

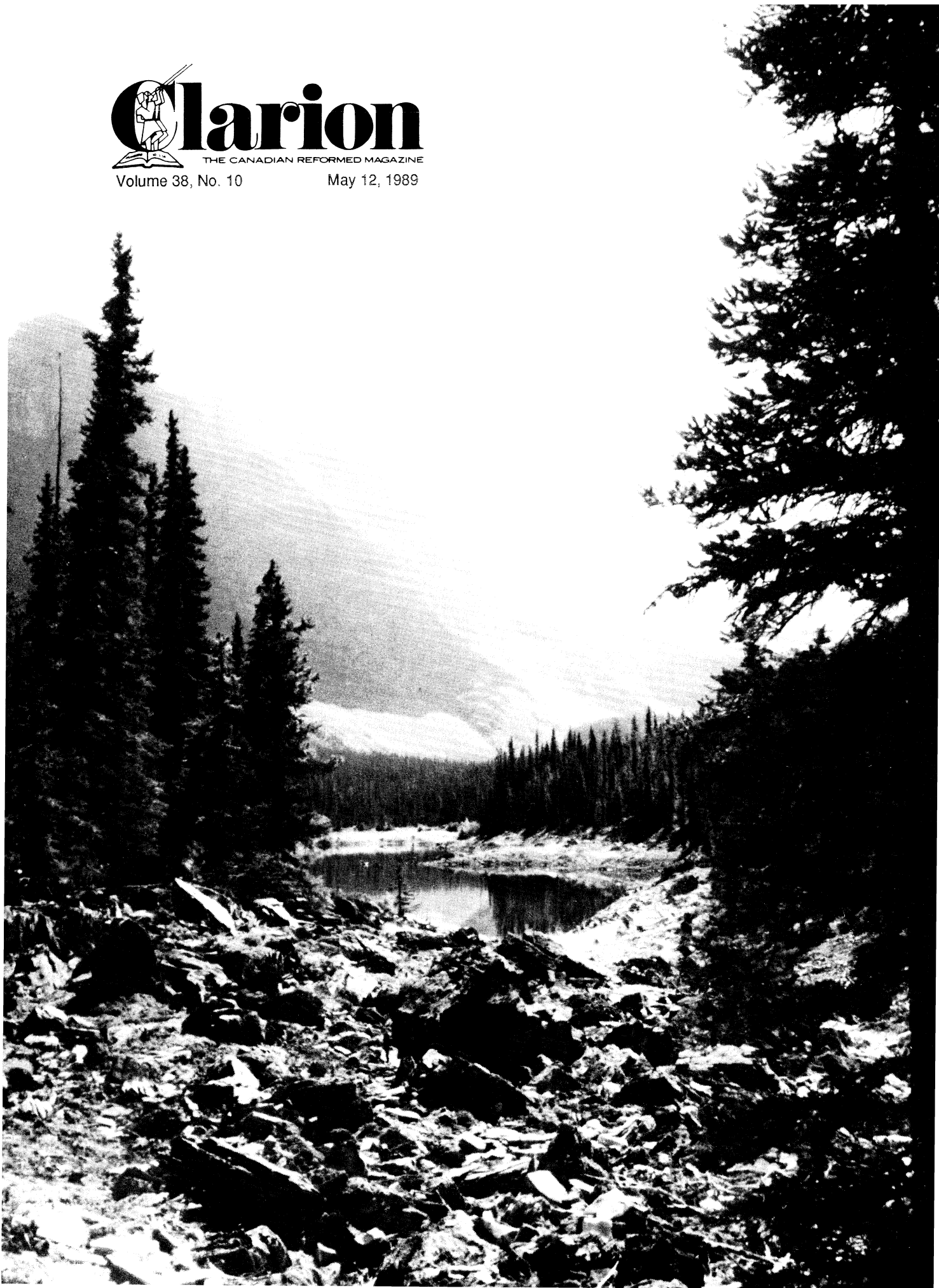


Clarion

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PENTECOST: baptism with the Holy Spirit

By G.H. Visscher

It is very distressing to note that whereas the Holy Spirit Himself works towards bringing about unity among the people of God (Eph.4:3), the discussions about Him and His work over the centuries have been such that a great deal of disunity is the result. Today, there are not only radical divisions between churches which are of Pentecostal persuasion and others but even within the Pentecostal movement there has been excessive division and separation as different stands have been taken with respect to the Spirit and His gifts. A countless number of Christians have lost the real "peace of Christ" as they take up this endless pursuit for such gifts as tongues and healing as the be-all and end-all. And many others are felt to be second-rank Christians, or even told that they are not Christians at all because they do not have the so-called "second blessing" wherein these gifts become evident.

And so it makes it all the more urgent that the question be examined: do we, as Reformed people, really have the right understanding of the working of the Spirit in this Pentecost age? For surely, the Reformed Church misses out on the blessing that it may receive from this great event if it looks only at the excesses of others without considering its own deficiencies. One might ask, for instance, how much attention has been paid within Reformed circles to the very Scriptural teaching about the "baptism with the Holy Spirit"? Do we understand what that really is, or do we immediately wrongly equate it with the baptism with water that we are all so familiar with? And moreover, why is it that also within Reformed churches there is often a great deal of worldliness and weakness? Why is it that as individuals and as a community, we do not display more power in terms of living a Christian life and drawing others to join us? No doubt, here lies the answer, at least in part: it is because we are not dependent enough on the Spirit of God, and fail to live sufficiently out of the reality of Pentecost. It will be good to reflect on this.

A baptism administered by Christ

The fact that in the above, the event of Pentecost has been referred to as a "baptism" may strike one as somewhat odd because whenever baptism is mentioned today, one immediately thinks of the water-baptism which is so common among us. In this baptism however one does not even come into contact with water; instead, it is a baptism *with the Holy Spirit*. That Pentecost can be referred to in this way, is obvious from Acts 1:5, which reads "John baptized with water, but before many days you shall be *baptized with the Holy Spirit*". "Baptism" really is an appropriate word in this connection because "to baptize" simply means "to dip, immerse, or submerge", and this is really what happened to the apostles on

Pentecost. They were truly immersed, submerged into the Holy Spirit; they were completely filled and possessed by Him.

To appreciate the work of the Spirit here however, one needs to focus first of all on Christ, for He is the One who is central also here at Pentecost. The baptism, the signs, and all the activity here is all the work of the Lord Jesus Christ. To be convinced of that, one needs to look at something that Luke wrote in his first book, something that is so significant that if one does not see that, he will not understand what is written in the second chapter of Luke's second book, the Acts of the Apostles. In Luke 3:16,17, when Jesus is about to be baptized by John the Baptist, John speaks some interesting words about this Jesus. He says: "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie, *He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire*". John the Baptist says, in other words, that the One who comes after him, is also a Baptist. Besides John the Baptist, there is also Jesus the Baptist, and just as Jesus is greater than John, so the baptism that Jesus comes with is a baptism greater than John's, for it is a *baptism with the Holy Spirit and with fire*.

But now, if one searches the Gospels in order to find passages wherein Jesus is busy baptizing with the Spirit and this fire, then one soon discovers that there are no such references. It does not happen before He dies on the cross, nor before He ascends into heaven; He departs from this world without ever administering His Spirit and fire baptism! So when does Jesus do so? Not until fifty days after His resurrection! Pentecost is the act wherein Jesus is the Baptist, administering His Spirit and fire baptism! He is the One who sends the Spirit of God down into that room (cf. Acts 2:33)!

One might then ask: why is it that Jesus does not administer this Spirit-and-fire baptism sooner? It is a question which seems to have puzzled even John the Baptist and to have led to his question: "Are you He who is to come or shall we look for another?" (Matt.11:3). But the point is that before Jesus can administer this baptism with the Spirit and with fire, He must first Himself undergo Spirit-and-fire baptism! And this is what does take place in the Gospels. Shortly after John the Baptist says these words Jesus goes into the Jordan, and as John baptizes Him with water, He at the same time is baptized with the Holy Spirit, who descends upon Him "in bodily form, as a dove"(3:22). Jesus' baptism was unique in all the world; it was essentially a baptism whereby He became equipped for that most difficult task of His, for His ministry and work by receiving the Holy Spirit of God. Moreover, John said that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit and *with fire!* To

John, "fire" is often a symbol of destruction, judgement and cleansing, as is seen in verse 17 of chapter 3, where He said of the Christ: "His winnowing fork is in His hand, to clear His threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into His granary, but the chaff *He will burn with unquenchable fire*". Without going into all the details here, if one asks when Jesus Himself was baptized *with fire*, then it seems one must think primarily of Christ's suffering. From the beginning of His ministry to the end thereof, Jesus was going through a baptism ordeal, which was not completed until He had drained the entire cup of the wrath of God. The fact that baptism with fire must be viewed in this way is obvious from Luke 12:49 where Jesus cries out "I came to cast fire upon the earth; and how I wish it were already kindled! I have a baptism to be baptized with; and how I am constrained until it is accomplished", or, "how distressed I am until it is accomplished." The picture that Luke seems to be sketching then is that when Jesus comes into the world, He cannot immediately begin baptizing the people of God with His Spirit and fire baptism because this baptism contains a destructive, judgmental element. The people of God are so sinful and corrupt that if they were to be baptized immediately with this kind of baptism, they would be consumed by the Spirit and the fire! Then they would be destroyed by it, and destroyed completely! Therefore, before the people of God can receive that kind of baptism, the Jesus who is neither sinful nor corrupt, as their sin-bearer and their Mediator, must undergo that Spirit and fire baptism! In order that the Spirit and fire baptism might be beneficial to the people of God rather than destructive, the Messiah Himself as their sin-bearer must go through it! He must remove the curse in this baptism by taking all those destructive and judgmental elements upon Himself, and so turn it into a blessing! He must drink the cup of the wrath of God, drink it completely, and so bear their condemnation. Before He can become the Baptist who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and with fire, He must first become "the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world"! (John 1:29,33).¹

When Pentecost is seen in that light, then it really comes into its own - as the crowning point on all the work of Jesus Christ. There is a tendency to think that at Easter all is really over, and that with Ascension and Pentecost things begin to taper off even more. It is very far from true; seen rightly, Pentecost is really the climax and the fulfillment of them all. For notice: at Easter, that which John said would be the very purpose of Christ's work - baptizing with the Spirit and fire - has still not yet taken place! Even at Christ's ascension, at the end of His earthly ministry, that which was said was His goal at the beginning of His earthly ministry, still has not yet happened. If His ascension is really the end, then the course charted out for the Christ has not been completed, and the Bible an unfinished book, a story that is left suspended in the air. Instead, at Pentecost it all comes to its climax and fulfillment. There, that which was said about Him at the beginning of His ministry, is finally a reality. There you have the baptism with the Spirit and fire. A sound like the rush of a mighty wind - it is a sign of the Spirit descending. And suddenly, tongues as of fire, resting on each one of them. What is it? It is all the benefits and blessings won by Jesus Christ in His life, death, and resurrection being applied to the disciples. It is Christ pouring out His Spirit, causing His church to become a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph.2:22). It is Christ building a temple of God in which the Spirit of God dwells (1

***"In the words of
Paul to the Galatians:
'if we live by the Spirit,
let us also
KEEP IN STEP
with the Spirit.' "***

Cor. 3:16). It is Christ causing His church to become a Spirit-baptized body. You could say, therefore, that which John's baptism was to Jesus, that Pentecost was to the church. What the Jordan was to Jesus, Pentecost was to the apostles. For at the Jordan, when Jesus was baptized by John, the Father gave Jesus the Spirit so that He might be able to accomplish the messianic task before Him. Likewise, at Pentecost, the Jesus who received the Spirit from the Father, now gives the Spirit to His Church. The Spirit who has equipped Christ for His task is now poured out on the church so that she might be equipped for hers.

So it is. Also in the books of Acts Luke shows in more ways than one that Pentecost is the work of the ascended Christ in heaven. In Acts 1:1, for instance, Luke says: "In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach". In other words, now I am going to tell you about what Jesus continued to do. Now I'm going to tell you part two of the work of Christ! All the action in the Book of Acts - the result of the work of Christ! Not really: the acts of the apostles, but the acts of *Christ* through His apostles! So too with Acts 2:33. That whole Pentecost sermon of Peter's is very interesting because notice that on the day when the Spirit is poured out and when Peter is full of the Spirit, whom does he preach about? About the Spirit? Does He say: "look at the Spirit! See what He does!" No, from beginning to end, it is a sermon about *Christ*! Peter says: Pentecost is the work of

Jesus Christ! The Spirit in Peter is causing Peter to show that Pentecost is all about Christ, Christ, and Christ again, that it is entirely the fulfillment and the climax of Christ's work! For Peter says in verse 33, about the wind, the fire, the tongues of Pentecost - that that is all Christ's work. He says: "*this Jesus . . . being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out that which you see and hear!*"

This ought then to be borne in mind when people nowadays tell us that Pentecost needs to be repeated in the life of every individual Christian. We should not believe it, for Pentecost is very much like Christmas, Good Friday, Easter and Ascension. It too is a unique event in the whole history of redemption, and just as the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ are unrepeatable events, so Pentecost is unrepeatable. Just as Christ died for His Church once-for-all, so He poured out His Spirit once-for-all on that Church of His! Pentecost is the event whereby the new age, the age of the Spirit, the new dispensation is ushered in. And since that age is already here, it surely cannot be ushered in again.

A baptism with the Holy Spirit

On the day of Pentecost itself several mysterious things take place, such as a sound like the rush of a mighty wind, the tongues of fire, and the tongues which are spoken (Acts 2:1-4). When one explores their cause, it is no doubt found in the fact that this baptism administered by Christ is at the same time a baptism *with the Holy Spirit*. For since the Spirit is an invisible Person, one who cannot be perceived with the human eye or the human ear, He must manifest Himself in other ways, by means of signs. So it is. The wind points to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the room, for "wind" often symbolizes the "Spirit", being the same words in both Hebrew and in Greek. Think in this connection of John 3:8, where you see the parallel as well; for Jesus says there: "the *wind* blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not

know when it comes or whether it goes; so it is with everyone who is born of the *Spirit*." The same you see in John 20:22, where the risen Jesus breathes on the disciples, causing a wind to come upon them and says to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit". So it is too with the tongues which look like fire and descend upon their heads; that too is a symbol of the presence of the Spirit and of the fact that these persons are being baptized with the Spirit. Likewise, the fact that suddenly these men speak in strange languages not only symbolizes the fact that from this point on the Gospel is to go out to many nations and to be heard in many tongues; it also serves to prove that the Spirit of God not only filled the room, but He also filled the



HYMN 38

Winchester New

Hamburg, 1690

1. The Spir-it, sent from heav'n a-bove,
Shows us the way of truth and love.
The Prom-ised One dwells in our hearts;
He light and life to us im-parts.

2. He on the Church of Christ our Lord
His many varied gifts outpoured,
That, without pride or malice, we
Might one another's members be.



apostles. He had them under His complete control. They spoke as He gave them utterance. Truly then, they were baptized with the Holy Spirit!

Now it might be asked: what does this imply for us today? Again, the Pentecostal movement is telling us that once we have been converted to Christ, and if we have truly been converted, then at some later point we must receive as well the "second blessing" of an experience such as this. Then we too must have our own mini-pentecost in which tongues and the like are a reality. Granted, it should not be denied for a moment that at the first Pentecost and thereafter, people spoke in tongues. Undoubtedly, for a time, tongues played quite an important role in the life of the church. In Corinth, people did speak in tongues; when the letter to the Corinthians was written, the Gospels had not yet been written, Acts had not been written, neither had the book of Revelation, nor most of the others. All the Corinthians apparently had in their possession was a handful of New Testament letters. And indeed, in this void, God did cause one person to speak in tongues, and another to interpret them, and so He would pass on His Word. Tongues, when they were properly used, and properly interpreted, constituted prophecy. As long as the Scriptures were incomplete, God chose to speak to His people in that way. That cannot be denied. It is interesting to compare all this with the last book that Paul wrote, 2 Timothy. There, in Paul's last

will and testament, one reads nothing about tongues or such special gifts of the Spirit. Why? Because the Word is now complete! So instead, one now reads about officebearers whose task it is to maintain that Word and to preach it. And this Word is sufficient, for "all Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness, *that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work*" (3:16,17). But whereas the use of tongues in the early church cannot be denied, what ought to be denied most vehemently is the suggestion that all true Christians must be able to do likewise today. That is a result of misreading Holy Scripture, which is merciless and cruel, for it causes many Christians to be tossed into doubt about the truthfulness of their faith.

That those who teach this misread the Scriptures is evident already from Acts 2. For we may ask: who is it precisely that speaks in tongues here? Do all believers do so? Does everyone who is baptized with the Holy Spirit begin to speak in other tongues? Certainly not. In reality, it is only the twelve apostles who do so. For Acts 1:26 mentions Matthias, the newly appointed apostle, as well as the other eleven; and then Acts 2:1 says: "When the day of Pentecost had come, *they* (that is, the twelve apostles!) were all together in one place. And suddenly a sound came from heaven . . . and filled the house where they were sitting . . ." In this passage, the pronouns "them" and "they" refer back to those apostles, so that also verse 4 reads: "and, they (the apostles) were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance." The apostles are the ones who receive these signs, and begin to speak in tongues, because they are the officebearers of the church, the representatives of the New Testament church. The Spirit comes upon the church, not when everyone or even a select group begins to speak in tongues, but when the apostles, the *representatives of the church*, receive this gift. And notice too, that later, in the same chapter, when we hear about three thousand other people coming to faith, then we do not hear anything about the sound of a mighty wind, or tongues of flame, or of speaking in tongues! Yet were these people not also Christians? Were they not also "baptized with the Holy Spirit"? Does Peter not baptize them with water, telling them that the promises apply also to them, and that they too receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit? Therefore, it should be realized again: the beginning of Acts 2 is unique, and unrepeatable. So if believers today are looking for a model or a pattern of how it must go today, they must look at the end and not at the beginning of Acts 2, reflecting primarily on the three thousand rather than the twelve.

The same can be seen in 1 Corinthians 12:10,30 where Paul makes it clear that whereas only *some* people speak in tongues, yet "by one Spirit we were *all* baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and *all* were made to drink of one Spirit" (vs.13). Again, this is no privilege of the select few, of a certain elite, "all were made to drink of one Spirit".

So it might be asked: who is it that can lay claim to the title of Christian? Is it only those who have received special gifts such as speaking in tongues? The clear teaching of Scripture is: if you believe, really believe, in Jesus Christ, then you too were baptized with the Holy Spirit. Baptism with the Holy Spirit is a universal Christian experience. It is not so that there are "have-not Christians" and there are "Spirit-baptized Christians". Rather, it is so that there are Christians who are Spirit-baptized Christians and there are persons who are not Christians at all.

A baptism which calls for the filling of the Holy Spirit

All this might, however, cause one to wonder: if all those who really believe in Christ were actually baptized with the

Spirit of Christ, why is it that sometimes there is so little evidence of the work of the Spirit in these Christians? Why is it that there is often a lack in zeal, in enthusiasm, in dedication? The life of the Church is often such that one might draw the conclusion that the Spirit of God is very far from this place and these people.

Yet it must be realized that the lack of a thorough Christian lifestyle and outlook does not necessarily mean that a person or a body of people have not been baptized with the Spirit. To be sure, it can mean that; perhaps the profession of belief is only a matter of the lips rather than the heart. Hypocrisy is there in the true church too (article 29, Belgic Confession). However, the question is: does this necessarily mean that the Pentecostals are right - that only those who have some of these higher gifts have really "got" it, and that they are the only real Christians? Instead, what it means is that what those who have been baptized with the Holy Spirit as a one-time reality need to realize is that they need to be filled with the Holy Spirit of God again and again! Their supply needs to be replenished; the fullness of the Holy Spirit of God needs to be recovered, for whereas the baptism with the Holy Spirit only happens once in the life of every believer and is unrepeatable, the filling with the Holy Spirit needs to be repeated and also can be. Luke teaches us that in the book of Acts. Acts 2:4 says: "they were all filled with the Holy Spirit", but later some of the same people are being filled again; in 4:8 we hear of Peter being filled with the Spirit again, and in 4:31 the whole company is once again being filled with the Spirit of God (cf. Acts 9:17; 13:9, Eph. 5:18). Paul says it all when he urges the Ephesians: "be filled (that is, KEEP ON BEING FILLED) with the Holy Spirit".

Thus, it is clear that the picture of the Christian life as a life in which everything is joy and peace and the like is little more than a caricature. It is not so that once a supposed second blessing has been received, the life of the Christian is nothing but bliss. Rather, moments of temptation are sure to come. Sin continues to be a reality. Times of discouragement

will be there. Satan yet blows with much of his force. But what will we do when such moments come upon us? Follow the Pentecostal myth which would say that the presence of such points to the absence of Christ and His Spirit? Instead, we need to hear the Spirit who encourages us: "Keep on being filled with Me". For the fullness of the Spirit is far from permanent; one needs to think just of the beautiful words of the Catechism: "God will give His grace and the Holy Spirit only to those who *constantly and with heartfelt longing* ask Him for these gifts and thank Him for them" (L.D.45).

So then Pentecost is a time also for Reformed people to search their hearts. Has our Christian life degenerated to nothing but a hollow ritual, an empty routine? Has our Christianity gone flabby and become weak? Are we knowingly indulging in things which our God has forbidden? Do we find it difficult to say "no" to our flesh and "yes" to our God? Then is it not time for repentance? Is it not time to be filled again with that life-giving, sin-destroying Spirit of God? In the words of Paul to the Galatians: "if we live by the Spirit, let us also KEEP IN STEP with the Spirit". It means: not twenty, ten, or one step behind the Spirit ... but beside Him, keeping up on that forward, progressive path on which He wants to take us. In the thought pattern of Luke, if we have been baptized with the Spirit once, then let us be FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT AGAIN AND AGAIN AND AGAIN!!


Recommended for further reading:

- R. B. Gaffin, Jr. *Perspectives on Pentecost: New Testament Teaching on the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, (Presbyterian & Reformed, 1979).
- J. F. MacArthur, Jr. *The Charismatics: A Doctrinal Perspective*, (Zondervan, 1978).
- D. Macleod, *The Spirit of Promise*, (Christian Focus, 1986).

¹ R.B. Gaffin, *Perspectives on Pentecost*, pp. 14-16.



CHURCH NEWS



THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
OF THE
CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

The Twentieth Anniversary Meeting
of the Theological College
will be held D.V. on

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 1989
at 8:00 pm.


in the auditorium of Redeemer College,
(Hwy. 53, Ancaster)

with Dr. K. Deddens
as the featured speaker.

The new professor of dogmatics
will be installed

and there will be an official farewell for
Dr. J. Faber and Dr. K. Deddens.

More details will follow.



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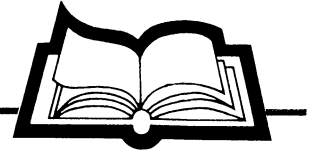
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By J. De Jong

“... and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to be mocked and scourged and crucified, and He will be raised on the third day.” Matthew 20:18b, 19

Pentecost: To the Gentiles !

There is a significant pattern in the announcements that the Lord Jesus makes concerning His imminent suffering and death. In the first announcement, He says that He will be turned over to the elders, chief priests and scribes, Matthew 16:21. Here His focus is on the immediate perpetrators of the crime against Him. The second announcement widens the circle of those who are guilty, and includes the crowds who rose up so furiously against Him. Jesus says He was to be delivered into the hands of men, Matthew 17:22, by which we think of the Jews in general. In the final announcement, the circle of guilt is broadened even more. Jesus specifically outlines the *kind* of death he must undergo, and says that He will be delivered up to the *Gentiles*, for them to do with Him what they would.

In this final turn to Jerusalem, the disciples now hear of the incredible depths of the imminent sufferings of the Saviour. This could not but defy all their expectations. For the last thing that was to happen to the Messiah according to the expectations of the day was that He was to be delivered up to the will of the Gentiles. Indeed, people expected Him to deliver them from the Gentiles! He was to be a ruler over the nations, ruling them with a rod of iron.

Revealing this new dimension of His coming sufferings to the disciples only intensifies Christ's sufferings. They obviously did not understand the depth of what was about to take place. Yet they had to be instructed for Pentecost! And as they are instructed, successively wider dimensions of Christ's sufferings and victory come into view. The work He was about to do had significance for the Gentiles, too! Mentioning them to the disciples brings into focus the dramatic pattern of God's plan of salvation.

For Christ says that He was to be delivered up to the Gentiles as a specific group of people. The Gentiles incorporate all those who were not Jews, in Christ's day and in succeeding generations, until the day of His return. Now Christ announces that they are included in His condemnation. He will die as Jew, but only in the forum of the world. The Gentiles have their share in the guilt of His death. They will sanction and increase the cruelty of the Jews against the Messiah.

But what is the great salvation plan of God? When Christ includes the Gentiles here as accomplices in His death He also wants to instruct the disciples concerning the scope and value of His cross. Indeed, His salvation work is not only for the Jews, but for the Gentiles as well! And just as He was handed over to the Gen-

tiles, so He was given up for the Gentiles, and on their behalf. As apostles after Easter, the disciples were called to be witnesses of His victory over sin and death, and bring the message of amnesty from guilt in the blood of the cross to the *end of the earth*.

Here the disciples learn that *all* will share the guilt of His death. We are included as well! We all share the guilt of the cross. But this forms the ground for the apostolic preaching! When God still proclaims amnesty even after this universal and unfathomable guilt, He shows the greatness of His mercy and longsuffering with the world! And in announcing to the Gentiles the *guilt* they had as accomplices in Christ's death, the apostles may also announce to them the way of escape from the immanent wrath of God, preaching God's grace for those who believe in the blood of the cross as the only way that sins can be remitted in the world.

We then see rays of Pentecost in the final announcement of Jesus concerning His imminent death. Hard as it was for Him, it represents our deliverance from sin and guilt! That the Gentiles are included in His death allows them to be included in His resurrection! The one who was delivered up to the Gentiles was also delivered up *for* the Gentiles. As Paul says, "He who did not spare His own Son, but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him?" Romans 8:32.

Although this was a difficult road of learning for Peter and the apostles, (Acts 10, Galatians 2), yet they learned that "God shows no partiality, but in every nation any one who fears Him and does what is right is acceptable to Him," Acts 10:34. The message of Pentecost is grounded in the reality of Christ's suffering and death, and is addressed equally to all the parties guilty of this sin.

This is the way the Messiah becomes the long-awaited King of the nations. He defeats the nations by being delivered up to them and for them! His triumph is made perfect in weakness! For in being delivered up to all, all share the guilt of sin. Yet in being delivered up to all, Christ *bears* the sin of all. Therefore, the Pentecost message may go out: amnesty and salvation for all who believe, both Jew and Gentile!

We also share the guilt of His death. Our own selfish and hostile nature is portrayed in what the Gentiles did. But by His mercy we have been permitted to hear and accept His grace. The message of the blessing of the cross may also come to us, along with the Spirit of holiness for the Gentiles. Who then cannot but praise God for His glorious gifts? **C**

Two appointments: a new era

By J. Faber

On Thursday April 20, 1989, the General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Winnipeg directed the Board of Governors to appoint two new professors at the Theological College in Hamilton. As all our readers know by now, in

this year both Dr. Karel Deddens, professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconology, and the undersigned, professor of Dogmatology, will reach the normal retirement age of 65 years, the Lord willing.

Synod now chose Dr. N. H. Gootjes

to become professor of Dogmatology per September 1, 1989, and designated Drs. J. De Jong professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconology per May 1, 1990.

May I introduce to you these two brothers?

I. Professor of Dogmatology

DR. NICOLAAS HENDRIK GOOTJES (Pusan, Republic of Korea)

Dr. Nicolaas Hendrik Gootjes was born at Leeuwarden on July 16, 1948. He matriculated from the classical department of Gereformeerd Lyceum at Groningen and became a student at the *Theologische Hogeschool van De Gereformeerde Kerken* at Kampen (Sep. 1968 - Feb. 1974). Immediately after his exam as *candidatus* he continued his study for the exam *doctorandus* (oude stijl). His major was dogmatics and his tutor Dr. L. Doekes. He obtained the degree of *drs. theol.* on May 14, 1976.

On Sep. 26, 1976, he became minister of De Gereformeerde Kerk at Leiden. After three years Deputies for Correspondence with Churches Abroad asked him to become guest professor at Korea Theological Seminary in Pusan.

Since February 1980 Dr. Gootjes teaches part of dogmatics and New Testament Greek.

On January 21, 1985, he obtained his doctor of theology degree in Kampen. His dissertation, entitled *De geestelijkheid van God* was published by T. Wever, Franeker (255 pp.). It dealt with one of God's perfections, namely, His spirituality.

After his doctoral thesis he published in *De Reformatie* and in *Radix*. Since *Radix* is the magazine, issued by *Gereformeerd Wetenschappelijk Genootschap*, a society of scholars, I mention essays about the doctrine of the Holy Spirit: "Het getuigenis van de Geest in verband met de Schrift" (Vol. 11 No. 4, Oct. 1985) and "De doop



Dr. N. H. Gootjes

met de Heilige Geest en de betekenis van Pinksteren" (Vol. 13 No. 3, July 1987). In English Dr. Gootjes wrote an essay about "Sensus Divinitatis" in *Westminster Theological Journal* (Vol. 48/2, 1986, 337-350). During the fall of this year he will publish a sequel about general revelation.

When it became known that Dr. N. H. Gootjes, especially in connection with the school education of his children, would like to leave Korea in the summer of 1989, the attention of our present professor of Dogmatology and later of the entire Senate was directed towards Dr. Gootjes as a suitable successor.

Dr. Gootjes has the reputation of being thoroughly Reformed, a good

teacher, and an excellent student of languages. He now teaches even in the Korean language and is fluent in English.

Dr. Gootjes is married to Dinie Stegeman; the eldest of the children is preparing for secondary school education.

The family hopes to stay in Korea till the end of June 1989. Dr. Gootjes is under the obligation to publish part of the lectures he gave at Korea Theological Seminary and will be very much occupied winding up his work in Korea. Moreover, he needs some time preparing the new courses (e.g., Philosophy) he will have to give in Hamilton. On the other hand, the family likes to settle down in the Hamilton area before schools start in September 1989.

Dr. Gootjes will be appointed per September 1, 1989, and be given four months for accommodation and preparation.

Given these circumstances, Dr. J. Faber declared himself willing to postpone his retirement till January 1, 1990.

Now that Synod 1989 directed the Board of Governors to appoint Dr. Gootjes, the church at Ancaster will be asked to call him as their minister and set him apart for the work of the training for the ministry within the Canadian Reformed Churches. A colloquium at classis Ontario South and the installation as minister of Ancaster should precede his installation as professor at the convocation on Friday September 8, 1989.

II. Professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconiology

DRS. JACOBUS DE JONG
(Burlington South, Ontario, Canada)

About Drs. Jacobus (Jack) De Jong we can be short, since he is well-known as minister of the Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington South.

He was born August 24, 1949, and studied at the Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, B.C. He obtained the degree of *Bachelor of Arts* (major: economy and commerce) and studied for one year at the University of Toronto and the Institute for Christian Studies (under the direction of Dr. Evan Runner). After his studies at our Theological College in Hamilton for the *Bachelor of Divinity* degree (1973-1976) he immediately continued his studies in Kampen, the Netherlands, where he obtained the degree of *doctorandus* (oude stijl) under the tutorship of Dr. L. Doekes (major: dogmatics).

In October 1978 Drs. De Jong became minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at London, Ontario, and in August 1983 he moved to the congregation of Burlington South.

In the meantime he continued zealously his doctoral studies and is in



Drs. J. De Jong

the end stages of preparing a thesis about Dr. Klaas Schilder's concept of God's accommodation in His revelation. The Senate has hope that Drs. De Jong will have his degree as *doctor theologiae*, when he starts his work for the Theological College.

Drs. De Jong is one of the few

Canadian Reformed ministers who in the near future will have the academic degree of *doctor theologiae*. More often dogmaticians have shown themselves to be apt to become teachers of diaconiology. We only mention as example Dr. C. Trimp at Kampen. Moreover, the regular contributions of Drs. J. De Jong to *Clarion* in which he published many original meditations, have brought us to the conviction that he must be able to direct especially the sermon sessions well.

Finally, his dogmatic studies have given him a broad horizon for the teaching of church history and especially the development of the doctrine in the course of history.

The Rev. Jack De Jong is married to Margaret Smeding and they received five children.

The Board of Governors will appoint Drs. De Jong per May 1, 1990, in order to give also him the period of four months normally allowed to a new professor for preparation for the lectures beginning in September.

We are thankful for these decisions of General Synod Winnipeg 1989, which are of such great importance for the future of our Theological College. We wish

the brothers Gootjes and De Jong the wisdom, insight and encouragement of the Holy Spirit, first to accept the honourable designation as professor at our

Theological College and then to fulfill the duties of their office to the glory of God.



**Consulaat-Generaal
Der Nederlanden
CONSULATE-GENERAL
OF THE NETHERLANDS**

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OPSPORING ADRESSEN:

LEEWES, Gerrit Jan, geboren op 28 juni 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Dieterstraat 92, Nijmegen. Naar Canada vertrokken op 14 mei 1952.

NIETVELT, Andreas Jacobus, geboren

op 21 mei 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Orteliusstraat 301hs, Amsterdam. Naar Canada vertrokken op 6 december 1951.

OVERVELD, Hendrik, geboren op 10 juli 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Lichtenvoordseweg 38, Varsseveld. Naar Canada vertrokken op 30 juni 1954.

PENNINGS, Gerrit Hendrik, geboren op 6 januari 1905 te Wisch, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Aaltenseweg 14, Varsseveld. Naar Canada vertrokken op 15 april 1952.

VAN DE(R/N) SLUIS, Hendrik, geboren op 28 juni 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Hoge Naarderweg 20,

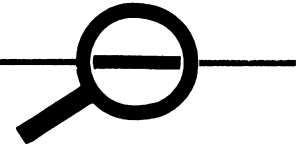
Nijmegen. Naar Canada vertrokken op 21 januari 1954.

TEENGS, Leonard Willem Jan, geboren op 15 juli 1923, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Amsterdamseweg 174III, Arnhem. Naar Canada vertrokken op 13 mei 1952.

WANJON, Franciscus Bernardus, geboren op 5 juli 1924 te Arnhem, laatstbekende adres in Nederland: Nw. Aanleg 6, Arnhem. Naar Canada vertrokken op 4 mei 1954.

De Consul Generaal,
voor deze:
Mevr. G. SCHNITZLER
Kanselier

By C. Van Dam



The Reformed Church in the United States

In the *Clarion* of March 31, 1988, it was noted in the Press Review that the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) has been of great help and assistance to the fledgling Reformed Confessing Church of Zaire. Because the relief organization within our Dutch sister churches (De Verre Naasten) is providing material help to these Christians, there has been contact between the RCUS in the person of Rev. R. Grossman and the Dutch committee. As a result and because of the growing interest in the RCUS, two articles were written in *De Reformatie* (Feb. 11 and 18, 1989) by Rev. H. Veldman to supply some information about this Reformed church. He also informs us that the Dutch deputies for contact with churches abroad are going to be investigating these churches with a view to a possible relationship with them. Since these churches are also of great interest to us, I will pass on some of the information given in *De Reformatie*. An article on this church which appeared in the July-October 1988 issue of *Journey Magazine* (and which is based on information provided by Rev. D. Roe), will also be used.

The RCUS is a small church, the faithful remnant after protracted and divisive controversy. According to *Journey Magazine*, there are about 3000 members spread over about thirty-five churches in three classes. This church is very consciously committed to the Reformed faith. At the moment it has as its sole confessional document the Heidelberg Catechism, a feature which gives it a special place in the world of Reformed churches. However, there is apparently talk of once more subscribing to the Canons of Dordt which ceased to be a confessional document in 1820.

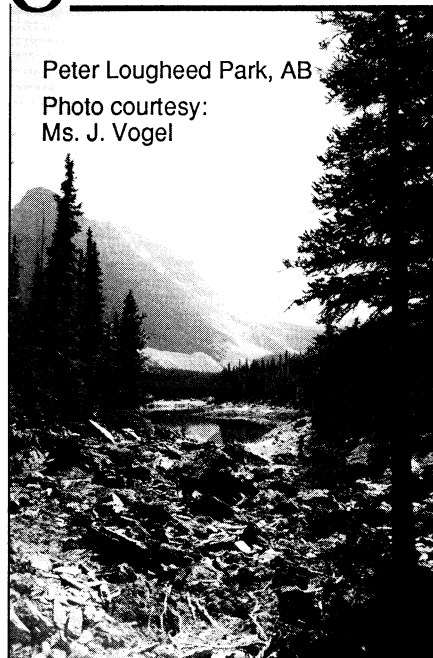
Early history

The RCUS is of German origin and was initially formed by immigrants from German-speaking cantons in Switzerland and the Palatinate who came to America in the eighteenth century. The congregations that were initially established received help from the Dutch Re-

formed Church in New York. Indeed their first minister, John Philip Boehm, was even ordained by a Dutch Reformed pastor. Further, the Dutch Reformed Church helped them organize their first synod in 1747. The next year, at their second coetus (as Synod was then called) the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt were accepted as their confessions.

The Dutch Reformed Church continued to be of great help and supplied 38 ministers from the Netherlands for the many vacant German congregations. The German churches remained under the supervision of the Dutch churches until 1791, at which time they declared themselves independent. At this point the term "coetus" was replaced by "synod" to designate their broadest assembly. A few years later, the official name became The Reformed Church in the United States.

OUR COVER



Peter Lougheed Park, AB

Photo courtesy:
Ms. J. Vogel

By the early 1800's the church was adjusting from being a German church to an English-speaking one. They also swelled in size. In 1825 the first theological seminary was established in Carlisle, Pennsylvania which ended up in Lancaster in 1871. Other seminaries were also founded with names such as Heidelberg (in Tiffin, Ohio) and Ursinus (outside Philadelphia). In 1908, the seminaries merged into Central Seminary in Dayton, Ohio.

The struggle with liberalism

By the middle of the 19th century, the church was troubled by theological and liturgical controversies. The departure from the Reformed faith was seen in the high church movement led by John W. Nevin and Philip Schaff, both men of great stature in the church. In 1887, many of the ideas of this movement were institutionalized with the adoption of the new Directory of Worship and the church was effectively severed from its more Reformed roots. By the 1900's the leadership of the church had become liberal. In 1934 a Plan of Union was presented by which the RCUS would unite with The Evangelical Synod of North America (which itself was a recent union of Lutheran and Dutch Reformed groups). Six years later the RCUS adopted this course of action and the new united church was called the Evangelical and Reformed Church. There was to be liberty of conscience in this new church and the confessions and catechisms were to be purely advisory and not binding. So what was once the RCUS was no longer a confessional church. In 1957 the Evangelical and Reformed Church joined Brethren and Congregationalist groups to become the United Church of Christ. There was nothing left of the Reformed heritage to show for with those who joined these "ecumenical" movements.

The faithful remnant

However, when this drift to liberal ecumenism became evident in the 1920's, those who wanted to remain Re-

formed were roused to firm action. In 1934, the Eureka Classis (northern mid-west) let it be known that it would not participate in the ecumenical efforts. When the union became official in 1940 (the Evangelical and Reformed Church), the Eureka Classis declared itself the "continuing church." Only a few other congregations outside the Eureka Classis followed this route of faithfulness. "From a membership of 350,000, with six synods, 58 classes and 1,675 congregations, the continuing church had 28 congregations numbering barely 1500 members. The work of generations was lost as twelve colleges, three seminaries, three orphans homes, deaconess' homes etc. were all lost. . . . only one region of the country (i.e. the mid-west) resisted the wide road that led to destruction" (*Journey*, 31). As mentioned at the beginning of this article, the membership of the RCUS is now about 3000 in thirty-five churches. Since they have no seminary, their ministers have in the past been trained at Westminster but now apparently favour Mid-America Reformed Seminary where the RCUS has

been given representation on both the board and faculty in the person of Rev. R. Grossman. Mission is done in Taiwan and support is given to the young Reformed church in Zaire.

Rev. H. Veldman quotes an RCUS document which (freely translated from his Dutch translation!) says: "It is granted that statistically speaking we are not a large community compared with other 'denominations.' However, by God's grace we continue for the cause of our God wherever He creates the opportunities. Our greatest concern is to remain faithful to Christ in the midst of unbelief and religious confusion." In answer to a question regarding the future of the RCUS, we read: "This question is easy to answer. The future of the RCUS is as clear and obvious as the promises of God, if we but serve Him in faithfulness to the entire Scriptures."

The RCUS and the Canadian Reformed Churches

It is clear that we as Canadian Reformed Churches have much in common with the RCUS. With Rev. H. Veldman,

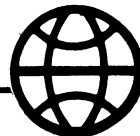
we can affirm that we can recognize in them the desire to fight for the true Reformed doctrine against false ecumenism and an increasingly aggressive liberalism. On the basis of the above information there surely appears to be a good basis for a healthy and truly ecumenical relationship as churches together for the mutual encouragement to remain faithful in this increasingly anti-Christian age.

It is therefore not surprising that some members of the Canadian Reformed congregations in Carman and Winnipeg have had contact with members of RCUS congregations. Also the Rev. P. Kingma has visited one of their ecclesiastical assemblies within the context of the "mission-at-large" initiative of the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids. It is to be hoped that these are not the last meetings. Could not one of our churches approach a future synod with a well-founded request that deputies be appointed for contact with the RCUS?



INTERNATIONAL

By W.W.J. VanOene



HONG KONG

(RNS) Christians here are worried that a recently enacted law requiring registration of places of worship in a south China province will lead to further restrictions on religious activity in China and Hong Kong. Christians are planning to protest the law, adopted by the provincial Guangdong government, when the top official in the province's religious affairs bureau visits Hong Kong in March. A primary concern is that the provincial regulation comes at a time when officials are drafting a Chinese national law on religion, which will also govern religious activity in Hong Kong after 1997 when China assumes authority over the British Colony. Christians are concerned that restrictive elements of the provincial law could be incorporated into the national law. (CN)

WASHINGTON

U.S. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop delivered a letter to President Reagan on January 9 saying that scientific studies on abortion are nearly all flawed. Koop called for a thorough study that would cost \$ 10 million, or at least a "satisfactory" study that could be conducted

for \$ 1 million. Koop reviewed some 255 scientific articles on abortion. In the end he concluded that only anecdotal kinds of materials existed. Anti-abortion (or Pro-Life) forces had hoped that Koop, a conservative Presbyterian, would press their case in his office of Surgeon General. Koop noted that he had seen case reports of both physical and psychological damage, but he had also seen case reports of the health benefits of abortion. Pro-Life groups in particular hoped that evidence of a post-abortion syndrome could be produced. Koop's letter also reviewed statistics in the U.S. There are about 6 million pregnancies each year, with about 3.3 million of them unplanned. About 1.5 million abortions take place, that is about one in every four pregnancies. (*World*) (REC NE)

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

(RNS) – A sharp drop in collections for the United Church of Canada's Mission and Service Fund is being blamed on the controversy over the ordination of homosexuals in the denomination. Year-end figures show that the fund fell nearly \$ 3 million, or 9 percent, below its 1988 goal of \$ 33.4 million, church officials an-

nounced February 1. Total receipts for 1988 of \$ 30.5 million were also lower than the 1987 total of \$ 31.9 million. This is the first time in more than ten years that the fund has received less than in the previous year. Many of those opposed to the ordination of homosexuals have called for church members to boycott the fund in protest. (CN)

SANTA ANA

California (NNI) – Despite officially proclaimed changes in custom regulations, Soviet officials continue confiscating religious literature, reports Keston College. The most recent incident involved a customs officer who seized literature from a Russian Orthodox Christian returning from a visit to Paris in mid-December. "If you were a servant of the cult (i. e. a priest), ' the official said, "and had documents identifying you as such, you could take as much as you like..." Soviet officials also confiscated a shipment of 80,000 Gospel portions in December 1988, which were being transported in the Kharkov region of the Ukraine by members of the Christianin press, an unofficial Christian publishing house. (CN)



General Synod — hard at work!

By M. Werkman

Yes, our general synod is hard at work. The brothers start at nine in the morning and are not finished till nine at night, with the necessary breaks in between. Besides, they put in overtime by studying the materials at home before and after the sessions of synod. Fortunately, they are taken care of in an excellent manner by the sisters who cheerfully and untiringly serve them with food and drink. Cheers to them! And the numerous flowers (donated by VanderVeen's Greenhouses in Carman) brighten each day by the beautiful colours God has created. Most delegates are also wise enough to get their physical exercise by going for a brisk walk after lunch and supper. Some have their running shoes and jogging suits lined up! Judging from that, we may say that it is a wise synod indeed!

Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber

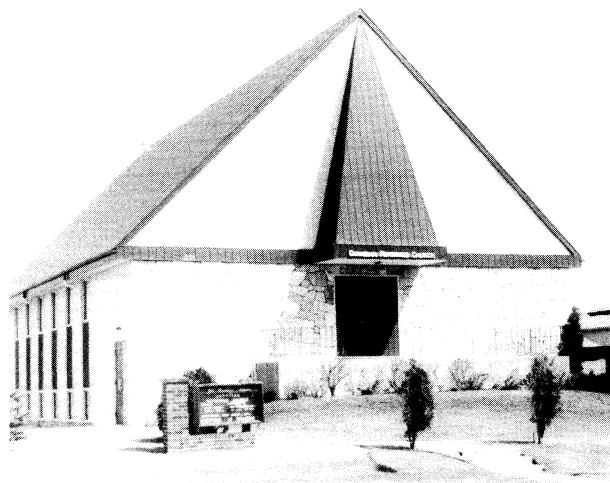
Out of appreciation for the faithful and dedicated service of Dr. Faber since the beginning of our College in 1969, the synod decided to invite both him and his wife and presented them with a suitable gift - a trip to Australia. This was gladly and gracefully accepted.

No professors at synods!

We will not have professors as advisors at our general synods. Committees of synods are always free to ask the professors for advice when necessary. But the professors will not be attending synods as regular advisors.

New professors

Synod directed the Board of Governors of the College to appoint Dr. N.H. Gootjes of Pusan, Korea to replace Dr. J. Faber as professor of Dogmatology, and Drs. J. De Jong of Burlington-South to take the place of Dr. K. Deddens as professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconiology. Congratulations to both of them and to the churches as well! They were both



Winnipeg — the hosting church

given ten days to inform the synod of their decision.

The chairman spoke fitting words to Drs. De Jong who responded from the floor of synod. Dr. and Mrs. Gootjes flew over from Korea and were cordially wel-



From l-r: G. Nordeman, W. Gortemaker, Rev. W. den Hollander, J. De Leeuw, and our newly appointed professor: Drs. J. De Jong

comed. Dr. Gootjes also addressed the synod with well-chosen words.

Visitors from Texas and South Dakota!

Rev. M. VanderWel officially welcomed Rev. J. Peterson as the representative of the OPC. The chairman welcomed Rev. S. Allison of the Reformed Church in the United States (formerly known as the "Eureka Classis") who was present privately. Rev. Peterson later addressed the synod.

Appeals

An appeal from Rev. S. DeBruin and others was declared inadmissible. A letter from the Orthodox Reformed Church of

Edmonton was dealt with. This was an appeal against a decision of a regional synod which no general synod had dealt with yet. After proper study and discussion this appeal was rejected.

Synod judged that since article 31 C.O. does not necessarily restrict appeals to those who have been personally wronged, Regional Synod West 1987 had denied the appeal of a brother on improper grounds.

The Athanasian Creed

The Athanasian Creed was adopted in its final version.

Brother J. van der Kolk

As the representative of our sister churches in the Netherlands, brother J. van der Kolk was heartily welcomed by the synod. A few evenings later he gave a heartwarming speech.

Bible translations

There is concern among the churches about the direction of the RSV Bible Committee with its new translation. Synod continued our Committee to scrutinize the New RSV Bible as soon as it is published. The Committee is to check the faithfulness of the translation, especially

regarding the so-called inclusive language, and to report to the next synod.

The address church

Burlington-East was reappointed as the church to which communications to our churches should be sent from outside our federation.

The OPC


A lot of work was done by the synod on the matter of the relationship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Letters from several churches were dealt with. Finally on Saturday April 29, two minutes after twelve noon, the synod came to a conclusion. Our Committee for Contact with the OPC was continued. Synod



Rev. P.K.A. de Boer and Rev. J.J. Peterson (OPC). Rev. de Boer is working on the Acts.

stressed that the present contact is temporary and not intended to become a permanent relationship. The committee has to be diligent to discuss the various divergencies (including the fencing of the Lord's Table and confessional membership) and the OPC's relationship with the Christian Reformed Church.

The Acts are coming!

Thanks to the zeal of the first clerk with the help of his computer, the Acts of the synod are already up-to-date! If all goes well, the church members should have them in their hands before long. These Acts also include all the (interesting) speeches that were delivered at this synod. 

Neerlandia: new church building dedicated

"Blessed be the LORD who has given rest to His people Israel, according to all that He promised. The LORD our God be with us, as He was with our fathers. May He not leave us or forsake us." These were the words with which the evening of the dedication of our new church building on December 2, 1988, was opened. Almost every member of the congregation, both young and old, was present, as well as visitors and delegates from other congregations.

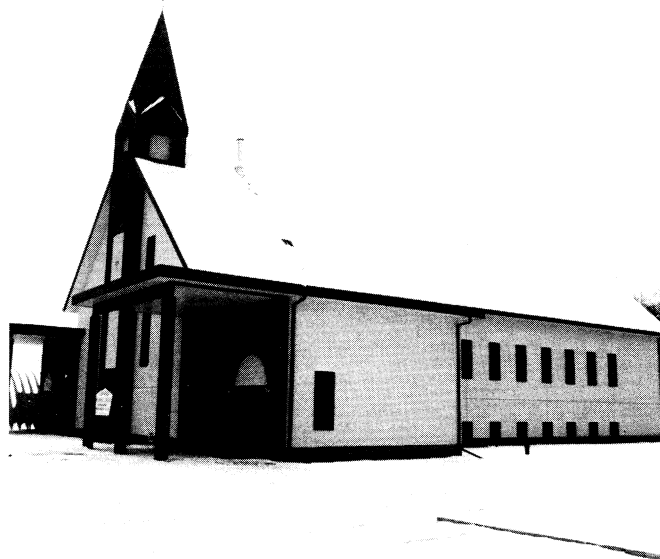
The chairman of the consistory, br. A. Viersen, opened the meeting with reading 1 Kings 8:54-68, where we read Solomon's words to Israel after the dedication of the temple. After we sang Psalm 118:7, the chairman led us in prayer. A hearty welcome was extended to everyone present and the wish was expressed that we would have a good evening together and that not men but our covenant God and Father would receive the praise and glory as we dedicate this new church build-

ing. The master of ceremonies, br. Jeff Van Leeuwen, was then given the floor.

On behalf of the consistory, br. Viersen stressed that the purpose of this new building is that God's Word may be preached here. As with the temple of old, we as congregation seek the pres-

ence of the Lord our God, so that through the preaching of His Word He will continue to be with us, as He was with our fathers. It is the work of our covenant God that in this building we may still confess our faith every Sunday, the same faith which was once delivered to the saints. May Christ our Lord continue to use this building as a visible reminder that He gathers and preserves His church also in Neerlandia. On behalf of the building committee, br. John Froma gave a short resumé of the construction of the building. Next a delegate of the Women's Society, sr. Lucille Terpsma, presented a beautiful framed embroidery to which all the women had contributed a part. She expressed the wish that the pictures would bring to mind God's work in fulfilling His promises of the past and that we must continue to trust in these promises. The chairman of the consistory thanked the women for this beautiful gift.

Then the young people

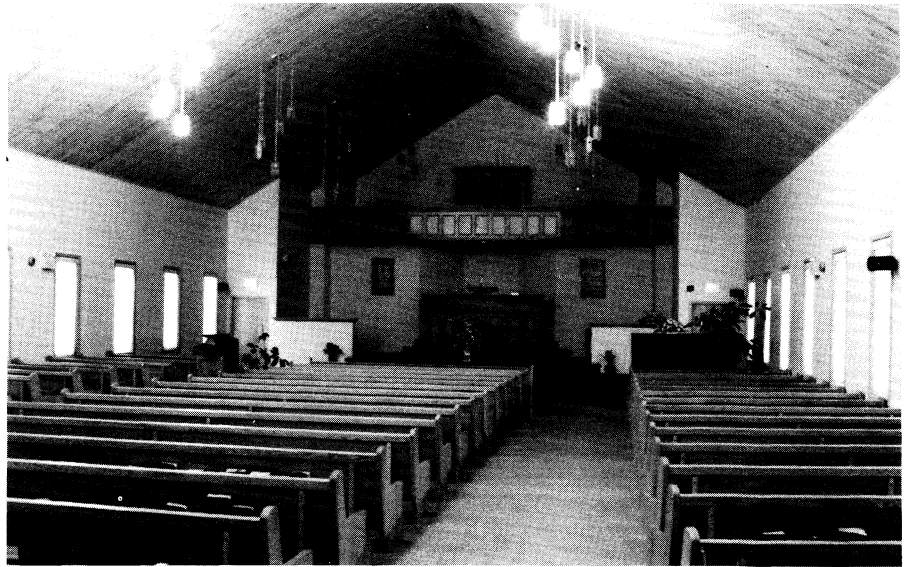


Our new church building

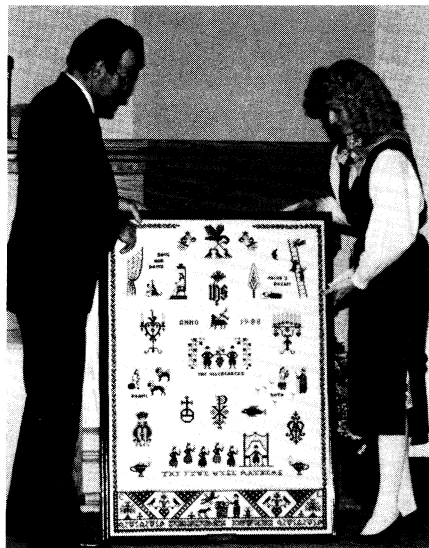
came forward and gave us a review of the events leading up to the completion of this building. They spoke about long times and short times and good times and bad times and took no time to call on the chairman of the consistory to present him with a timely gift, an electric clock. After it took some time to unwrap this gift, the chairman thought it a good time to thank all the young people for this useful item.

After the singing of Psalm 84:1 and 5, br. Wim Van Winkoop of Edmonton gave an organ recital which was very much enjoyed by all. Delegates were then given the floor. Rev. Tiggelaar from Barrhead brought the congratulations from Barrhead and also presented a beautiful clock. Rev. Van Beveren from Edmonton also conveyed congratulations. Letters were received from Edmonton "Immanuel" and also from Winnipeg. Mr. George Visser, member of the Barrhead Municipal Council, represented the civil authorities and conveyed on their behalf Council's best wishes. Br. Wm. Vogelzang, the contractor for the building, gave some remarks about the progress and obstacles encountered during the construction and expressed the wish that the congregation may use this building for a long time to come.

Br. J. Helms, a new immigrant, addressed us in Dutch about the two ways we can speak about the church: as a building made up of living stones and as



The interior – more room



A beautiful presentation ▶

Enjoying the new facilities in a social gathering

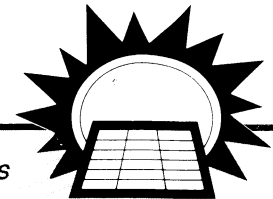


a building in which we gather. Br. S. Tuininga then read his article in which he showed us God's faithfulness in history. He reminded us of the small and insignificant beginnings here in Neerlandia, a small group on their own meeting in a house – all because of the sure conviction that this was the direction their covenant God wanted them to go. He explained why in such a small place there are two churches, two ministers of the Word, both claiming to be the congregation of our Lord. It behooves us to be thankful that our God and Father has given us a name and a place in His church-gathering work. He expressed the prayer that He will enable us in His grace to remain faithful through His Word and Spirit. After this, br. Wm. Van Winkoop expressed some good wishes and congratulations to the congregation.

A piano recital was presented by sr. Sharalie Terpsma, after which three members sang three songs for us and the choir also performed. Next we were shown a video on which we could watch how some of the work was performed by our male members, especially their courageous work on the top of the steeple. As a last surprise the MC read a letter, which had just been received, from Rev. de Jager. Along with his best wishes also came a gift to be used for the new building.

After the singing of Hymn 59:1 and 3, br. Kevin Van Der Zyl closed in prayer of thanksgiving. A social gathering followed. We may all look back to an enjoyable evening.

A thankful member ©



By Mrs. J. Mulder "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of Him, who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Peter 2: 9

Dear brothers and sisters,

The church of Jesus Christ is God's own possession. He obtained it with the blood of His own Son. (Acts 20:28) Therefore it is always so precious to Him and He will always care for it. That means also that you as a living member of that church may always live closest to your Father's affections. He guides and directs you, comforts and protects you.

The Apostle Peter describes the congregation in beautiful terms: "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people."

One thing He wants to get across with these names: the church is rooted in God's election. The good pleasure of His grace! *That* is the sole cause for being what we are, God's own people. We have not chosen Him, but He has chosen us to be priests in His service. He in His grace has set us apart to be dedicated to Him. He made us His people by establishing the covenant of grace with us and our children.

Great promises, which imply serious obligations! To live accordingly as children of the light.

Darkness and light are complete opposites. "What fellowship has light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6:14) Paul says in the same context, "what partnership has righteousness and iniquity," "what accord has Christ with Belial." Darkness stands for a life of sin or iniquity, a serving of Belial or the evil one.

Peter brings us here the good tidings that God has pulled us out of that domain of darkness, away from the evil one and into His marvelous light. It is as if he thinks of a stage in a theater. The stage, where the play is going on, is "in the light." The spectators are sitting back "in the dark." Now Peter says, the LORD has called you out of that darkness and set you on the stage in His marvellous light. He does not allow you to be a spectator but He has made you royal priests and servants.

Why, with what purpose did God do that?

Not in the first place for *our* sake but first of all for *His* own sake.

The LORD wants us to declare His wonderful deeds. That is why He called us "up stage" into the light. In order that we in this world serve Him, also tell others about Him and His grace, His justice and wrath! But *telling* about Him is not the only thing what is meant with "declaring the wonderful deeds" of God. Just read on in this chapter and you will find out what it all implies.

"Maintain a good conduct among the gentiles" (12)

"Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution. (13)

"Live as free men, yet without using your freedom as a pretext for evil." (16)

"Live as servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the emperor." (17)

"Servants, be submissive to your masters" (18)

"You wives, be submissive to your husbands." (3.1)

"Husbands, live considerately with your wives." (3.7)

"Finally, all of you have unity of spirit, sympathy, love of the brethren, a tender heart and a humble mind . . . for to this you have been called, that you may obtain a blessing." (3:8,9)

It is clear why we have received mercy. In order that God would be honoured here also through us. And thus His Kingdom will be built.

And when the last person is added to God's people and has received mercy, we may expect our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ from heaven in great glory and majesty. Then the cause of the church will be recognized as the cause of the Son of God and we will receive as God's gracious reward, a glory man can never conceive. (Belgic Confession, Art. 37)

From the mailbox

1. A sister from Smithers wrote me that Mr. H. VanBostelen celebrated his 90th birthday on May 5th. His eyesight is very poor, but if you as yet would like to send him a card or letter of congratulations, his wife can read it to him. He certainly will appreciate it! The VanBostelens are temporarily staying with their children in Coaldale.

**Address: c/o Mr. H. Breukelman, Box 666
Coaldale, AB TOK OLO**

2. I received a note from Mrs. Hofsink, Trevor's mother, also Smithers. Because of a faulty shunt Trevor became partly paralyzed. He is presently undergoing therapy in a hospital in Vancouver and his condition has already improved above expectation. We share the thankfulness of the Hofsinks, that the LORD has heard their prayers. We wish them also for the future His blessing.

Our birthday calendar for June:

JOAN KOERSELMAN

Box 624, Coaldale, AB TOK OLO

Joan hopes to celebrate her 32nd birthday on June 17th.

DANIEL STROOP

193 Diane Drive, Orangeville, ON L9W 3N3

Daniel is looking forward to his 8th birthday on June 20th.

BEVERLY BREUKELMAN

Box 666, Coaldale, AB TOK OLO

Beverly, also living in Coaldale, will be 27 years old on June 30.

CONGRATULATIONS to you all!
Have a happy birthday!

Please, send your requests to me!
With greetings,

MRS. J. MULDER

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



Ministers' Conference, at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

January 9, 1989

By R. Aasman

The ministers' conference was scheduled to have two speakers, Prof. Dr. J. Faber for the morning session and Rev. G. VanDooren for the afternoon session. However, since Rev. VanDooren was laid up with back trouble, Dr. Faber was asked to extend his presentation. He readily accepted this invitation in a spirited manner.

The title of Dr. Faber's speech was, "The Quest for the Apostolic Faith Today in the World Council of Churches." This topic was restricted to the time period of 1975 to 1986. At the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Nairobi, 1975, there was a call for greater unity within the churches which would be made possible through a common confession of the apostolic faith. At the Faith and Order Commission of 1978 in Bangalore the following three important prerequisites were laid down which would lead to unity in the churches: 1. a consensus of the apostolic faith; 2. a mutual recognition of baptism, eucharist, and ministry; 3. structures that make possible common teaching and decision making.

The Lima Conference of the World Council of Churches in 1982 discussed the matter of the apostolic faith and split the discussion into three sections: towards a common recognition, explication, and confession of the apostolic faith for today. With respect to the recognition of the apostolic faith it was pointed out that more than two hundred denominations would have to agree on the apostolic faith; an existing creed would have to be chosen and accepted by all denominations; therefore the creed taken as basis for the apostolic faith is the so-called Nicene Creed. With respect to the explication of the apostolic faith it was made clear that the Nicene Creed had to be taken and understood in today's situation; for instance, does this creed bind

today's churches to Greek or Roman thought of the time when it was written or to today's culture? Finally, with respect to the confession of the apostolic faith it was made clear that all churches would not be forced to subscribe only to this one confession; there is room for diversity, pluralism, and multiforms in personal, communal, liturgical, and conciliar confessions. Later meetings of the General Assembly in Vancouver (1983) and the Faith and Order Standing Committee in Crete (1984) wanted to concentrate especially on the explication of the apostolic faith. Thus the Faith and Order Standing Committee of 1986 in Berlin/Potsdam drew up the latest draft of the Explication of the Apostolic Faith Today.

Nicaeno-Constantinopolitan Creed

Of the three ecumenical creeds (the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed, and the Athanasian Creed) the Nicene Creed, or the Nicaeno-constantinopolitan Creed, which was approved by the Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., is the most ecumenical creed. It was and is more widely accepted than the Apostles' Creed. Therefore within the World Council of Churches it was quickly decided that the Nicene Creed should be the basis for confessional unity within the churches. Dr. Faber expresses his personal appreciation for this recognition of the Nicene Creed as a creed to be used extensively within the churches. Although the Apostles' Creed is much loved and used within the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Nicene Creed is broader and deeper than the Apostles' Creed. Hence Dr. Faber personally has always used it extensively in the liturgy of the church, and he urges others to do the same.

However, for the Nicene Creed to be acceptable to all churches within the

WCC a special study had to be made of the phrase "and the Son" (known as the *Filioque*) found in the statement "the Holy Spirit . . . who proceedeth from the Father and the Son." Originally the phrase "and the Son" was not found in the Nicene Creed. It was added later by the western churches of Europe but has never been accepted by the eastern churches to this very day. The eastern churches feared that the Holy Spirit was being made subordinate to the Son. The western churches felt this phrase was required over against Arianism, and quite rightly they took this phrase from a passage such as John 15:26 where Christ said, "But when the Counselor comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father . . ." However, in order to satisfy the eastern churches, the Klingenthal Memorandum of 1979 sought ways to alter the *Filioque* expression. One recommendation is appreciated by Dr. Faber: the Holy Spirit . . . proceeds from the Father through the Son. However, after the Klingenthal memorandum it was agreed to go back to the original form of the Nicene Creed and leave the *Filioque* out altogether. Dr. Faber feels that this is too drastic a step, made simply to find unity between the western and eastern churches. It would be better to have a reformulation of "and the Son," possibly by "through the Son."

Apostolic faith today

Presently there is only a draft of the Explication of the Apostolic Faith Today. The serious flaw in this draft explication is in its concept of Scripture. It is clearly under the influence of modern hermeneutics. Scripture is not seen as the inspired, infallible, and authoritative Word of God. For instance, when the Nicene Creed speaks of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then it is not seen as a literal, physical resurrection but as a spiritual

resurrection, or, a resurrection into the apostolic message. In other words, Christ is seen as living on in the Scriptures.

In the draft explication there is also clearly the influence of modern theology, especially that of J. Moltmann and feminism. For instance, there is some appreciation for the feminine aspect of God's work. However, the draft explication does not go so far in the feminist line as to address the Father as "Mother." There is a real lack of Scriptural attention to the vicarious atonement of Christ. Although the Nicene Creed speaks so clearly about, "was crucified also for us,"

the draft explication speaks of God taking upon Himself death and pain, and of the discipleship of God which calls us to discipleship, to carrying a cross in our suffering for others. What is overlooked is the unique suffering of Christ for our sake.

Another point where the influence of modern theology becomes clear concerns the expression of the Nicene Creed, "who spoke by the prophets." The draft explication interprets this to mean that the Holy Spirit continues to speak through men today. Understandably, this is well-appreciated by the

charismatic and neo-pentecostal movement.

It is clear therefore that the Nicene Creed will only assist in true ecumenical unity and lead to a recognition of the apostolic faith when there is a full love for the authority of the Scriptures.

At the ministers' conference it was noted that this is the last time that Dr. Faber will address this conference as an active professor at our college. Much appreciation is expressed for the many times that Dr. Faber addressed us. Hopefully he will do so many more times during his retirement. **C**

1988 — A significant year for the Dr. K. Schilder School

By Wayne Chase

1988 was particularly significant for the American Reformed School Association, and the congregation in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The year marks, on the one hand, the completion of a ten-year history, and on the other hand, the completion of a new addition, pointing us ahead to a future, which if our heavenly Father permits, will be filled with great educational opportunity. Initial construc-

tion of the school building began in 1977, and was completed in time for opening exercises in September of 1978. At that time, grades 1-8 were admitted for instruction, and Mr. W. den Hollander, now serving as minister of the Winnipeg congregation, was appointed as the first principal. Mr. B. Seldenthuis arrived in 1981 from Rotterdam to accept the position of principal in the va-

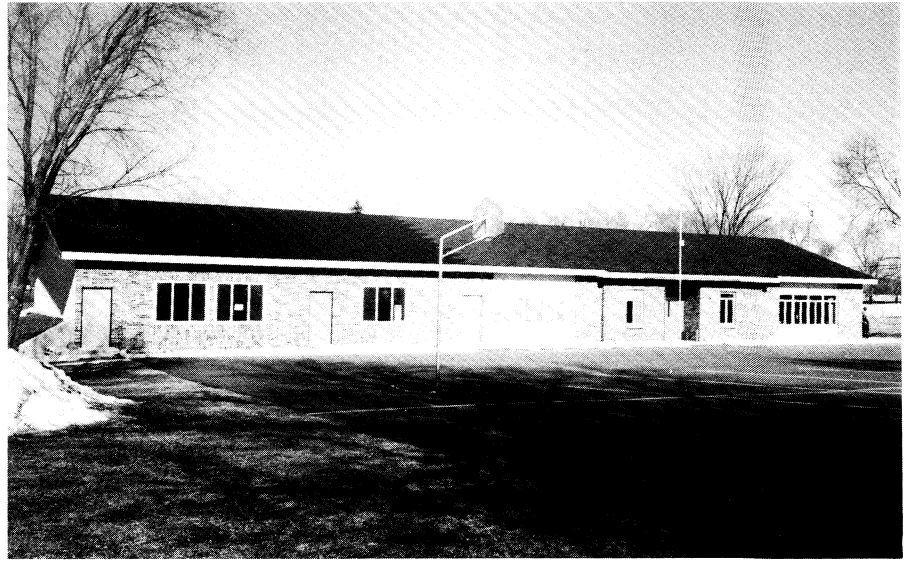
cancy created by Mr. den Hollander's departure to Hamilton in order to complete his study for the ministry. Under the guidance of Mr. Seldenthuis, the High School curriculum was revised and expanded, patterned on a four-year rotating schedule, enabling graduates to enter college or university programs if they so wished subsequent to their high-school training. Following the departure of Mr. Seldenthuis in the spring of 1986, the school was again without a principal. But contact had already been made with Mr. D. VanDijk, who was at the time teaching in Zeeland. Mr. VanDijk was finally granted his visa to the United States in the spring of 1987, and arrived that summer to become our third principal, the position which he presently holds. During those ten years, the school has benefitted from the work of its full-time teachers: initially, Mrs. A. Sieber (now Mrs. Chase) and Miss H. Meester. Mr. W. Chase arrived in 1984 to teach the primary grades following Miss Meester's departure. Rev. P. Kingma had been instrumental in the inception of the school in 1978 and has continued to offer his support in the teaching of high-school Bible and Church History. There have as well been many others who, as part-time teachers, selflessly contributed to the educational enterprise at the "Dr. K" school. As always, the school population has fluctuated, varying from between 12-32 students. It presently



Students of the Dr. K. Schilder School

stands at 18. The 1988 commencement program was thus the occasion for the celebration of ten years of existence as the American Reformed School in Grand Rapids. In addition to the program presented, an anniversary booklet filled with facts, photos, and nostalgia was published.

Not only do we wish to thank our heavenly Father for permitting us to keep what we have been given, we have had the privilege to oversee the construction of a significant addition to the school building. Entirely financed by brothers and sisters in the Netherlands through the *Stichting Hulp aan het Gereformeerde Onderwijs in het Buitenland* the units adds an additional 2200 square feet of classroom space to the existing structure, consisting of a much-needed chemistry lab-room linked to a classroom, and a spacious multi-purpose room adjoining an efficiently designed kitchen. The men of the congregation spent many hours volunteering their time and labour to complete the work that did not specifically require licensed subcontractors. Because of this voluntary effort and the generosity of various contractors for the necessary concrete, block, electrical, and finishing work, the Building Committee estimated that the expenses were shaved by fifty percent. By the middle of December, 1988, the addition was ninety



School building

percent complete, and an evening was set apart to officially open the building for use. A potluck supper was enjoyed by all, with the Ladies Auxiliary providing newly purchased flatware and dinnerware for the kitchen.

Despite the fact that not all of the families in the congregation recognize the education mandated for our covenantal children, one consistent with the con-

fessional standards to which we as a Reformed community are bound, God has shown His graciousness in permitting the continuation of the Dr. K. Schilder School. We give thanks to Him, for in His providence, He uses people to accomplish His good purposes. In spite of unfaithfulness on the part of His covenant people, we may find security in His faithfulness. C

HYMN 36

Sollt' ich meinem Gott Johann Schop. 1641. alt

 1. He has come, the Ho-ly Spir-it!

 Je-sus left us not a-lone

 When He went up to in-her-it

 Might and glo-ry on the throne,

 For He sent the One He prom-ised.

 Ho-ly Spir-it, Power of God.

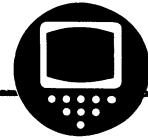
 Let us spread this truth a-broad

 And un-ceas-ing-ly de-clare it.

 Let us now our voic-es raise:

 To the Spir-it we give praise.

2. Praise the Spirit who, proceeding
From the Father and the Son,
In the truth the Church is leading.
Let us praise Him, everyone!
Him who is both Gift and Giver,
Him the Sender sent to earth,
Holy God and yet poured forth.
Praise, O people, Him forever:
He true life to you imparts,
For He dwells within your hearts.
4. Spirit of all understanding,
Of all grace, of truth, and prayer,
Show the paths of life unending;
Always guide us, everywhere.
May we say, yes, "Abba, Father,"
Say of Jesus, "Thou art Lord,"
And praise Thee with one accord.
Be where Christ His Churches gathers,
Take the off'rings that they bring,
Hear Thou when Thy praise they sing.
5. Counsellor, O Holy Spirit,
Thou who didst from heaven descend,
Wilt Thou with our Saviour's merit
Fill the earth's remotest end.



Press release of Classis Pacific April 3, 1989

Opening. On behalf of the convening church, the church at Chilliwack, Elder P. VanWoudenberg calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Psalm 99:1,2,3, reads Psalm 99 and leads in prayer.

He welcomes the delegates, and wishes the brethren the wisdom of the Lord, so that everything may be done to the glory of His name and to the upbuilding of the churches represented.

Credentials. The credentials are examined and are found to be in good order. The church of Cloverdale has given a special instruction along with their delegates.

Constitution of classis. Classis is constituted. Officers at this classis are: Rev. J. Moesker, chairman; Rev. B.J. Berends, vice-chairman; and Rev. M. VanderWel, clerk.

The chairman, Rev. Moesker welcomes the visitors and commemorates the acceptance by Rev. M.H. VanLuik of his call to the church of Chilliwack and the passing away of the baby-boy of Rev. and Mrs. P.K. Meijer in the Netherlands. He informs those present that the Meijer's family has returned to Brazil.

He also extends a special welcome to Rev. W.B. Slomp who is present for the first time as delegate from the church of Houston.

Agenda. Added to the provisional agenda is a letter and an appeal of a sister. The chairman also reminds the delegates of the various appointments to be made at this classical meeting.

Correspondence. The appeal and letter of a sister are distributed and studied. Since it concerns a matter of discipline it is dealt with in closed session.

Reports. The Treasurer's report is accepted for information. The Committee for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry reports on a student's request for financial support. This request is granted. The church for the Inspection of the Archives informs the delegates that the material covering Classis 1988 was found to be in good order.

Question period ad Article 44 C.O. The relevant questions put by the chairman to the delegates are answered in the affirmative. (*Acts Synod 1986, Art. 94*) One of the churches asks for and receives advice on a matter of discipline.

Appointments. The convening church for the next classis is the church of Cloverdale. The date is set for June 13, 1989. If there is nothing for the agenda, the next classical meeting will be held, D.V., on September 26, 1989. The suggested officers for the next meeting are: Rev. B.J. Berends, chairman; Rev. M. VanderWel, vice-chairman; Rev. A. VanDelden, clerk. Other necessary appointments are made as well.

Question Period. Q. Is the report on the status of retired ministers at classical meetings available? A. It is not yet ready. Q. Should the Church News not be used to inform the general membership of the classical agendas? A. This should be left

to the discretion of the convening church.

Censure ad Art. 44 C.O. is not necessary.

Adoption of Acts and Approval of Press Release.

Closing. The chairman leads in prayer and thanksgiving and closes the meeting.

B.J. Berends, vice-chairman

I.L.P.B. Board and Administrative Committee April 8, 1989, London, Ontario

The chairman, Mr. Peter Torenvliet, opened the meeting in the usual Christian manner.

The Men's, Women's and Young People's Leagues were all represented. In addition all members of the Administrative Committee were present. A special welcome was extended to George Helder who is now officially representing the Men's League and to Tim Hutten and Willa Dale Smid who serve on the Administrative Committee as coordinator and secretary, respectively.

Since the last meeting *Revelation, Vol. 1* by Rev. L. Selles has been published and will be advertised by the Marketing Committee. Next to be published: *Minor Prophets* by Rev. P. Lok and *Revelation, Vol. II* by Rev. L. Selles.

Still in various stages of editing: *Romans* by Rev. J. Francke, *Believe and Confess, Vol. I* by Rev. C. Bos, *Luke, Vol. I* by Rev. C. Hagens, *Galatians* by Rev. M.J.C. Blok and *Philippians* by Prof. Deddens.

Future projects include: *Luke, Vol II, Believe and Confess, Vol. II, and Acts.*


Sales and financial reports were discussed. Reciprocal agreement with the Publication Committee of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia was cancelled.

Guidelines for Translators and Editors was discussed and the decision was made to capitalize all pronouns referring to God to be in agreement with the Book of Praise.

The new constitution was received for information.

Accountability of the Administrative Committee to the Board was also discussed.

Gerrit Bos closed in prayer after which a delicious meal was enjoyed.



CHURCH NEWS

Accepted to Grand Valley, ON
REV. P. AASMAN
of Hamilton, ON

Declined to London, ON
and Watford, ON
REV. P. AASMAN
of Hamilton, ON



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

When you were born, your Dad and Mom were very happy! Lots of people congratulated them with their new baby! Lots of people brought presents! "A bundle of joy" some people call a new baby. What a precious gift from the Lord to the new Dad and Mom! Stop! Wait right there! Guess what? You know who else got something? Or, someone, I should say. That baby, *you* received *Parents* from the Lord. Soon it will be Mother's Day. Your mother is the *Mom* you received from the Lord. Mother's Day is a good day to stop and think about that. To stop and say "Thank you" to Mom, but also "Thank you, Lord, for my Mom." Your Mom is pretty important to you, right? Well, get out your pencil a minute and put down why you love her and why she is so important to you.

I love Mom because _____

Mom is important to me because _____

What I like best about my Mom is _____

SQUIRREL

About the picture

"... for the picture ... I had gone up to my neighbour's house. They have a stuffed squirrel on a stump just as it shows in the picture. I looked at it and then I drew it."



By Busy Beaver
Margaret De Witt



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Donald Van Leeuwen*. Of course you may join! Do you help look after all those animals on your farm, Donald? Will you write and tell us about your favourites and what you do?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Bianca VanDenBeukel*. We are happy to have you join us. I am looking forward to your letter, Bianca. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already. Keep up the good work!

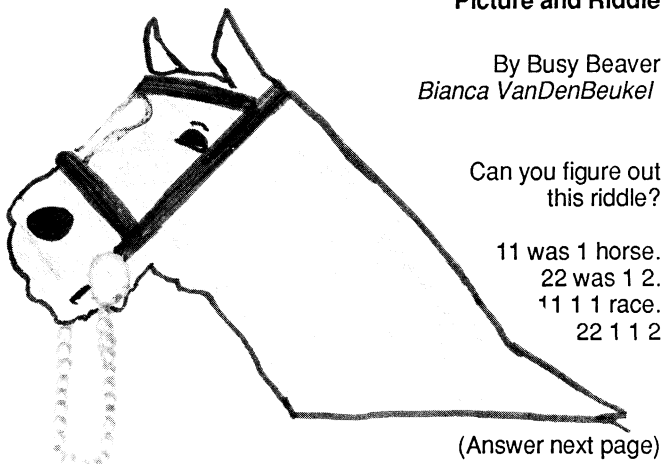
Yes, you are right, *Anna DeVries*. Receiving your letters is one of my "favourite things." So what are you doing now in P.E., Anna? I'm glad you enjoy your organ music. Did you know that TALENT + WORK = SUCCESS? Keep up the good work, Anna. And let me hear how you do!

I see you have been very busy, *Margaret De Witt*! Thank you for sharing your poem and picture. Keep practising to develop that talent, Margaret. You are lucky to have such friendly neighbours!

Hello, *Laura Breukelman*. It was nice to hear from you again. And I'm glad you had such an enjoyable birthday. I think you must be very happy to get such good news from your sister who's so far away!

Thank you for your big letter and the puzzle, too, *Mark Timmerman*. What an exciting trip it must have been! How do you feel now about living in Canada, Mark?

HORSES



Picture and Riddle

By Busy Beaver
Bianca VanDenBeukel

Can you figure out this riddle?

11 was 1 horse.
22 was 1 2.
11 1 1 race.
22 1 1 2

(Answer next page)

Quiz Time!

MOTHERS

Mothers have always played an important role in shaping the character of their children. Match each mother with the proper statement.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Mother of all living | a. Rachel <i>Jeremiah 31:15</i> |
| 2. Helped son deceive his father | b. Mary <i>Luke 1:30</i> |
| 3. Was paid to care for her son | c. Eve <i>Genesis 3:20</i> |
| 4. Was commended by Paul | d. Hannah <i>1 Samuel 1:11</i> |
| 5. Sought best for her sons | e. Rebekah <i>Genesis 27:6-10</i> |
| 6. Wept for her children | f. Athaliah <i>2 Kings 11:1</i> |
| 7. Became mother to a daughter-in-law | g. Jochebed
<i>Exodus 2:8-10</i> |
| 8. Caused death of John the Baptist | h. Herodias
<i>Mark 6:22-25</i> |
| 9. Killed her grandsons | i. Eunice <i>2 Timothy 1:5</i> |
| 10. Gave her son to ministry | j. Naomi <i>Ruth 1:6</i> |
| 11. Highly favoured by God | k. Salome <i>Matthew 20:20</i> |

(Answers next page)