an absolute minimum.

² Cf. on this, P.E. Hughes, *A Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews* (1977), 452 (on Hebrews 11:3).

³ See, e.g., D.R. Groothuis, *Unmasking the New Age* (1986), 20f., 48ff.

The Protestant churches in Nazi Germany³

Downfall of the “German Christian” movement

Mueller’s election and the introduction of the Aryan paragraph roused several Protestant leaders out of their complacency, but more was to come. In November 1933 a meeting of 20,000 “German Christians” took place in the Sports Palace, Berlin. The meeting opened with Luther’s “A Mighty Fortress.” In the speeches that followed and in a resolution that was passed, the “German Christians” shed all their inhibitions and showed their radical colours for all to see. Doctrines and confessions were attacked, and speeches as well as resolutions were outspoken in their anti-Semitism: the Jewish elements of Christianity must be discarded; the Old Testament would have to go; the “Rabbi Paul” was to be rejected; the Bible was to be purged of all Jewish influences. No Jews or blacks were to be allowed in the church. German Christians were not the meek, humble followers of some Jewish messiah, some suffering servant, but the proud followers of Christ the conqueror. Their champions were not “the crucified Christ” but “King Christ and the Fuehrer.”

Only one person out of the 20,000 cast a negative vote. The “German Christians” had revealed their satanic platform. Protests streamed in. Many deserted the movement, now that they saw the evil of its theology. Even the Nazi party realized

that the “German Christians” had gone too far: instead of unifying the church and making it complacent, they had caused disunity and aroused the Protestants’ suspicions of the regime. The party disavowed the “German Christians.” So did bishop Mueller. Although various of its constituent groups survived, the “German Christians” as a movement that had the official support of the Nazi party disintegrated. Its heresies, however, stayed very much alive.

Mueller retained his official function, and he soon made it clear that by severing his ties with the “German Christians” he had not relinquished his pro-Nazi stance. Toward the end of December he shocked the churches by signing, on his own authority, an agreement with Von Shirach, the Hitler Youth leader, whereby the 6 or 700,000 members of the Evangelical Youth Organization were transferred to the Hitler Youth. Official protests were of no avail, and those among the young people who refused to go along with the transfer were ostracized by classmates and ill-treated by the authorities. Mueller must have had Hitler’s approval. Hitler once said, in connection with his attempts to subdue the church: “In my youth, I took the view: dynamite. Later I realized that one can’t break the Church over one’s knee. It has to be left to rot like a gangrenous limb . . . But the healthy youth belongs to us.”¹

Resistance: The Pastors’ Emergency League

Opposition by Protestants does not date from the events of the calamitous November and December months. Protests had been heard earlier. Some German churches had drafted statements against the heresies of the “German Christians” already before their takeover of the church, and others did so afterwards. Karl Barth, the well-known Swiss theologian who was a professor of theology at Bonn, also criticized the “German Christian” movement, especially in his writings of the summer of 1933. He completely rejected their programme and refused to allow them church membership.

The famous Dr. Martin Niemoeller, the former U-boat captain, also must be mentioned. In September 1933, after Mueller had incorporated the Aryan paragraph, Niemoeller and other ministers set up the Pastors’ Emergency League, which called upon all dedicated pastors to unite and sign a four-point declaration which bound adherents to Scripture and confessions, and rejected the Aryan paragraph. It is true, as one author has pointed out, that the League avoided any confrontation with the state, and that the Aryan paragraph was rejected only “in the area of the Church of Christ.” It is also true that the League numbered only about 6,000 members in September 1933. That so few

pastors joined was another indication of the malaise in the churches. Nevertheless, with the Emergency League and its official protests of September, the first open "No" of the churches was heard, if not against the regime, then at least against Mueller and the "German Christians." Loyalty toward the regime was carefully observed. When in October 1933 Hitler ended Germany's membership of the League of Nations, everyone cheered, including the Pastors' Emergency League, which sent a congratulatory message to the Fuehrer assuring him of the members' support.

Later that year, the League would react to the events in the Sports Palace (the notorious mass meeting of the "German Christians") and to Mueller's act of signing over the church youth to Von Shirach. It did so by means of protests read from the pulpit. Early in 1934 Mueller passed the so-called Muzzling Act, which forbade "the misuse of church services for church-political affairs, in whatever form," including attacks upon the church government or its action. The League ig-

nored the act and its members continued their messages of protest and warning. It would lose almost 2,000 members, however, when Hitler intervened personally, and when a council of Lutheran bishops endorsed Mueller. Punishments were now also doled out: some protesting ministers were deposed, others pensioned off or dispatched to small congregations in remote villages. The opposition had been split and the League weakened, but it was not destroyed. The battle continued.

"Free synods" and "confessing churches"

In 1934 opposition in the churches began to be united. It was the year of the free synods and of the establishment of confessing churches. Free synods were assemblies that came together without the permission of the official church-governing bodies and bishop Mueller. These synods were first held separately on behalf of the three groups constituting the Evangelical Church: Lutheran, Reformed, and United. Later, with Barmen II in May

1934, the three groups joined together in one synod.

Free synods appear to have been organized primarily to protest the dictatorial acts of the Reich bishop, and to protect the purity of the churches' doctrine as stated in the Old and New Testament and summarized in the Lutheran and Reformed confessions of the Reformation. The reassertion of the old doctrine was directed not in the last place against the religious policies and ideas of the ruling Nazis and those of the "German Christians."

Member churches of these free synods were called confessing churches. The intention of the confessing churches was not to separate themselves from the official national church body; they maintained that they, and not Mueller's establishment or the "German Christians," were the legitimate continuation of the old churches. In fact, of course, there were two church bodies: the confessing one, and the official one that was under the supervision of the Reich bishop and the government. (There were also mixed churches, where some of the members were "confessing" and some were not.)

Between March and May 1934, many confessing churches were established in the northern German provinces. In the



"Hitler once said . . . 'In my youth, I took the view: dynamite. Later I realized that one can't break the Church over one's knee. It has to be left to rot like a gangrenous limb . . . But the healthy youth belongs to us.' "

South, most churches had remained intact under conservative leadership. These southern churches viewed the Pastors' Emergency League with suspicion, and they were not happy with the new confessing churches either, feeling that these were too radical in departing from the established provincial churches. This animosity between North and South continued throughout the war. The northern confessing churches did not receive much support from their brethren in the South.

The "Free Synod of Barmen"

From May 29 to 31 a combined synod of Reformed and Evangelical/Lutheran churches was held at Barmen. This was the famous national synod Barmen II. Twenty-six provincial churches had sent representatives. All the 138 delegates were examined before entering to make sure that no "German Christians" were present, and the members of the synod were to sign red membership cards and keep them on their persons at all times. (Ultimately all members of confessing churches were asked to sign and carry such a membership card.)

The synod accepted the "Barmen Declaration," which had been written by Karl Barth and two Lutheran theologians. Consisting of six articles or theses, this declaration rejected the false doctrines of the "German Christians" and recalled the churches to the central truths of Bible and confessions. It also rejected the totalitarian claims of the state, as well as the official church's reliance on the state. Thesis 5 read:

We reject the false doctrine that the State . . . should and could become the single and totalitarian order of human life, thus fulfilling the Church's vocation as well.

We reject the false doctrine that the Church . . . should and could appropriate the characteristics, the tasks, and the dignity of the State, thus itself becoming an organ of the State.²

Not only the Nazis' totalitarianism was attacked here, including their attempt to use the church as a political tool, but also Mueller's dependence upon the state in his attempts to rule the church.³ Even so, the Barmen Declaration was not a political manifesto. Political issues were avoided, and Hitler's crimes were not mentioned. Not a word was said, for example, about the Jews. This was a terrible omission in many of the pre-Barmen declarations as well as in Barmen itself. The Jewish question does not seem to have interested Barth overmuch. Much later, he himself admitted that. In a letter written in May 1967 to Bonnhoeffer's biographer, he stated:

I myself have long felt guilty that I did not make this problem [the Jewish ques-

tion] central, at least in public, in the two Barmen declarations of 1934 which I composed. In 1934, certainly, a text in which I said a word to that effect would not have found general agreement either in the Reformed Synod of January 1934 or in the General Synod of May at Barmen — if one considers the state of mind of the confessors of faith in those days. But that I was caught up in my own affairs somewhere else is no excuse for my not having properly fought for this cause.⁴ Indeed, practically the entire church avoided the Jewish question, particularly the persecution of non-Christian Jews. As we have seen, there had been protests when Mueller introduced the Aryan paragraph for the church office-bearers, but the Jews outside the fold were left to fend for themselves. J.S. Conway, in his study *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, also mentions this omission and suggests three reasons: Firstly, the men at Barmen were not politicians but theologians, whose main aim was to fight heresy and preserve the purity of the church's doctrine. Secondly, most of the Protestant clergy had always refused to get involved in politics and constantly hampered the efforts of those pastors (including men like Barth and Niemoeller) who tried to rouse them to resist the evils of the regime. Thirdly, and connected with the second reason, there was the stubborn Lutheran tradition of obedience to the ruling powers. That tradition also helps to explain, according to Conway, why the confessing church refused to set itself up as a separate free

church. As we have seen, there were theological reasons for this refusal, but there was also the disinclination to cut all ties with the government.⁵

Another omission in the Barmen Declaration is any reference to the Crucified Christ, and that at a time when many already were suffering for His Name's sake. In addition, there is Barth's dualism. His rejection of the world as sinful, as a creation rejected by the "Wholly Other," the far-away God, is evident in Barmen. Thesis 3 deals with the relation between church and gospel, but does not confess that this very gospel has authority over the state as well. Even Niemoeller did not go far enough in withstanding the state and confessing Christ's sovereignty in all spheres, including the political one.

Nevertheless, Barmen provided a common front for the churches, especially for the confessing churches in the North. The paganism of the "German Christians" was attacked and the gospel professed. The Nazi regime also realized the importance of Barmen: the publication of the declaration led to attacks by the secret police which confiscated the text throughout the country and threatened concentration camp sentences for those who possessed a copy.

— To be continued

GARNET PEET

¹Conway, p. 15.

²*Ibid.*, p. 84.

³*Ibid.*

⁴E. Bethge, "Troubled Self-Interpretation . . .," in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, p. 167.

⁵Conway, pp. 84ff.



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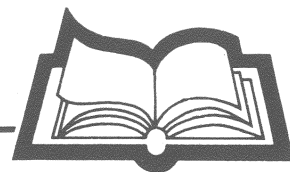
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“The eternal God is your dwelling place, and underneath are the everlasting arms.”

Deuteronomy 33:27

Carried Home

The blessings of Moses give us a remarkable description of the LORD God of Israel, a description which is for the most part unique to Moses. The eternal God is described as a “dwelling place” for His people. The term used here occurs nowhere else in Scripture, although we have closely related terms in Psalm 90:1 and Psalm 91:9. The word as used here is the same term Scripture uses for the lairs and dens of wild animals. God’s dwelling place is a place of safety and security, a place where God Himself is absolutely sovereign. No entrance into His dwelling place is possible without His consent.

It strikes us that Moses is God’s instrument in employing this image. He was the prophet who left the wealth and security of Egypt in order to lead God’s people through the desert. For over forty years Israel appeared as a homeless, wandering people. Often they despaired of ever entering the promised land. Yet God proved He was ahead of them, and was a refuge to them in the wilderness. Moses alludes to what God Himself had promised, for He said, “I will make my abode with you and my soul shall not abhor you,” Leviticus 26:12.

And the LORD also proved His presence with mighty signs and wonders. The fire and smoke of Sinai, the manifestation of glory in the tent of meeting, the fire of judgment, the pillar of cloud and fire, the rod that budded, the rock that brought forth water — all these were signs which showed that the LORD had made His home among His people. He was the eternal God — constantly ahead of them, as the term literally indicates. He was their dwelling place, and just as He came to Sinai, so He carried His people with Him through the desert. On the way to the manifestation of His glory He is pictured as the mighty God who carries His people in His arms. As He makes His way to the dwelling place of His choosing, He moulds and safeguards His people so that they may be grafted and set like jewels into the home of His choosing.

It’s an image for God’s people to remember as they are about to enter the promised land. So it also becomes an image important for us! Not the land, but God is their real home! As they arrive at their destination, they must see God as their eternal dwelling place, the one that will carry and bear them up in such a way that they will conquer all their enemies. He said, “The land is mine,” (Leviticus 25:23), so making clear that the arrival in the promised land is not the final end or goal of their journey, but that in assuming possession of the promised land, they were to see God Himself making His way to His dwelling place of glory.

And despite Israel’s fallback into bondage and fear, God made His way to Zion, His dwelling place! He made good

His word of prophecy when the temple was built in Jerusalem and the ark entered the holy place, I Chronicles 15, II Chronicles 5. As in the dedication of the tabernacle, so here “the glory of the LORD filled the house of God,” II Chronicle 5:14. And when the earthly Jerusalem was rejected because of her sins, the LORD promised that He would return, and bring joy and gladness to Zion again, Isaiah 40. Once again, the glory and the smoke of His presence would fill His holy mountain!

All this was realized in the work of Christ, who is the image and reflection of the Father. In Christ the Word dwells among us, full of grace and truth! So John can say that Moses and the dispensation of the law have now been surpassed, John 1:17. Indeed, in Christ, the whole fulness of God dwells bodily, Colossians 2:9. In Christ the risen Lord at God’s right hand, true God and true man, God has been pleased to make His eternal home! So all who by faith are ingrafted into Christ, into His broken body and shed blood, may also share the dwelling of God in the Spirit. Indeed, as Paul says, this is what fulfils the Old Testament promises, II Corinthians 6:16. So the church may be the temple of the living God, and we, with our life in the body here today, may be temples of the Holy Spirit, God’s dwelling place in Christ!

This song of blessing also makes clear where the LORD is going with His church. He is the eternal God, always ahead of His people, breaking open a pathway of victory for them. This great drama unfolds in the Revelation of John. God strides in power and might with His people towards the day when He can dwell with man. Thus, even though it appears that the entire creation is loosed from its foundations, the church has nothing to fear. God is in the midst of her, Psalm 46:5. It is His home, His dwelling place. And from His temple comes the final judgment which will bring destruction on all His enemies, and usher in the final dawn in which He will make His dwelling place with His people, Revelation 15:5ff. Again the temple will be filled with smoke from the glory of God and His power! Then the holy city will appear, and a loud voice will say, “Behold the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them,” Revelation 21:3.

So we can continue our pilgrimage with confidence. He is always ahead of us, the eternal God. He has been sure and steadfast in His purpose! He will carry Jerusalem as a mother carries a child, Isaiah 66:12. Underneath are the arms that encircle and protect us. And He will carry us home!

J. DE JONG

Confession and school₂

Very important and still relevant is what the late Prof. B. Holwerda said about the matter of school education in a speech held in 1941 and printed in one of the books, published after his death, namely: “*De betekenis van verbond en kerk voor huwelijk, gezin en jeugd*” (*The meaning of covenant and church for marriage, family, and youth*; pp. 89-102). I will give extensive quotations.

God the Father and our creation

God the Father and our creation: that is the first article of our confession that is also the beginning of our school. We are saying here: “The earth is the LORD’s and the fulness thereof.” If we do not see this, we do not understand anything of the school with the Bible . . . The school with the Bible is something other than a school plus a Bible. It is something other than a school with some education in religion. The school is not a school with the Bible if just a psalm is to be learned, or the history of the Bible is told to the children; but a school is truly school with the Bible, when all of the education is ruled by the Scriptures; when each and every subject is ruled by the confession of God the Father and our creation.

Holwerda continued to say (in 1941):

It is still quite strongly so that for many among us the characteristic distinction between the Christian and the public schools is seen in a Bible story, in a stanza of a psalm and in prayer, while the other subjects are considered as being neutral. We have so little defense against the well-known remarks from public school supporters, that our speaking of counting and writing in a Christian way is actually nonsense. Outsiders say: “Also for your children two times two is four, precisely as at the public school. They get the same results as others in adding and subtracting, in multiplying and dividing. Of course, if two times two for Christian children would be five, then we could see a good reason for a Christian school; but not now.” Outsiders say: “When your children learn to write, they do

this in the beginning in just as clumsy a fashion. When they start reading, they stutter in the beginning, and drone with the same tone as at the public schools. In history they learn the same dates; in geography they study the same map. Are not all these subjects neutral?” Do we have only little defense overagainst such reasoning? Are we aware that in this way the Christian character of the entire education is actually attacked, and that by such contemplations the whole Christian life is fundamentally undermined?

Holwerda writes, in the war situation:

Many parents are happy when their children are able to learn well: such children have later, when they have finished school, a good possibility to make a decent living; then they can nicely find their way through life; add to this some knowledge of the Bible and all will be fine for eternity as well. However, in this way life as a whole is secularized. For such Christian parents consider a good school a vehicle for a good position.

Should we not agree that these words of the late Prof. Holwerda are still relevant? Prof. Holwerda refers to *Psalms 8*, calling this the psalm which Jesus Christ had in mind, as often as He thought about little children.

This poet says: “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Thy name in all the earth!” Why is that name majestic here on earth? It is because among other things, “by the mouth of babes and infants, Thou hast founded a bulwark because of Thy foes, to still the enemy and the avenger.” He considers the mouth of a child, the chatter even of babes, a tremendous instrument, by which God breaks here on earth the dominion of the evil one, by which He builds His kingdom, and reconquers the world for Himself. We are inclined to say: that is somewhat overdone. The dominion of Satan stands firmly and it is surely not blown down by mouths of children. But that poet is confident and he knows what he says. He enjoys the crying of a baby who is born. He does not do that because that

mouth will sing psalms later on, and will say prayers. Of course, that is also important. He is doing this because this child is also chosen by God to royal dominion. Also to this child God paid attention as a son of man, and also this child is crowned with glory and honour in order to have dominion presently over the works of God’s hands. He knows very well that not each and every boy is a born minister. Most of them will be busy in the country or in the city in other jobs. But these sons of man will have their occupation as servants of God and in their business the name of the LORD will be glorious over all the earth. That is the expectation of this poet: not that these children will have a good job, but that they will become *Godfearing* farmers and labourers; that they will keep in their business and in their job the commandments of the LORD; that they in their own place will repel the enemy and the avenger, and that they will conquer the rebellion against God.

The majesty of God’s name

Do we see the significance of our Reformed schools? Prof. Holwerda says further (p. 95ff):

Of course, two times two is four, also in our schools. But our children have to know that, not because they must presently be able businessmen, but in order to sanctify their business “for the LORD.”

Covenant children learn the same letters as other children, and when they begin to use a pen and ink, they make the same stains as the others do. But by the young brains, by the mouths, by the little fists of our children, God has founded a *bulwark* because of His foes, in order that His name will be glorious on earth. If that were not the case, then do not teach them at all. If your boys only have to count in order to advance in life and surpass father and mother, then do not teach them and do not let them be taught. Then life will be profaned and desecrated, and this child will become a tool of the enemy and the avenger.

Instead they learn to count and they learn to read because of God's foes. The LORD, whose glory is above the heavens, is on the way to His glorious kingdom on earth also in the scratching pens of our children.

Holwerda goes on:

A recruit does not learn to handle weapons without purpose. He is learning this in order to be able to fight on behalf of his king, and his fatherland. If he isolates it from that purpose, he is engaging in crime.

So it is with our schools. Our children do not learn to read and to count as if education were an end in itself. Geography and history are not subjects which are to be considered apart from God. Children can only work with them either for or against God. There is not a third way. For the earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof. The children will serve God in the world and will give thanks to Him. If they are not doing that, and if they do not learn to do that, then God will give them over to a wrong mind, because they have not

honoured or thanked Him; then in their thoughts and deliberations they will come to vanity and their unwise heart will have become darkened.

Holwerda says to the parents:

This is your calling regarding the school with the Bible: that you see and confess things in this way: that you say: my children shall be educated in the service of God for their whole life; and in no other way; that you maintain it and stand for it, whatever the consequences are: my children are for the honour and the Name of the LORD. For nothing else. You do not send them to the school because they have to know how they have to go through their life and how they can go to heaven, but in order that God's name will be glorified in all the earth. If the sole purpose of education would be to make them skilled for life and nothing more, then it would be alright to let them go to a public school. If it is desirable that they know something about religion, well, then the church and the catechism class are there. But if you say:

the earth is the LORD's then you say: now never any other school, but only the school with the Bible. For us, that is the school which maintains the Reformed confession. Not all of them will become ministers of the church — a good thing too! — but presently they have to know on the farm, in the shop, in the factory, in the kitchen and in the garage how to serve the LORD.

Prof. B. Holwerda added:

I wish that this motive of the great enmity would dominate us again; that we would see it again that in our whole life here on earth, in all its aspects, the name of the LORD must be hallowed; then we would know again what Christian education actually is, and we would again stand behind it. Then we would again be immovable as our fathers were: here we stand, we cannot do otherwise. For the name of the LORD on the earth! For anything else we never will give our children!

— *To be continued*

K. DEDDENS

IN MEMORIAM

Arent Bouwe Roukema Verbi Divini Minister

December 1, 1907 — October 22, 1988

A.B. Roukema was the second son of a family of twelve, of whom only six children survived. He was born in Zwagerveen, a Frisian village where his father was a teacher at the Christian School. The time of the struggle for equality of Public and Christian schools before the law was not over yet; neither for that matter had the time of financial hardship for the families of Christian School teachers yet come to an end. However, that was a small matter for father and mother Roukema in comparison to their much greater concern for the Christian School education for their children not only at the elementary but also at the secondary level. Such an education on that level was still hard to come by. It could certainly not be found in Kibbelgaren, another village, but this one in the province of Groningen, where in the meantime Mr. Roukema Sr. had become the principal of the Christian School. So it became possible for Arent, who wanted to become a minister, to attend the Public

Gymnasium (High School) in Winschoten. That did not last very long, however. No sooner did the Christian School of Harkstede, 12 km from the city of Groningen, have a vacancy than Mr. Roukema applied for the position of principal and, after he was appointed, moved so that his son could commute per bike to the well-known Willem Lodewijk Gymnasium. Upon graduation in 1928, the road led straight to Kampen for study at the Theological College. Freshman Arent found a boarding house where, to his surprise, Benne Holwerda also stayed. Next to his Frisian birth, which always won out, his boarding and friendship with Benne, who became professor of Old Testament in Kampen in 1945, was a matter of lifelong pride.

Student Roukema graduated from the College in 1935. After his Classis exam the road to the ministry might theoretically have been opened but in practice this was not the case. It was the time of what was called a surplus of candidates but

what was actually a deficiency of zeal in the churches to provide labourers in the big congregations which were understaffed and to provide for a pastor and teacher in the small congregations which did not have this kind of staff at all and for years on end remained vacant. The church liberation of the year 1944 changed all that radically. That was not yet the case when student Roukema became a candidate eligible for call. He "preached around" for a year in so far as invitations to speak an edifying word were received and he served another year as assistant to the Rev. F. Slomp of Heemse, perhaps better known as Fritz de Zwerver, a leader of the resistance movement in wartime. At the time of candidate Roukema's assistance-ship the war was still a couple of years down the road.



In 1937 the first call was received and promptly accepted. It came from the newly instituted church of Berkum, located at the outskirts of Zwolle. Rev. Roukema's nine years in Berkum were important for him — in the first place because at last the goal for which he had worked so long was reached; in the second place because at that time he met Giny Scholtens, who in 1940 became his wife; and in the third place because in 1945 another choice, once more a good one, was made, the choice, namely, of liberation from synodical tyranny and from statements which were imposed upon the churches with binding authority and which had already caused a split in the Spring Classis Zwolle of 1945. This liberation was not an easy thing, for of the entire consistory only two deacons joined the minister in the decision to liberate themselves. To everyone's surprise, however, half the congregation, 245 members, all together, signed the act of liberation. The ecclesiastical possessions were taken from the liberated church but, by court order, the church services could be continued in the church building. As they had lost their dwelling place, the Roukemas moved in, for the time being, with father and mother Scholtens, until more permanent living quarters could be found. That was not in Zwolle or Berkum but in Bunschoten-Spakenburg, the church from which the Rev. Roukema received a call in those days. Since it became a "Rehoboth" for the family, the call was accepted and the installation followed in August 1946. For ten years Rev. Roukema served this church, at first together with Rev. J. Rijneveld, and later on with Rev. J. Kamphuis as the third minister.

The pastorate in Bunschoten-Spakenburg was a busy one because of the size of the church and consequently of the three wards. Nevertheless, Rev. Roukema managed not only to know the sheep of his own part of the congregation but of the other wards as well, and not just by name but by nickname and with the complicated family relationships as well. A gigantic job for anyone else but child's play for pastor Roukema, the man with the photographic mind. When the exodus of the emigration started, Rev. Roukema contributed to the spiritual well-being of the emigrants by his work for the "SOEP" Action, SOEP being a Dutch acronym for "Steun Overkomst Emigratie Predikanten," i.e., support for the migration of ministers able and willing to serve the newly formed churches in Australia, Canada and South Africa which were financially not yet able to defray the cost of bringing them over — a laudable initiative which was effective during the time when no government funding was granted yet. As a director of this Action, Rev. Roukema made a trip to Canada and visited the

congregations in Ontario. The need for labourers in this field of the harvest apparently impressed the visitor so much that, when called by the church at Watford, he readily accepted. It was not a small thing to do, for the financial situation of the very young church was so precarious yet that only a minimum salary could be offered. Fortunately groceries to feed a big family were still cheap at that time. A minnow in comparison to the Spakenburger whale, the work in the church of Watford (some of whose members lived in London, where services were also held), was time-consuming. In 1960 the London division of the congregation became the church at London, and Rev. Roukema became the pastor of two congregations. It was agreed that, after their four years in Watford, London should have the privilege of having the family in her midst. Educationally speaking, the move also offered better opportunities for the children.

It was a good time but, as so often in this broken world, a time as well where-in difficulties had to be faced. Some of them were of the pastor's own making. His propensity to talk led, as James already knew, to slips of the tongue which were not always appreciated, to put it mildly.

There were further the difficulties connected with immigration. The immigrants' adjustment to a new country and a strange language, the difficult attempts to find suitable work, to start farming, or to set up a business caused tensions and strain. And so did the different opinions regarding cooperation with Christians of other denominations, brought along from the Netherlands. Rev. Roukema who had grown up in the time of the final struggle for the equality before the law of Christian and Public Schools could not imagine seeing his children go to a Public School if a Christian School was within reach. Others did not share this view and pointed to the dangers which a mixed Christian School presented so that they wanted to wait and work for a Canadian Reformed School and for the time being use the Public School. The tensions around the school problem and Christian organizations accompanied Rev. Roukema during his active ministry, and at times made work hard for him. But never for long, for there was also much to be grateful for. I have never heard one bad word about the preaching of Rev. Roukema and his pastoral work. Many of his sermons were published and they were read and heard in the reading services. He regularly contributed meditations and articles on practical subjects to *Canadian Reformed Magazine* and wrote Outlines on Haggai for the Interleague Publication Board with which the various societies were helped.

His encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of the church since the Secession of 1834 in Holland helped ecclesiastical meetings to find their way in problems which had to be dealt with.

His regular and "extra-curricular" activities came to a sudden halt when in 1965 Rev. Roukema suffered a heart attack which was diagnosed as "slight" but from which it took him a long time to recuperate. It was even feared that he would not be able to move to Grand Rapids, which had called him before he fell ill. However, recovery came finally and he served the Grand Rapids church from April 1966 until his 66th birthday on Dec. 1, 1973.

A terrible blow for the pastor and the nine children was the loss of his wife Giny in 1971, after a very happy marriage of thirty-one years. She had been a helper fit for him indeed, encouraging him in times of disappointments and frustration and straightening him out in times when he went overboard. Rev. Roukema did not like to be interrupted and he might say when you did so, "Allow me now first to finish," but, when Giny spoke her "och Arent!", he listened. It was a joy to observe this mark of a happy and a good marriage. To do without her was very hard on her husband. It was a wonderful thing that the children and relatives here and overseas helped him in so far as that was possible in his loneliness. So did his friends, the population of Maranatha home, and the brothers and sisters in Burlington as well as those in Brampton, both in and outside Trinity Towers. For fifteen years after his retirement he was still with us, once in a while laid up with bouts of sickness, but most of the time up and around, and travelling to Holland yet in 1987, in the company of his daughter Hilda. He had not been on the pulpit anymore for a long time but he never missed the services. In the Dutch service he always sat in the pew closest to the exit, enjoying the preaching. His mind remained clear in his declining years and his fantastic memory was still all there. He did not miss out on important events and he shared in the joys and sorrows of family and friends.

My last memory of him goes back to the day of my wife's burial. To hear better what was spoken, Rev. Roukema had moved forward, standing all by himself, short and stooped, but with uplifted head in order not to miss out on anything. A couple of days later he was hit by a massive stroke which led to his death on October 22, close to his 81st birthday. It meant the end of his loneliness and the entrance into his Father's house with its many rooms, where His Lord Jesus Christ had prepared a place for this faithful servant of His.

L. SELLES

Ordination of candidate J.G.R. Kroeze in Hamilton

On this historic, beautiful early autumn Sunday, cand. J.G.R. Kroeze was ordained as minister of the Word and Sacraments, and as missionary, in the Cornerstone church by his missionary colleague, the Rev. Paul Aasman.

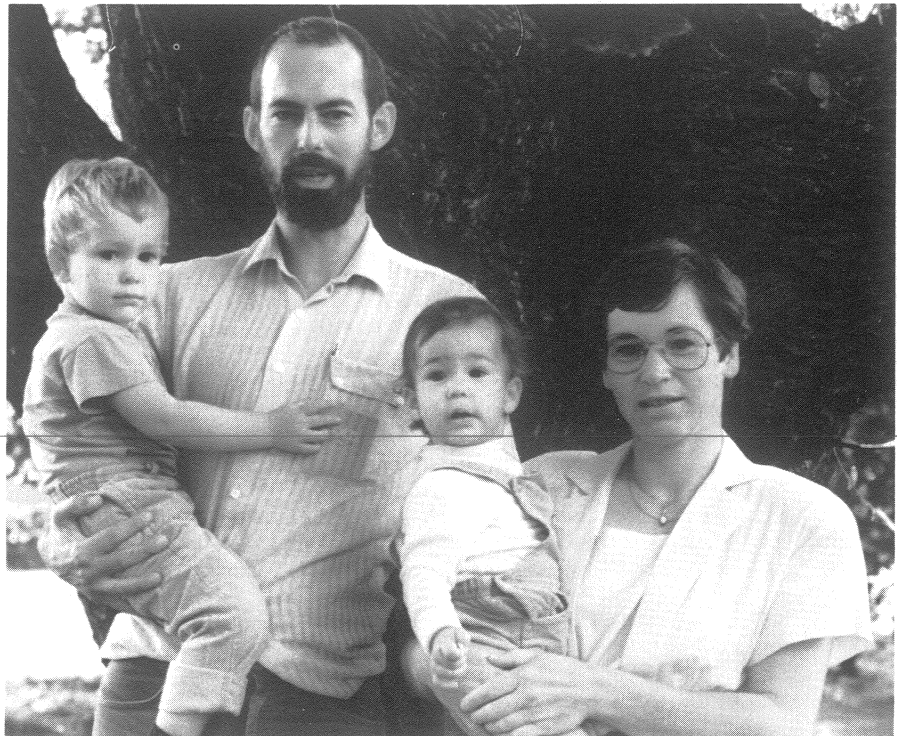
Rev. Aasman had chosen as text II Corinthians 2:14-17 with the theme: "The apostle Paul thanks God for granting him a ministry that always triumphs in Christ"; the three points were:

1. What it is to win this triumph.
2. How this triumph is won.
3. Who wins this triumph.

In short, Rev. Aasman explained that the apostle Paul wrote these words to praise the glory and the mighty deeds of the Lord all over the world. Paul emphasizes here that the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ is to be spread everywhere. It is the knowledge of the redeeming power of Jesus Christ which brings salvation. He was sent through God's love to take away the sin of the whole human race. This is the message which triumphs over man's sinful heart and brings the gospel of reconciliation.

This triumph is won through His apostles by the pure preaching of the aroma of "Jesus Christ and Him crucified." The task of a preacher is to bring this message of the aroma of Christ and call to repentance. God Himself through His Holy Spirit will bring the victory through His servants. Rev. Aasman urged cand. Kroeze always to preach the Word as standing in the presence of God. Your commission is to preach the Word obediently and, like the apostle Paul, you will be led to triumph. At the same time Rev. Aasman urged the congregation to support their new missionary in his work, not for his honour but to the honour and glory of Jesus Christ. "Pray for the final universal triumph," he said, "that those who are chosen may enter into God's rest."

Thereafter the Form for the Ordination of Missionaries was read and the questions answered with a clear: "I do with all my heart." It was followed by the laying on of hands, while the minister declared:



"God our heavenly Father, who has called you to this holy office, enlighten you with His Spirit and so govern you in your ministry that you may fulfil it obediently and that it may bear fruit to the honour of His Name and the expansion of the kingdom of His Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

The church service was followed by a coffee social to congratulate Rev. and Mrs. Kroeze.

In the afternoon Rev. Kroeze preached his inaugural sermon. He had chosen as text Romans 1:16-17 with the theme: The Gospel is God's Instrument for Salvation; his three points were:

1. It is God's power.
2. It reveals God's power.
3. It applies God's power.

In his sermon Rev. Kroeze explains that the gospel had become a stumbling-block to Jews and Greeks but not so for the

apostle Paul. For him the gospel became the power of God which is in Christ Jesus His Son. It is this power which is to be preached to all nations.

Through this apostolic preaching the believer will enter into salvation. The power of God in the gospel is a declaration of freedom revealed in righteousness before God. It becomes the norm of our life. Rev. Kroeze urges us to examine ourselves: do you live a life to the Glory of God? As God's instruments you have called missionaries to proclaim this gospel in Brazil. All this can only come about through the power of the gospel. To Him be all honour and glory, His is eternal dominion.

This service was followed by congratulatory messages from Rev. Cl. Stam, (soon to be the pastor of the Cornerstone church, who said he was looking forward to working together with both our mission-

aries), and from the churches at Ancaster, Lincoln and Smithville. Elder A. Witten, chairman of the consistory, spoke words of welcome to Rev. Kroeze and his wife and their two little children. "You have come from far and far will you go." Yet the church at Hamilton may always be your home church and base.

Being the official representative from the churches in the classical resort of Ontario South, Rev. Agema considered it a privilege that he could speak at this occasion. He considered our new missionary somewhat "his own" in the sense of the support of the cooperating churches in Classis South. Rev. Kroeze may rest assured that this support is not only in financial aspect, but rather by prayer in the homes and churches. He welcomed Rev. Kroeze to the pulpits to become acquaint-

ed and to visit the congregations. He wished him God's guidance on the frontier of God's Kingdom.

Brother H.A. Bartels, chairman of the Mission Board reminded us that it is now one year ago that Rev. P. Aasman was ordained and said that he expects to depart before the year ends. Now a year later we may make a new beginning, since Rev. Kroeze begins to prepare himself for the work in Brazil. Hopefully it will not take as much time. He wished Rev. Kroeze and his wife the Lord's blessing during their preparations this coming year.

Finally, Rev. P. Aasman expressed his gratitude that he may work together with Rev. Kroeze whom he has known for four years during their studies. The prospects of working together as a team excites him. To depend on each other is not

an ideal but very realistic as a partnership in the gospel. From the beginning he found it an excellent proposal of the church at Hamilton to send out two missionaries. It is a New Testament pattern. He wishes Rev. Kroeze and family the Lord's blessing while awaiting departure.

These beautiful services were concluded with the singing of:

*The king whose name we are professing,
Shall like the sun endure.*

In him all nations find their blessing;

Make Thou his throne secure!

Blest be the Lord, for He so glorious

Alone does wondrous things.

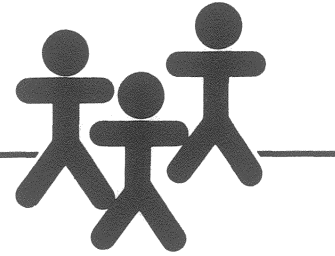
O God, in all the earth our chorus

With "Amen, Amen" rings.

(Psalm 72:10 Book of Praise)

SOLI DEO GLORIA

SCHOOL CROSSING



"Handbook of the . . . school"

A trend which has been developing among our schools is to compile and publish a School Handbook in the form of a booklet. The booklet is, according to one, to help parents acquaint themselves with the background of the school, its programmes, administration and policies.

The use of a handbook is intended to standardize and streamline "a more functional communication" between home and school.

Judging by the comments made by those who participate in the exercise of producing a school handbook, much is to be gained, particularly if the school society involved is spread over a number of congregations.

In covenantal education it is assumed that the whole congregation is involved in establishing, and maintaining the schools. However, not all supporters may have children at school, therefore compiling a handbook to be distributed to all the members and supporters may be very beneficial.

Most of the handbooks reviewed include information about the establishment of the school society. The purpose of the

society may be emphasized in an address from the chairman and by listing the constitution and by-laws. The name of the school may also become part of the focus for introducing the school to those not acquainted with the school society or the respective Canadian Reformed congregation(s). The aim, purpose, rationale or goal of Reformed education and of the school in particular may be outlined. This gives opportunity to, for example, speak about the baptismal promise, and outline the covenantal relationship.

With permission we include two sections from the handbook of the John Calvin School — Smithville:

THE NAME — JOHN CALVIN SCHOOL

John Calvin (1509-1564) was a "second generation Reformer," used as an instrument in God's hand to continue the cause of the Reformation of the Church in the sixteenth century. Like the Waldensian Reformers of the Middle Ages, and like Martin Luther, his German predecessor, twenty-five years his senior, Calvin subscribed completely to the three main tenets of

the Reformation: the supremacy of Holy Scripture (*sola Scriptura*), the justification by faith alone (*sola fide*), and salvation by grace alone (*sola gratia*). The Reformers also redirected the church's attention back to the office of all believers.

But Calvin went much further than Luther, for he realized that our whole life must be lived to the glory of God. Not only our lives, all of life which includes church, government, science and learning, etc. are subject to God's Word and must be subject to God's sovereignty, to glorify God. In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin formulated and organized his thinking on many of the important aspects of our faith. The influence of Calvin's work and writing have come to us today via our Dutch ancestors who embraced the Reformed faith in the sixteenth century and passed this rich heritage on to subsequent generations.

In giving John Calvin's name to our school, we not only honour the man who laboured so faithfully in God's kingdom, but more importantly, we

testify that we still uphold the same faith which he proclaimed, by the grace of God.

Our school is a Canadian Reformed School. It is *Canadian* because we are Canadians with a task and place in this country. But we are also *Reformed* because our faith is rooted in the Reformed faith. As a Canadian Reformed school, we have a special identity because we identify with the Canadian Reformed Churches where the parents, students and teachers worship every Sunday. As parent/members of the school society which maintains this school, we see the importance of a solid unity between the teaching of the church and the curricula in the school. This threefold confessional unity found in the families, the church and the school is a blessing for all of us. May the LORD bless our faithfulness, so that the *new* generations may also serve Him in faithfulness and obedience.

REFORMED EDUCATION AND THE COVENANT

"I will establish my covenant . . ." (Gen. 17.7)

The place of the *covenant* of grace is central to Reformed education. The "Form for the Baptism of Infants" in our *Book of Praise* clearly describes this covenantal relationship:

"First, we and our children are conceived and born in sin and therefore by nature children of wrath so

that we cannot enter the kingdom of God unless we are born again."

" . . . , baptism signifies and seals to us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ."

This Form tells us that the Father has adopted us to be His children and heirs and that in Jesus Christ we will receive all the benefits promised in the covenant,

"the cleansing from our sins and the daily renewal of our lives, till we shall finally be presented without blemish among the assembly of God's elect in life eternal."

What a rich heritage God has given us to pass on to our children! But the gift of God's grace must motivate us to present ourselves as "a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him." (L.D. 12) Again, the Form for the Baptism of Infants clearly shows our obligation to the LORD:

" . . . we are, through baptism, called and obliged by the Lord to a new obedience. We are to cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, to trust Him, and to love Him with our whole heart, soul and mind, and with all our strength. We must not love the world but put off our old nature and lead a God-fearing life."

Also by means of the Reformed education given to the children at our school, they will be led, by the grace of God, to make a faithful response to the LORD's demands: "flee from sin, pursue righteousness, love the true God and their

neighbour," (B.C. Art. 29) and ". . . crucify the flesh with its works," (H.C., L.D. 33).

This important covenantal relationship, discussed above, must permeate all the work we do at school, because we are helping the parents prepare their children for a calling in God's Kingdom. As citizens of this Kingdom they are working with their talents to build a city not made by hands, "the city which has foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God." (Heb. 11:10)

What does all of the above mean for us and our children?

In whatever calling they may receive from the LORD, as parents, as farmers, labourers, lawyers, teachers, ministers, etc., they will use their God-given talents in a way that is pleasing to their Sender. (Cf. Matt. 25:14ff: the parable of the talents).

Further, administrative information listing board and staff members, transportation arrangements and school timetables and projected calendars are often included. A list of members, donors and of financial data including budgets may even be published.

School policies and services detail the day-to-day operation and decision-making. This section in particular, if presented with detail by the board and staff will result in increased accountability. Necessary information regarding the board — staff policies for dealing with everything from absences, homework, fire drills, library, evaluation, dress code, student supplies, and volunteers — all assist in increased accountability. Don't hesitate to include the board's discipline policy and the school's discipline code.

"Functional communication" between board, staff and parents and students alike will be enhanced if a thorough Handbook is available.

In reflecting on school accountability, I would only add that home visits, (teachers visiting the parents at their home), are according to some studies, another most desirable manner to develop a good parent-teacher relationship, especially at the elementary school level. One study very properly concluded that: "Probably the ultimate value of a home visit program, the one most treasured by administrators, teachers, parents and students, is the knowledge that professionals will no longer look at students in terms of their placement in a group. Rather, they will be seen as individuals; persons with unique interests, ideas, feelings, abilities and needs. Student-teacher and teacher-parent relationships develop a new dimension and the importance of individualizing programs becomes more readily apparent to teachers."

A. WITTEN

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SCHOOL ORGANIZATION	
MESSAGE FROM ADMINISTRATION	
I am pleased to introduce this student handbook which has been prepared for your use. It provides information that is necessary for you to understand the operation of the school. In addition, it contains:	
-- an outline of the responsibilities of students	
-- a summary of the services and opportunities provided at Brookwood	
-- a yearlong planning calendar	
School rules at Brookwood are few in number but the expectations for reasonable and responsible behaviour are high. You should read carefully the sections on general information and student responsibilities. They serve as a framework by which we can all work in an atmosphere of co-operation.	
At Brookwood there is an extensive involvement of teachers and students in special activities such as choir, band, drama, clubs, sports and social events. It is our hope that all students will participate in school activities which are suited to their special interests and abilities. One cannot grow by standing back as a spectator or a receiver; personal growth demands commitment and sound planning.	
Most successful business and professional people, and other busy adults, keep a planning calendar to co-ordinate their activities. Successful students also plan their work and their other commitments. It is hoped that the format of this handbook will help you to organize your activities and to plan your school work.	3

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

The whole upbringing and the labour of the church is to be set up in such a manner “as if you are allowed to build on the basis of a grace which has already been worked” in the heart.

Kuyper’s teachings in this respect have been summarized as follows.

“1. The doctrine of election is the starting-point for the doctrine of the covenant.

“2. The regeneration is that the kernel of the new life is brought into a person’s self, whereby this ‘self’ becomes sinless; this regeneration takes place without the Word, by a direct act of the Holy Spirit; regeneration can remain hidden and idle in a person for many years.

“3. The essential element of baptism is a strengthening of the faculty of faith which takes place simultaneously with the visible act of baptism; this strengthening is the endowment of a separate baptismal grace; this endowment with the baptismal grace is at the same time the sealing of the promise; wherever such strengthening of the faculty of faith does not occur, there is no true baptism but there is only a sham baptism.

“4. Regeneration, in which the faculty of faith is given, is the ground for baptism; since all children are to be baptized, regeneration is presumed in all.

“5. This presumptive regeneration is the ground for the baptism of infants.

“6. The need for this presumption lies in our ignorance regarding the reality of the regeneration of the infants; if we knew who among them are truly regenerated, we would, of course, be permitted to baptize those only.

“7. The baptism of infants stands or falls with this presumptive regeneration.

“8. The doctrine of the presumptive regeneration dominates totally and absolutely the upbringing of the children and the whole labour of the office-bearers.”

Action

The teachings of Dr. A. Kuyper bore fruit: graduates and students of the Free University spread his ideas. His articles in *De Heraut* were spelled by many within the churches.

Objections were heard as well.

The gravamen by the church at Bedum A may then have been declared inadmissible on formal grounds by the 1896 general synod, the objections remained.

Especially Prof. L. Lindeboom did not cease exposing and warning against Dr. Kuyper’s ideas.

When Dr. A. Kuyper Jr — at that time minister at Makkum — stated that Paul was regenerated from birth on, Prof. Lindeboom sent his objections to this to Makkum’s consistory.

The answer that he received was snubby. The consistory declared that in a different field the work of Prof. Lindeboom was certainly being appreciated — Lindeboom taught the New Testament discipline at the Theological School — but that, when it came to dogmatical questions, the consistory would rather listen to “dogmaticians capable in this field.”

Lindeboom continued to warn and in January 1905 he published, together with forty-one others — among whom Rev. T. Bos, Rev. H.G. Kapteijn, Rev. J. Kok, Prof. M. Noordtjij and Rev. J. Westerhuis — *Five Theses Regarding Teachings Concerning Which Controversy Has Arisen in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands During the Past Years*.

This small brochure was presented “To the Consistories of ‘The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands’” and in the preface the authors — or may we say “the author, Prof. L. Lindeboom”? — declared that it was the fruit of consultation between many of them. Others took note of it and witnessed their agreement by their co-signing.

Why did the brothers address the consistories first of all?

“Because the Consistories have been called by Christ to ‘preserve the true religion, and to see to it that the true doctrine takes its course,’ Art. 30 *Reformed Confession*.”

“Also all the members of the Congregation have the right and the calling to test the preaching and catechism teaching, yes all that is taught in the Churches both orally and in writing, by the Confessional Formulas in which the Churches profess their faith according to the Word of God. For this reason this brochure addresses the members as well, and it is available to everyone.” “What is to be done when that which is refuted in these ‘Theses’ is being taught? No one should then make this a reason for leaving the Congregation, but then one should point out to leaders and members who spread these teachings that they are doing the wrong thing; and if this does not help, one should submit his objections to the Consistory and, if necessary, to the broader Assemblies, with a modest, clear, and forceful protest against the deviations, urging them to maintain the old, Reformed doctrine.”

The brothers continue:

“The first one of these theses is different from the following four in that it does not deal with a dogma or tenet regarding the way of salvation, but with a fundamental article of the Reformed Church Polity: the meaning of subscription to the Confessional Formulas. Because of this nature and contents the first Thesis could be called an introduction to the following Theses; it lays the church-political basis for our testimony against the proclamation of the teachings marked in Theses 2-5.

“Yet we judged that we should not put this Thesis separately, because the right and obligation of the Churches regarding the confessions and the upholding of the doctrine is closely tied to the doctrine of salvation and belongs to that doctrine in its entirety, as also Art. 27-32 of the Confession testify.

“As far as we know, this Thesis has not yet been denied and contested among us in so many words; but it is a fact: that deviating teachings are being left alone and that, on the other hand, they who urge that those who teach them are dealt with in an ecclesiastical manner, are being treated from various sides in an all but brotherly manner. This fact does render it necessary, indeed, that the Consistories and all the members of the Congrega-

tion are emphatically pointed to the meaning of the subscription to the Confessional Formulas, and that the Thesis dealing with this comes first.

“May, through the blessing of the Lord, this word contribute towards putting an end to the doctrinal differences which have already disturbed many Congregations for too long and threaten the Reformed Churches with still greater harm!”

Since it appears advisable, also with a view to a good understanding of what happened in the thirties and forties of this century, that the contents of this brochure are known, we'll give the complete text of the Theses and their commentary.

First Thesis

By his subscribing to the Confessional Formulas of Unity of the Reformed Churches one obligates himself unconditionally neither in word nor in writing to teach anything which is not in accordance with these Formulas; as this is being declared in the Form of Subscription for the Ministers of the Word and in the one for the Professors of Sacred Theology.

It is not only possible but also most desirable and, by increasing illumination of the Congregation with the study of God's Word, it may be expected according to the promise of the Spirit, that the Congregation's knowledge of God is deepened, becomes clearer, is improved, and increased. The Holy Spirit may also make the rise of new heresies and — as a result of these — more profound pondering and thinking about the doctrine of the Scriptures subservient to this that some dogma or tenet is being developed. If and as soon as this development has been sufficiently proved from God's Word and has also penetrated into and been received into the full knowledge of the Congregation — the Churches are undoubtedly under obligation from the Lord to transfer such holy gain into the Confessional Formulas.

It does not follow from this, however, that a dogma or tenet is taken as the starting-point for more profound thinking and for teaching or preaching it to the Congregation in contradiction to what is confessed in the Formulas; thereby one would, *ipso facto*, leave the Reformed ground and not take the historical development into account.

It is not permitted either to call a dogma or tenet which is confessed in the Confessional Formulas and consequently must be promoted and defended in the Ministry of the Word and in the teaching *scientifically-untrue*; for this would lead us back to the Rationalism of earlier times when — for *practical* reasons — it was preached from the pulpit what — on the basis of *scientific considerations* — was being denied, rejected, and opposed. For what, according to the Word of God, is stated and confessed by the Churches in the Confessional Formulas may not be assumed to conflict with deeper scholarly thought which is being guided by God's Word and Spirit.

If someone should be of the opinion that a dogma or tenet, expressed in the Confessional Formulas and confessed by the Churches, is *not* true, subscription to the Forms of Unity obligates him to submit a gravamen; but before the major ecclesiastical assemblies have made a pronouncement concerning it, such a person is not allowed either in word or in writing, to go against what is stated in the Forms. By a voluntary bond all ministers in the Reformed Churches, by their subscribing, have promised to abide by that doctrine. (We) “promise therefore that we

shall diligently teach and faithfully promote the aforesaid doctrine without either publicly or privately, directly or indirectly teaching or writing against it And if it should happen that hereafter any objection or sentiment against the aforesaid doctrine or any point of it should arise with us, we promise that we shall neither publicly nor secretly propose, promote or publish it, but that we shall reveal it beforehand to the Consistory, Classis, and Synod, that it may be examined by them, being prepared always willingly to submit ourselves to their judgment; under penalty, etc.” See the *Form of Subscription* for the Ministers of the Word and the Professors of Sacred Theology. Compare the Form for the Ordination or Installation of Ministers of the Divine Word and that of the Elders.

If, therefore, someone teaches anything which is not in accordance with this doctrine, he is rendering himself guilty of unfaithfulness before the Lord and His Church. By not submitting a “gravamen” nor submitting his deviating views to the ecclesiastical assemblies, he also makes it look as if he is afraid of the “examination” of these sentiments, or does not honour the ecclesiastical assemblies as having the right and calling to take heed of the doctrine. Therefore the Consistories must take heed of themselves and of the whole flock over which the Holy Spirit has made them Overseers, to feed the Congregation of God which He has acquired by His own blood, and to bar all that is not in agreement with the doctrine of the truth which is according to godliness, and of which the Reformed Churches make profession in their Confessional Formulas.

Second Thesis

The Confessional Formulas do not speak of an ETERNAL JUSTIFICATION, but only of a justification in time and through or out of faith.

To pose: that the elect also have already been justified from eternity in the judgment of God, and thus from eternity have already been acquitted of guilt and punishment and have received the right to eternal life, so that at birth the wrath of God and eternal condemnation no longer rest upon them but that, justified from eternity in God's judgment, they only have to come to the CONSCIOUSNESS of their justification in time — this is in conflict with the Holy Scripture and with what is confessed in the Confessional Formulas, and therefore may not be propagated or defended, neither in writing nor in preaching and teaching.

The Confessional Formulas do speak of an eternal *election*, but definitely not of an eternal *justification*. On the contrary, they teach that the justification happens *in time*, as *execution* of the eternal *decision* regarding their salvation. Being *elect* in Jesus Christ our Lord — Art. XVI B.C. — we are delivered and saved by the work which Christ did for us in time and which He does in us. Our Confession teaches this most clearly in Art. XX-XXIII. After it has been said first — Art. XX — that God sent His Son who took upon Himself the very nature of man, therein to give satisfaction, it reads: “that God manifested His justice against His Son when He laid our iniquity upon Him, and poured out His goodness and mercy on us; out of a most perfect love He gave His Son to die for us and He raised Him for our justification that through Him we might obtain immortality and life eternal.”

— To be continued

Retirement — Rev. M. van Beveren

On Sunday August 28, 1988 Rev. M. van Beveren held his farewell or should we say retirement sermon, since he was retiring from being an officially active minister in our churches.

First some memorabilia. Our minister just recently reached the ripe young age of 67 years, having been a minister of the Word for thirty-one years and one month to the day on August 28th. His first congregation was Vrouwenpolder in Holland where he was ordained on July 28, 1957 and where he served until December 27, 1964 whence he took up his post in Fergus-Guelph serving there until November 9, 1969, when he was installed in Coaldale, Alberta. He ministered there until August 20, 1972, moving to the west coast to serve the church at New Westminster (now Surrey) until September 24, 1978. Burlington East was the next church to receive the benefit of his services until July 4, 1982 when he moved on to serve the Providence congregation in Edmonton, Alberta. We, in sunny Alberta, have enjoyed having Rev. van Beveren as our pastor and teacher for the past six years and hope yet to reap the benefits of his counsel for many years to come, be it in a less official capacity.

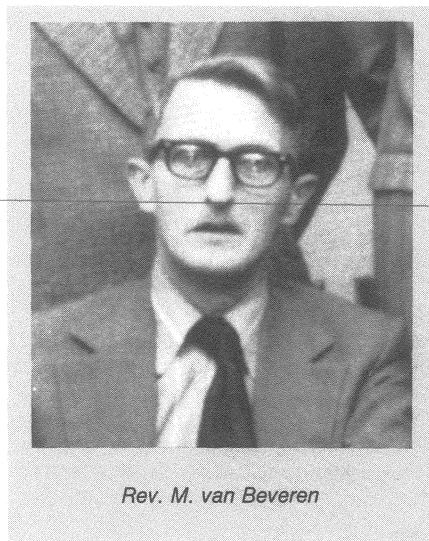
Our minister's text on this memorable day was taken from the book of Hebrews. After reading Hebrews 13:1-19 his text was the verses 20 and 21: "Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good that you may do His will, working in you that which is pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen."

He began his sermon by saying, "This afternoon we may give special thanks to the Lord for the preaching of the Word. Throughout the past years He has guided us throughout in spite of our shortcomings. We know He will continue to do so. He will with certainty not stop or forsake the work which He has begun until it is completed. It is a sure promise. He has given His own Son as the great Shepherd of the sheep. He will guide His own to lead them to His holy throne."

The theme of his sermon was: The God of Peace who proclaims His blessing in Jesus Christ.

1. The certainty of the blessing
2. The riches of the blessing.

Our text is a benediction. God proclaims that He will and does equip His people. It is a proclamation. It is a reality in our life, the life of every believer. We



Rev. M. van Beveren

must answer this in the affirmative, that we accept this promise, this proclamation. God makes this His promise a reality now already. God raised up Jesus so that He would be our Shepherd forever. He provided His church with such a great Shepherd. Only through Him do God's blessings come upon His people. Our Shepherd never leaves His sheep. We can be sure the blessings are ours because of Jesus Christ. The proclamation does not depend on any person but on Jesus Christ.

Christ will bring His work to a good end, gathering all His sheep before God's throne. His people will prevail to the very end, He will not fail. He gives understanding through His Spirit. His blessing we receive always, He will keep His people

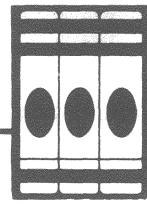
in the faith. In the world many turn away. We are not any better, if God would not prevent it we would go the same way. The loving Shepherd through the preaching and the sacraments guides His often stubborn sheep in His grace.

He gives us weak, sinful men, as instruments in His hand to watch over us, ministers, elders, deacons. They have failed in many respects. However, when they spoke according to God's Word, there was the gospel. For every word they have to give account. Behind them stands the Lord Jesus Christ. He knows our weakness, He never fails or leaves us. That is the joy also of today. God's proclamation stands, His Word abides forever. It is a joy for us that we have the great loving Shepherd of the sheep. He will feed His flock forever. He seeks those who were lost. We rejoice and are thankful today for His grace and mercy. He is the same today, yesterday and forever. Amen.

A word of thanks was spoken by the council on behalf of the congregation via its vice-president br. R. Van Delft.

He stated that last winter Rev. van Beveren had requested council to relieve (retire) him of his call as of September 1, 1988. Council regretfully acquiesced to his request. Thus today is his last Sunday as our full-time minister. In the past farewells were said to Rev. van Popta, De Jong, and De Bruin. We cannot do this now since Rev. van Beveren is not moving away. After a long holiday he will return and will in the future hopefully conduct the worship services for our congregation from time to time. He has served as a minister of the Word in the service of his Lord for thirty-one years and one month to the day. We thank the Lord that He has enabled Rev. van Beveren to serve many during this time, as per II Timothy 4:1,2. He, the Lord has enabled Rev. van Beveren to faithfully discharge the duties of his office during these many years. For this we thank our God. We then sang Psalm 134:2.

Respectfully submitted
on behalf of the
Providence Canadian Reformed
Church, Edmonton
D.S. POSTMA



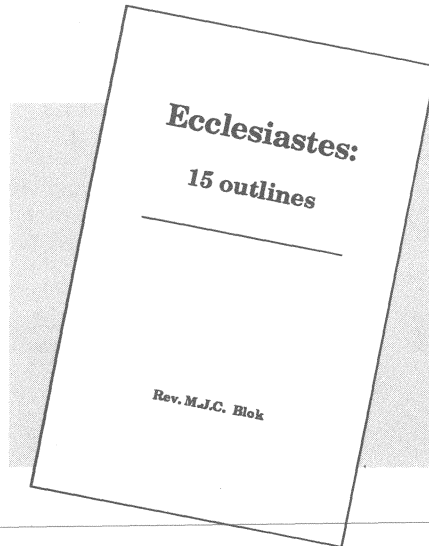
An aid for studying Ecclesiastes

The Inter-League Publication Board has made available in English translation the outlines of the late Rev. M.J.C. Blok on Ecclesiastes. The study of God's Word will benefit from it! Published as *Ecclesiastes: 15 outlines* (1988), this booklet of 74 pages is an excellent guide through the unique difficulties that this part of Scripture presents. Who has not had questions reading this part of divine revelation with its refrain "all is vanity" or the like?

Concerning authorship, it is argued that "Solomon could not have written this book" (p.2) but that the writer was a "teacher of wisdom" who "calls the people (i.e. God's people, the church) together, and, according to God's commandment, brings the Word to that gathered church or covenant community" (pp. 1ff.). The time of origin cannot be precisely determined, but it was during a period "when the church lived under an anti-Christian power, either the Persian or the Greco-Macedonian" (p. 5). "The church learns what it is to be a stranger, and the question is: how will the church act in this situation? Ecclesiastes gives us the answer to this question, and that answer becomes even more significant when we remember that this book was probably the last book of the Old Testament canon to be written" (pp. 5ff.).

In this study guide, Ecclesiastes is placed within the context of the Scriptures. Also this book with all its questions and investigations has as its primary author, the Shepherd of Israel (Eccl. 12:11). He calls His people to listen to the true wisdom which is ultimately revealed in Christ. Rev. Blok makes this point throughout. That gives this work its cohesion and focal point, and places it clearly within the history of God's self-revelation and redemption.

The explanations of the Scripture passages are clear and to the point. The questions that accompany each outline should stimulate discussions. A critical



comment could be raised about the question on pp. 61ff. Does it make much sense to pass on a question in English translation that assumes knowledge of a Dutch book? Perhaps the question could have been rephrased and a reference made, for example, to the articles by the Rev. A.B. Roukema, "Life Between Death and Resurrection," *Clarion*, 23:17-21 (1974).

OUR COVER



Then the listing of C. Vonk, *De Doden weten niets* (1971) could have been left out of the bibliography and the impression that it is a recommended book (which it is not) could have been avoided.

Some passages from this book will give a flavour of the whole. Concerning the place of Ecclesiastes in the Bible, the final paragraph reads:

We see him [the Preacher] struggle to hold on to the faith of the fathers at a time when the church is faced with the riddle of God's righteousness, goodness and wisdom in his government of the world. It is precisely in this way that the book reaches beyond itself to a revelation which was on the way, which has appeared completely in Jesus Christ. The Preacher could not understand the problems of his time, but he subjected himself faithfully to the majesty of the sovereign God, the Shepherd of Israel, expecting Israel's comfort. Therefore, his book has a unique place in the history of God's revelation in the Old Testament. (p. 12)

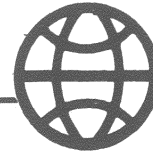
On Ecclesiastes 7:14, we read (in part):

The church can and must witness against sin, but she cannot intervene violently. God has also made the political and national evil days. Reformed dogmatics speak about God's "active permission." Article 13 of the Belgic Confession talks about his ordinance (which is stronger). Through faith we know where God's way will finally end, but how that way will go, no one knows beforehand. (p. 45)

I will resist the temptation to quote more. Buy this book and use it to study Ecclesiastes. If you are not a member of a society that studies the Word, it can be ordered from:

ILPB
Box 783
London, ON N6A 4Y8

C. VAN DAM



FOR AVID CYCLISTS (CANADIAN SCENE)

Alberta's first highway map for cyclists is now available. *The Alberta Cycling Information Map* indicates the width of the shoulders of the provincial highways and also each highway's traffic volume. It also indicates particularly narrow bridges where problems for cyclists could occur. The reverse side of the map gives information such as provincial traffic laws for cyclists, safety and maintenance tips and other useful information. Alberta is one of the first provinces in Canada to issue a map

strictly for cyclists. It is available from the Alberta Bicycle Association, Travel Alberta and the Canadian Hostelling Association.

EXPOSITION IN KOREA ON KUYPER (SEOUL)

In October an exposition on Abraham Kuyper was scheduled to be mounted by the Institute for Calvinistic Studies. The Institute was founded three years ago by Dr. S. K. Chung. It mounted a similar exhibition last year on John Calvin. Dr. Chung noted in his reason for the exhibition that, although Korea has strong pres-

byterian and reformed traditions, little was yet known of Kuyper. (REC NE)

SWEDISH LUTHERANS PREPARE NEW CONFESSION (STOCKHOLM)

A special commission has been appointed by the Swedish Lutheran Church to draft a contemporary confession to be presented in 1993. The Swedish Church believes a new confession is necessary in view of changes in life and society. The present confession of the Church is the Augsburg Confession, which will be 400 years old in 1993. (REC NE) VO

CONSULAAT-GENERAAL OF THE NETHERLANDS

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

OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

GROENEN, Jannetje, gehuwd met Herman Joseph ROBERTS uit Jogjins (Can.) geboren op 1 augustus 1924 te Nijmegen, naar Canada vertrokken op 13 september 1947.

IDSINGA, Wijtze, geboren op 10 april 1910, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Vierkantsdijk 1, Harlingen, naar Canada vertrokken op 24 juni 1952.

SHIWGOBEN, Phillip Ramnauth, geboren op 5 mei 1952 6e Legnan, Brits Guyana, in Nederland gewoond hebbende. Momenteel in Canada woonachtig, laatstbekende adres: 948 King St. East, Hamilton, ON.

SPAAN, H.J., geboren op 9 januari 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Raadhuisstraat 167, Alphen a/d Rijn. Naar Canada vertrokken op 20 nov. 1957.

PREYDE, Annie Maria Veronica, geboren op 22 februari 1928 te Sassenheim, laatste woonplaats in Nederland: Brummen.

VROLIJK, Cornelis, geboren op 11 februari 1926 te 's Gravenhage, laatstbekende adres: Slicherstraat 4, Den Haag, naar Canada vertrokken op 29 maart 1960 met bestemming Southport.

VAN SPANJE, Erich Robert Arnold, geboren op 14 maart 1938 te Djakarta, laatstbekende woonplaats in Nederland: Den Haag, naar Canada vertrokken op 8 november 1968 met mogelijke bestemming Montreal.

AERTS, Antonius Petrus, geboren te Zundert (N.Br.) op 28 november 1913, naar Canada vertrokken tussen 1945 en 1949, gehuwd met Nelly Meyer to Chatham in 1961. Gewoond hebbende: 1950-1952 King St.W., Chatham, ON. 1954-1955, 47 Victoria Ave., Chatham, ON., 1956-1960, 85 Queen St., Chatham, ON. 1961: 47 Victoria Ave., Chatham, ON. Oktober 1961-1965: 1801 E Thomas Rd., Lot A14, Phoenix, Arizona USA. 1965-1968: 31 Delaware Ave., Chatham, ON. & Cons. 12 RR, West Sorne, ON. Zijn laatste adres dateert van 1968: 85 Chester St., St. Thomas, ON.

BLOTT, Kevin Alan, geboren op 1 juni 1956, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Marinapark 197, Den Helder.

GELDERBLOM, Gerrit Bastiaan, geboren op 12 december 1908.

GELDERBLOM, Wilhelmina Cornelia, geboren 31 oktober 1907.

VAN DE(N) BROEK, Dirk Johan, geboren op 10 juli 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Sosterbergsestraat 131, Soest. Naar Canada vertrokken op 23 juli 1953.

VAN DAM, Alida Catharina, geboren op 26 oktober 1924 te Obdam, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Verlaatweg 10, Obdam. Naar Canada vertrokken op 27 maart 1953.

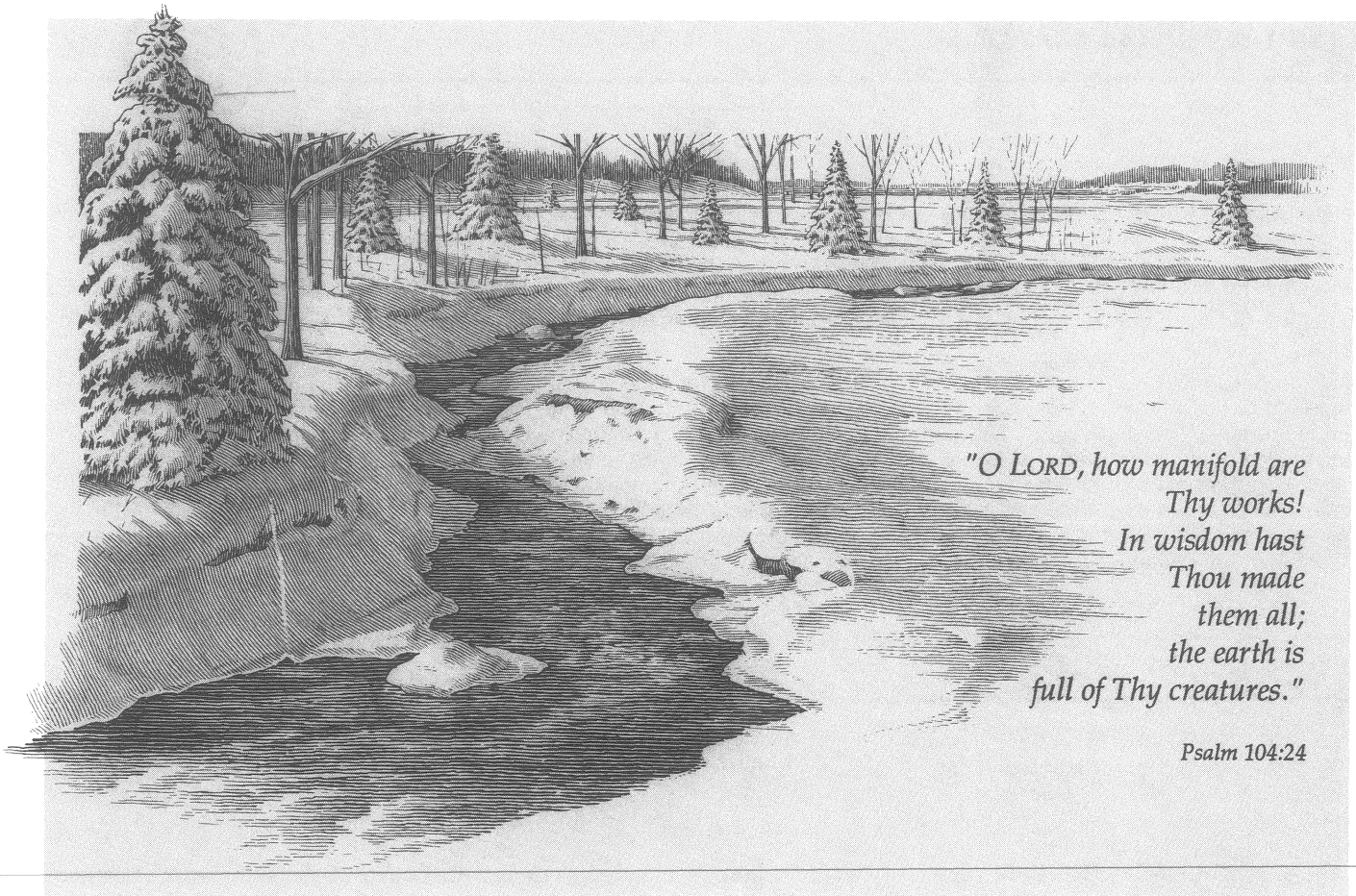
LANGELER, Derk Hendrik Gerhardus, geboren op 10 augustus 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: v.d. Endelaan 14, Hillegom. Naar Canada vertrokken op 25 maart 1952.

DE ROOIJ, G., geboren op 4 september 1923. Laatstbekende adres in Canada: 717 Consol Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

VAN DER VEER, Harry, gehuwd met een Canadese vrouw. Mogelijk vanuit Duitsland naar Canada gemigreerd.

VEEN, Th., geboren op 5 juli 1928, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Almstraat 30, Amsterdam. Naar Canada vertrokken op 4 juli 1960.

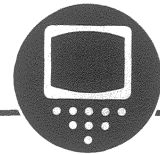
De Consul Generaal,
voor deze:-
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER
Fgd. KANSELIER



*"O LORD, how manifold are
Thy works!
In wisdom hast
Thou made
them all;
the earth is
full of Thy creatures."*

Psalm 104:24

PRESS RELEASE



"Anchor" Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, September 16, 1988

The meeting was opened by the chairman, Mr. G. Lodder, with the reading of Mark 4, the singing of Psalm 146 and prayer.

Following the adoption of minutes and agenda, reports were given by the following:

1. *Director:* Things at Anchor Home are running smoothly. The residents enjoyed a good summer that included outdoor living at Anchor Camp and swimming in the home's own backyard. The residents have remained in good health and have even set up their own musical band, with a bit of help from the surrounding congregational community.

Staffing needs are still being met; at present the association employs a full-

time director (Mr. N. VanderHeiden), two full-time counsellors (Miss Harriet Gelms and Miss Diane Jager) and one part-time counsellor (Miss Nancy Vandergriendt). The promise of expansion in the near future, however, ensures that we will soon be needing more staff. Nevertheless, quality care is certainly being given to our three full-time residents (Grace Homan, Jerry Bontekoe and James Buikema) and to various part-time residents. For this we are thankful to our heavenly Father who cares for all His children.

2. *The Advisory Committee* reported on the need to hire new staff in anticipation of expansion. An advertisement will be drawn up to solicit applications.

3. *Property Committee.* The contract for the addition to Anchor Home has been awarded and construction should begin as soon as possible.

4. *The Public Relations Committee*

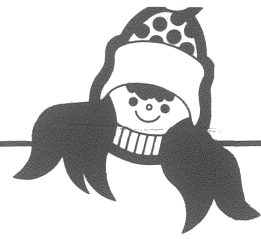
reported that a slide show introducing the Anchor Home and its residents to local Anchor members has been put together. This slide package will be available, with commentary, to those schools and societies that would like to use it.

5. *The Summer Camp Committee* reported on Camp '88, another roaring success, despite a shortage of staff. Those staff that do give their time invariably report enthusiastically about their camping experience.

6. *The Treasurer's* report revealed that the money is coming in very slowly. Members will be encouraged by their local representative to pay their \$100.00 fees as soon as possible.

After a few administrative matters, the meeting was closed with singing and prayer.

J. RUGGI



Hello Busy Beavers,

Now let's first wish ALL the Busy Beavers celebrating a December birthday a very happy day on their special day!

Here's hoping you all have a super time celebrating with your family and friends.

And last, but not least, may the LORD, our heavenly Father bless and keep you all in the year ahead.

~ December ~

Alan Hofsink	1	Richard Feenstra	16
Cynthia Van Raalte	2	Stuart Schenkel	16
Sophia Van Iperen	4	Lisa De Boer	17
Annette Bax	7	Jacqueline Bikker	19
Hannah Harlaar	9	Janice Berends	21
Leanne Beukema	10	Joni Dekker	24
Neil Van Seters	10	Wendy Hovius	24
Brian Janzen	11	Alwin Plug	26
Carla Schoon	11	Elizabeth Vanderpol	26
Stacey Schutten	12	Daniel De Gelder	29

How about a game for your birthday party?
Of course, everyone is welcome to try it!

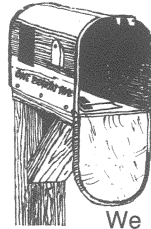
SECRET NUMBER

Tell a friend to think of a number. You will guess it correctly, no matter what the number is!

First, ask your friend to double the number in his (her) mind. Next, have your friend multiply that number by five and tell you the answer. Then you tell him (her) the secret number!

How do you do it? The answer will always have more than one digit. Drop the last digit and you have the secret number. For example, if the answer is 100, the secret number is 10.

The trick always works. Your friend is really multiplying the secret number by 10!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Nellie Bosveld*. We are happy to have another Busy Beaver from "down under" join us! And I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! Keep up the good work. And thank you for sharing, Nellie.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Laura Harsevoort*. I see you like to keep busy, too! Will you write and tell us about your family? And maybe you will share a story about the best book you've read lately, Laura.

Welcome to the Club, *Rosaleen Jager*. Thank you for the letter and also the pictures. I'm glad you found new friends at your new school. Bye for now. Write again soon.

What an interesting trip you made to Holland, *Anna Devries*! You sure are lucky to be able to understand Dutch. That way you can still keep in touch with your grandparents even if you can't see them so often! I'm sure they'll treasure your letters! I'm saving your wordsearch for NEXT fall, all right, Anna?

I hope you had a very happy birthday this month, *Robbie Blanken*. Thank you for a very friendly letter, and the poem, too. I know the Busy Beavers will like it!

Hello, *Amy Hofsink*. It's nice to hear from you again. I'm glad you enjoyed your trip this summer. Will you write us sometime to tell us how B.C. is different from your home? Bye for now, Amy.

Quiz Time!

HOMES

Cold outside? Makes us glad to get inside. Makes us thankful for our warm, comfortable homes, right?

Animals have homes that are as different as the animals are themselves!

Can you match each animal with what it calls "home"?

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. elf owl | a. shell |
| 2. prairie dogs | b. burrow in a sandy bank |
| 3. hermit crab | c. hutch |
| 4. beaver | d. nest on a chimney top |
| 5. trapdoor spider | e. a hole in a cactus |
| 6. polar bear | f. mother's pouch |
| 7. kingfisher | g. silk-lined tunnel with lid |
| 8. white stork | h. burrow in a "town" |
| 9. baby kangaroo | i. lodge |
| 10. rabbits | j. den in a packed snow bank |

(See answers)



Pictures by Busy Beaver Amy Hofsink