



Clarion

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Church Polity and Civil Law₂

By Dr. K. Deddens

No Church Polity?

In my first article I stressed that Church Polity (and also the Church Order) has a *spiritual* character, because the church of God is a spiritual body. Not the light of nature, but the light of God's Word must guide the church, also in this respect.

But there are people who say that actually church and law form an impossible combination and that the church must therefore get rid of the whole idea of Church Polity.

A representative of this idea was Dr. Rudolph Sohm, who was a Lutheran professor of law in several places, but by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century taught at Leipzig in Germany. He said: If then the church has a spiritual character, why was Church Polity introduced? The term is actually contradictory. The date that it was introduced was the date the church fell into sin. Dr. Sohm had three arguments in support of this view:

1. Law as such is formal, but in Christ's church the matter upon which everything depends is whether or not there is agreement with God's Word and will.
2. Law as such implies the obligation that everyone has to bow before it. It also compels those who are unwilling; but in Christ's church free obedience, which arises from love and which does not even have the slightest idea of compulsion, alone is important.
3. Law as such belongs to the world, to what is destined for earthly life; but the church of Christ is spiritual and the complete structure of the church is in accordance with it.¹

Already in 1894, at the occasion of the transfer of his rectorate at the Free University of Amsterdam, the "father" of the Church Polity of the Doleantie, Dr. F.L. Rutgers, disproved these arguments.

Rutgers' response can be summarized by saying that he argued in the first place that law in its original quality is not in conflict with the nature of the church. In the beginning there was a perfect harmony between church and law. The visible church on earth consists of believers who want to live on the basis of the Word of God alone. These believers are not perfect, but afflicted with many failures, just like all mankind. The brokenness of life made Church Polity indispensable for the well-being of the earthly church. The peculiarity of Church Polity is that it is explicitly subordinate to the nature of the church. Although Church Polity as such is not in conflict with the nature of the church, and it is even impossible for the church to exist without it, nevertheless Sohm's criticism on several hierarchical and collegial systems of Church Polity are of value. *If Church Polity loses its serving function, it becomes a disturbing factor which deforms and disorders the church* [italics added, K.D.].²

Principles of the Scriptures for Church Polity

Later, in the struggle of the church around the "vrijmaking" Dr. S. Greijdanus also argued in the line of Dr. F.L.

Rutgers. Church Polity is possible, indeed, but we have to bear in mind that Christ alone is the Head of the church. The church is the Lord's particular possession. We have to regulate all our ecclesiastical actions according to the revealed will of God. Christ is the chief Shepherd. Men can only be shepherds if they remain in Him. But, all ecclesiastical action of office-bearers or assemblies should be tested by the Word of God. The church is a *spiritual* unity under Christ the Head. Apart from the apostles, the Lord did not give general, regional, provincial, national or ecumenical office-bearers. The local church has received office-bearers from God Himself, not by common consent. They are servants of the Lord, and they may serve also God's people.³

Dr. S. Greijdanus elaborated on some principles, especially with respect to the relation between consistories and major assemblies, and he wrote at the end, "The Lord knows the desire for hierarchy and for tyranny, also among those who are His, also under religious attire, also among the guides of the Church, even among His apostles. But He condemned it and He forbade His disciples to yield to it. 'But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brethren' (Matt. 23:8)."

No legalism

To stress the spiritual character of Church Polity also means that we may not go the way of *legalism*. Dr. W.G. de Vries pointed especially to that danger in a second article in *De Reformatie* about "Church Order and Jurisprudence." I quote, ". . . when we would receive in our Church Order all kinds of water-tight formulations, with exact description of rights and competences and exceptions, then the danger of legalism comes up, according to my opinion."⁴ In connection with this, he quotes Dr. F.L. Rutgers again, who wrote in another brochure about the federation of the churches in the beginning of the 17th century in the struggle with the Arminians: "The federation of Churches was upheld by maintaining the common confession of the Churches; but it was thrown out of action, where it was necessary to preserve the pure confession; it was broken, where deviation from the confession had already undone it."⁶

Juridical view?

In a third article in *De Reformatie*, Dr. W.G. de Vries paid special attention to what he called a *juridical view* on the Church Order. He points to a danger in this respect. He wrote that the Church Order is there "in order to protect the confession. Therefore, the Church Order does not need to deliver all kinds of water-tight descriptions. After all, also the Reformed confession does not know juridical systematics. . . ."⁷

Dr. de Vries added that it is precisely an advantage that neither the confession nor the Church Order delivers juridical views. He gave the example of question and answer 74 of the Heidelberg Catechism. "Lord's Day 27 says that the infants

are grafted into the Christian church 'by baptism.' One who reasons in a juridical way would say: 'so, before baptism they were not members of the church.' However, the baptismal questions to the parents demands from them the confession that our children are sanctified in Christ and *thus* as members of His Church ought to be baptized. So, baptism seals that what was present already. Besides, Lord's Day 27 starts with the statement that 'infants as well as adults belong to God's covenant and congregation' and that therefore they should be baptized too. No juridical systematics, but warm words of the covenant concerning membership of the Church."⁸

I would like to add to that that the same happens in connection with the membership of adults who are baptized. The third question which is to be answered by the adult is in the second part: "Believing in Him, do you confess that you receive the remission of sins in His blood and that by the power of the Holy Spirit you have become a member of Jesus Christ and His Church?" He who reasons in a juridical way would say: apparently the person concerned was already a member of the church; hence the church must in this case be the invisible church. That is a reasoning just the other way around than in the case of baptism of infants. I even once heard someone build upon this matter a whole theory about the church. But again, we hear here warm words of God's covenant about the whole matter of membership of the church. The brother or sister who is to be baptized as an adult is not considered in a for-

mal, legalistic way, but is considered as belonging to Christ's church. The consistory had contact with the brother or sister concerned and allowed him or her to make profession of faith and to be baptized.

Our conclusion is that we must not read the Church Order or the liturgical forms in a juridical, but in a pastoral way, and that we must not mix up Church Polity and Civil Law. If we would do that, it would become a very dangerous situation for the church.

Next time we hope to see what has already happened in a concrete case in which these things were indeed mixed up.

¹ A good summary of the ideas of Dr. R. Sohm is to be found in Mr. F.T. Oldenhuis, *Rechtsvinding van de burgerlijke rechter in kerkelijke conflicten* (De Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1977), (Kamper Bijdragen, No. XX), pp. 10ff.

² F.L. Rutgers, *Het kerkrecht in zoover het de Kerk met het recht in verband brengt* (Amsterdam, 1894), p. 37.

³ S. Greijdanus, *Schriftbeginselen van kerkrecht* (Enschede, n.d.).

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

⁵ W.G. de Vries, *De Reformatie* 64, p. 447.

⁶ F.L. Rutgers, *Het Kerkverband der Nederlandsche Gereformeerde Kerken, gelijk dat gekend wordt uit de handelingen van den Amsterdamschen Kerkeraad in den aanvang der 17e eeuw* (Amsterdam, 1882), p. 54.

⁷ W.G. de Vries, *De Reformatie* 64, p. 470.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 470.



At the I.C.R.C. Introducing the churches

Given the fact that there were a number of churches present which the participants and the audience knew very little if anything about, one of the fine features about the conference was that on most evenings, before the speech was to be delivered, someone was asked to introduce his church or seminary. What follows here are five such accounts that will be of interest to our readership.

G.H. Visscher

Korea Presbyterian Church (Kosin)

A brief history of the KPC

The Korean Presbyterian Church was established by the joint effort of the North American Presbyterian Church, the Southern Presbyterian Church, the Canadian Presbyterian Church, and the Australian Presbyterian Church during the 1880's. When these four Presbyterian churches began their missions in Korea, they agreed to establish a Korean Presbyterian Church holding to the Reformed faith and the Presbyterian form of govern-

ment. But after the Korean Liberation, we had many divisions among the Presbyterian groups, and we became the first group who left the mainline Presbyterian Church in 1951 due to the Shinto Shrine worship. Even before our KPC (Kosin group) was formed, the Korea Theological Seminary had already been started in 1946 by the Rev. Sang D. Han and Nam S. Joo, who both suffered from a six-year imprisonment because they refused to participate in Shinto worship. Now we



Dr. Ho Jin Jun — Korea Presbyterian Church

have 1,200 churches with 300,000 members.

The inter-church relations inside and outside Korea

From the beginning our church has had close relations with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the USA; their missionaries were involved in seminary education and the "theology of Westminster Seminary" thus made a great impact on our school and churches. In the 1960's, however, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands were introduced to our churches through Prof. K.S. Lee who studied in the Free University in Amsterdam. Since that time several of our professors have been trained in the Kampen Seminary. In Korea we do not have any Reformed churches like yours, but the conservative Korean Presbyterian seminary school teaches the Dutch theology. In the 1970's we made an agreement with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands to begin sister-church relationship with them. But we have experienced some tension over a violation of the sister-church relationship on our part. We acknowledge that the Canadian Re-

formed Church has raised some questions to the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands as to why they have a sister-church relationship with the Korea Presbyterian Church which separated from the Hapdong group without fully justified reasons.

Kosin Theological Seminary and Kosin College

Our Korea Theological Seminary was operated by our churches without government recognition until 1970, when we received recognition and changed our name from Korea Theological Seminary to Korea Theological College. In 1981 the school was expanded to the extent that we have a medical department and another natural science department. We now have 100 faculty members and 2,000 students in the College and in the Seminary there are 250 students with 8 full-time teachers. This year we started to move our Seminary from Pusan to Seoul.

Due to this rapid expansion of our school, we have some troubles within the College. In seminary education our curriculum needs to find a balance between theory and practice, and we must also cope with the heavy financial burdens of building of the new campus in Seoul.

Dr. Ho Jin Jun

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

The Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America has its roots in the Reformation of 1560 under John Knox in Scotland. The Reformed faith found good soil, and was articulately expressed in the Westminster Standards. The church in Scotland initiated formal covenants with the King (1638, 1643) recognizing the sovereignty of Jesus Christ over both the church and the nation. By 1660 the king had rejected the covenants, and from 1680 to 1688 over 20,000 "Covenanters" were either martyred or exiled.

When William of Orange came to the throne in 1688 as a Protestant, the people of Scotland rejoiced, and most of the people of God in the Church of Scotland acknowledged him as their king and head of the church. A small minority of Covenanters, however, would not accept him since he refused to acknowledge the covenants, set himself up as the head of the church and convener of the General Assembly, and would not acknowledge Jesus Christ as King of the Church and of the Nation. This small minority continued for a time without a minister, but soon God brought others into their ranks including ministers, and the Reformed Presbytery was formed which in time and with growth became the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

The first congregation in America was organized in 1743 in Octorara, Pennsylvania. In 1798 the Reformed Presbytery was organized, and the Synod in 1809. One of the first acts of Synod was the organization of the Reformed Presbyterian Theological Seminary in 1810, the sixth oldest seminary in the United States. (Today, it has 156 students, 99 on campus.) Geneva College was organized in 1848 and has over 1200 students today.



Rev. W.P. Gadsby — Presbyterian Church of E. Australia

Another early action of the Synod was the decision that slave-holders could not hold membership in the church; this affected strong congregation in South Carolina where on one day hundreds of slaves were given their freedom, and many of the members moved to southern Indiana and Illinois.

The church has always been active in recognizing the sovereignty of Christ over all of life. Beginning with the 1830's, they were able to introduce into many sessions of Congress a Christian Amendment acknowledging the rule of Jesus Christ over the nation.

There has also been a strong missionary movement in the church beginning on the island of Haiti in 1840, serving over 100 years in Syria, Turkey and Cyprus in the Near East, and sending over 100 missionaries to China where prior to the ouster by the Red China government there were 16 centers of work including schools, a hospital and an orphanage. More recently work has been taken up in Japan where there are 7 centers of work in the area of Kobe. A new mission in Liberia is planned.

Centers of the church are in Pittsburgh and eastern Kansas, yet there are congregations in 20 states with three congregations and Ottawa Theological Hall (6 years old, 15 students) in Canada.

We are committed to the Reformed faith as it articulated in the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms and the Testimony of the Reformed Presbyterian Church.

Our church "headquarters", our Education and Publication Board, and our

Seminary are at 7418 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15208 USA.

Our closest churches in ecclesiastical fellowship are the Reformed Presbyterian Churches of Ireland, Scotland and Australia.

Dr. Bruce Stewart

Reformed Churches in South Africa

Reformed Churches in South Africa came into being by way of secession in 1859 on Biblical grounds similar to those which occasioned the secession in Holland in 1834. The early years had witnessed a severe struggle for survival and then towards the end of the century the war had renewed their trials. They suffered not only the closure of their seminary but the loss of thousands of people as a result of the war and the concentration camps. Nothing was left after the war — churches, manses and farms had been burnt down. As a result there was large-scale emigration of the people.

But in spite of all, God prospered them. A seminary which began in 1969 has become the largest, indeed, the only Christian university in the African continent having now some 10,000 students. No colour bar exists in the university. Now also the Church has its Bible and psalm book in the Afrikaans language.

In 1988 they terminated their membership in the Reformed Ecumenical Conference, not on the grounds of the apartheid decision but out of concern with respect to the compromising of the authority of Scripture and confession. The church has grown, consisting now of about 350 congregations and 150,000 members and has kept to the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity, to which all ministers of the church must subscribe. Their conviction and experience is that truth and love are from the Spirit of God. Truth without love is brutality and love without truth is sentimentality.

(Based on words of Prof. V.E. D'Assonville and Minutes of ICRC 1989, GHV)

Free Church of Scotland College

At the ICRC, Principal Emeritus C. Graham introduced the Free Church of Scotland College. He traced the history back to the year 1843 when there took place the event in the history of the Church in Scotland which has come to be known as "The Disruption." In that year the majority of the ministers of the Church of Scotland, as a protest against intolerable state intrusion into the affairs of the church, left the church to form the Church of Scotland, Free, while still

adhering to the principle of good state/church relationships. They were left without manse, churches, or facilities for training students for the ministry. Within 25 years three Theological Colleges had been established. By the end of the century deviations from Scriptural teaching had infiltrated the Free Church Colleges. This affected the churches and paved the way for a compromising union in 1900



Prof. C. Graham — Free Church of Scotland

and only 26 ministers remained in the Free Church. Although these men had the right to all the property of the church they were deprived of most of it. A fine building in the heart of Edinburgh was assigned as church offices and College. This building houses the College today. Its faculty of five professors, all of whom have had experience in the pastoral ministry, is appointed by the General Assembly. Its main purpose is to train ministers for the Free Church of Scotland but students from other backgrounds are welcome and each year several are enrolled. The library of some 40,000 books includes many valuable old volumes including some first editions of Calvin.

(Excerpt of Minutes, ICRC 1989)

Christian Brethren Free Church (Philippines)

On one of the evenings at the meetings of the ICRC, the opportunity was given for Rev. J.M. Vingno to introduce the Christian Brethren Free Church. Rev. Vingno spoke about the circumstantial yet providential way in which his churches started. When he was a student at a Baptist seminary, he came across a copy of L. Berkhof's Systematic Theology which brought him to the awareness that the Baptist position was unscriptural on many points. He had his problems with Arminian theology, with the altar call, the notion of salvation as merely going to heaven, and came to know instead of a Christ who does it all. The result was that later, rather than entering the ministry in a Baptist church, he attempted to estab-

lish Reformed Churches. The Lord so blessed his work that at present there are four congregations in the Philippines (with a total of 200-300 baptized members), and four other ministers, as well as a very active radio ministry. Due to extreme financial limitations however, the pastors need to be employed elsewhere in order to support their families and the meetings are held in the homes of church members.

Rev. Vingno related in his own humorous way how he came into contact with other Reformed churches. At an earlier time, he received the opportunity to travel to Amsterdam in connection with a Billy Graham crusade at which counsellors were needed. Rev. Vingno related that when he arrived there, however, he never went to the Crusade, but instead searched for a Reformed Church. A week's search brought no results, until finally he met someone who understood his Philippine English and gave him directions. When he came to that church, he was jubilant to learn that it was a "vrij-gemaakt" (liberated) church as he understood that "vrij" ("free") designated it as Reformed. There he was introduced to Mr. Henk van Dijken who works for "De Verre Naasten" (the Dutch Mission Aid) who then brought him into contact with other leaders of the GKN. The result is that the GKN is now attempting to assist the churches of Rev. Vingno in every possible way. Formal contact has been established between the Christian Breth-

ren Free Church and our sister churches through their Deputies for Churches Abroad, Mr. van Dijken is at the moment in the Philippines to determine what kind of assistance, financial and otherwise, needs to be given, and through an independent source, finances were received for Rev. Vingno to be present at the ICRC. Here we see how in this age when the globe is shrinking, as it were,



Rev. J.M. Vingno — Christian Brethren Free Church, Philippines

it is important that we make use of such a gathering as the ICRC in order that those who are young in the Reformed faith but resolved to be faithful to it might be strengthened in every possible way. (Based on words of Rev. J.M. Vingno at ICRC 1989 and *Ned. Dagblad*, April 26, 1989, GHV.)



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Geertsema
Co-Editors: K. Deddens, J. DeJong,
C. VanDam and W.W.J. VanOene

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION
41 Amberly Boulevard
Ancaster, ON, Canada L9G 3R9

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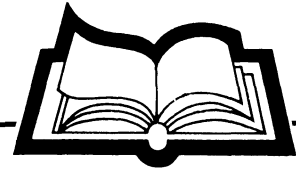
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“ . . . sorrowing most of all because of the word he had spoken, that they should see his face no more.”
Acts 20:38

The Greatest Joy

The account of Paul's parting address and departure from the church at Ephesus is unique in the book of Acts, since this is the only time in the book that we read of Paul addressing the established church. Here we have the words of Paul spoken with a living voice; for the rest, all we have are letters which he wrote to the churches at a later stage in his life. This parting shows the bond developed by the gospel. The apostle speaks moving words, but he is also very realistic about the future.

This gives all the more reason to wonder about the response of his hearers to his words. Luke specifically mentions that the elders and the congregation at Ephesus were especially sorrowful because they would not see Paul again. The fact that wolves will enter the flock, indeed, that even from amongst themselves perverse speakers would arise, does not weigh as heavily for them as the fact that Paul is going away for good. Is not their response somewhat too personal?

However, we must understand their grief in the context of Paul's work at Ephesus. Ephesus was a city at the gateway to the Gentile world. It was here that through the apostolic preaching a new man was formed, that is, the man of the final dispensation who reflects the union between Jew and Gentile. For it was especially through Paul, the missionary to the Gentiles, that God created "in Himself one new man in the place of two," Ephesians 2:15. This new man is the *last* man, that is, the one prepared by God through the gospel to witness the close of the age, and the one through whom God will usher His glorious future into the world.

All this forms the theme of the letter which Paul writes to the Ephesians from the place which later became his final stop in the gospel preaching, Rome. This book is filled with the revelation of the mystery of God's will concerning the ages, that is, His plan for the fullness of time in which He works to unite all things to Himself. And Paul encourages the Ephesians in this letter to equip themselves for the battle that brings the close of the age.


Now the last word of the book of Acts is "unhindered," a word which means: "without let or obstacle." This word captures the fundamental thrust of the book of Acts, for it describes the goal to which everything points in this book. That goal is the establishment of the fellowship of the truth of the gospel without *hindrance* or *barrier*. This term also describes the fundamental growth and openness which Paul first experienced at Ephesus and its surrounding regions,

where "all the residents of Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks," Acts 19:10.

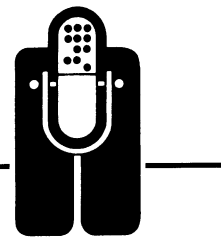
Here we come to understand the great sorrow of the Ephesians at Paul's departure. In his departure, the gospel proclamation stumbles upon an earthly hindrance and the openness of the fellowship created by the gospel must be broken for a time. Literally this text says that the Ephesians sorrowed most of all because they would no longer see Paul's face. And the form of the word "to see" indicates that this "seeing" was an act of intense involvement, a "seeing" which included the whole person and all his emotions. It was certainly not a matter of casual observation. The heart of their grief concerns an interruption in the fullness of the bonds created by the fellowship of the gospel.

So it becomes clear why not seeing Paul again is the point of greatest sorrow for the Ephesians. For here they meet one of the necessities of the present dispensation which reminds them that the fullness has not yet come. Here people who share the riches of the final dispensation meet the one obstacle to the complete fulfillment, the element of the fulfillment which is still outstanding and to which everything points and to which the proclamation of the gospel also directed them. That strife and struggle await them is not their deepest sorrow. For God had promised strength in the struggle, and this was an essential element of the present dispensation. But enjoying the day-to-day fellowship of the apostle in Christ was one of the enduring blessings given with the gospel. And losing that fellowship brought them the greatest sorrow, since this was a foretaste of the final age which they would now have to do without.

Yet this greatest sorrow is also coupled with what for the Ephesians and for us may be the deepest joy. That is obvious from the last word of the book of Acts, the word to which everything that happens in the book points. It points to the day when all the saints together, to the last man, may share the fullness of the apostolic fellowship with Christ at the last day. For then faith gives way to sight, and then we may know the fellowship that has no barriers and the bonds of love that have no grief.

The realization that in Christ this deepest joy is dawning in the world is and remains an ever greater source of comfort and strength for the faithful. Sharing the foretaste of this joy today gives us the confidence and hope we need to bear the cross of the present age. For the joy that knows no bounds is coming! Then we will share with Christ the fullness and the unity of all things. 

By W.W.J. VanOene



Especially when a congregation grows, the danger is very real that the members no longer know each other. They may recognize a familiar face, since they see it frequently on Sundays during the services, but they may not know the name which belongs to that face. Let alone that they know something about the person to whom the face belongs.

For this reason it is something to be promoted and applauded that in various congregations coffee is served after the service either one Sunday a month or once every two months. In more and more congregations this custom is introduced. Remarkably, in the last pile of bulletins I found several announcements to this effect.

Burlington East's E. P. R. wrote: "In a large congregation like ours, it is not easy to know everyone of the members. In order to get better acquainted with our brothers and sisters, the Committee of Evangelism and Public Relations (E. P. R.) invites all members downstairs for coffee (and a cool drink for the children). This coffee time has been endorsed by the consistory and will take place every first Sunday of the month."

Similarly, in Smithers it was decided "regarding the suggestion to have coffee downstairs one Sunday per month . . . to proceed with this on a trial basis for a few months." By this time the trial basis will be a thing of the past and we are wondering whether the "trials" will continue or not.

The whole matter catches on in Australia as well. In Kelmscott it was "suggested to have a cup of coffee after the church service on a more regular basis, as this promotes healthy exercising of the Communion of Saints. Consistory favours this idea and resolves to organize this once every two months." It was decided to do it after the 6:30 p. m. service on the last Sunday of every other month.

Continuing with Kelmscott we may report that the Bosch family appears to have settled in quite well. The expression "From Yancheop to Mandura" shows that my colleague is already somewhat acquainted with the area. You should go and see the sculptures and the caves in that Yancheop area! May also their possessions join up with them soon. As far as this goes Rev. Bosch seems to have some concerns. "We heard recently that our container has been booked on the vessel "TNT Express"! I don't know but somehow that is not so reassuring."

Well, let's stay in Australia for a little longer.

Armadale apparently is more or less organizing the trip which Dr. and Mrs. Faber will make to the Australian continent. We do not have to make clear to our readers why they go there. It was a very nice gesture of our latest Synod that they offered this couple this trip. Besides, it will strengthen the bond between our churches here and those in Australia even more. We don't begrudge our brother and sister their "windfall" and are certain that they will enjoy their journey and stay there. Just one advice: either fast for several months before you go, or be very firm in your refusal when all sorts of goodies are offered. The Australians know how to bake and to enjoy the good gifts of our Father's creation!

When they come there, the stay of the Rev. P. VanGurp will have come to an end, unless it is extended. The Church at Bedfordale has found Dr. P. VanGurp willing to come over from the Netherlands and serve them for four to six months. This period is to start this September. As our readers may know, Rev. VanGurp was a minister in Albany, W. A. for some years.

Albany is also the church that sent the Rev. J. Koelewijn to Papua New Guinea as a missionary. There are several

places where work could be undertaken, but one cannot be at more than one place at a time. The Rev. Koelewijn wrote in the *Mission Courier*: "The situation with the Border Camps and Lae and Madang is a complex one. There seem to be approximately 2000 Protestant people in these camps. However, Albany does not deem it responsible at present to take any action there. It feels that all its energy should be concentrated on Port Moresby and not to include Lae and Madang at this stage."

The Byford consistory "discussed a request to look into the mission work in Lae and Madang."

The more one gets into that work, the more need one discovers. This is not strange. Nor is it strange that possibilities to help also others are being pondered and investigated. However, when the resources are limited, it is better to help ten people well so that they can stand on their own feet than one thousand people just a little so that they hardly benefit at all because the help has to be spread so thinly that it is practically non-effective.

I once read a story about a very, very rich man who was visited by someone who berated him for having so much and for not sharing his wealth with all others. The rich man called his secretary, told her to calculate his total assets and to give him the total number of people living on this earth. Upon receiving this information, he gave forty-two cents to the visitor and said, "This is your share of my wealth. You got your part now."

This shows clearly that helping a restricted number well is far more effective than giving a little here, a little there. Yet we can well understand that the concern is there and that the feeling of the great need which exists can render us sad, because our resources are restricted. One strong swimmer can never hold on to three or four people who are drowning and bring them to safety; he will have to let go of some in order to save at least one or two.

Rev. Koelewijn also told us about the conditions under which he has to work. "On Sunday, 2nd April, it rained continuously for 15 hours. It was really heavy, and when we woke up in the morning, there was a flood in the lounge. The water came down from the hill. The gutters of the house could not get rid of all the water. It came through the wall and ran through the room. I stayed home, sweeping and trying to avoid the worst. With the help of the boys we have been busy from 8 a. m. till 1 p. m. The church services almost fell through, because the rain made transport almost impossible."

Let's remember this in our modern, comfortable houses, with our cars and stormsewer systems.

The Albany Mission Aid Association is investigating in what manner they might be able to assist the brotherhood in Papua New Guinea in the establishment of a school. Two years ago "we as Association supported the proposal to look into the possibility of having a Christian school in Port Moresby."

Closer to home is the church expansion about which the Byford consistory had a discussion. "The consistory briefly discussed the Rockingham expansion. It is decided the budget should have a development fund. This would not be specifically for Rockingham but for any church development where it is needed."

Bedfordale was mentioned above already. They are still searching for property and have not been very successful until now. Listen.

"STONE STREET PROPERTY. After visiting the site, receiving and considering the additional information obtained,

consistory decided not to go ahead and propose the purchase of the property to the congregation. Although the property is fairly level, has a good house and relatively easy access, consistory foresaw problems arising relating to boundaries and to its location adjacent to an industrial area."

O those "boundary problems!"

In Armadale "It is decided to write to the other metro area churches to participate in an in-depth study of the boundaries and future church growth in all four churches and to find solutions which are mutually acceptable and beneficial in the long term."

I hope that their "in-depth study" goes so deep that they don't see the bottom and bury the boundaries in there. Churches will never get rid of boundary-problems, specifically not when the churches are so close together as the Perth metro area churches are. The only solution I could think of is that they dispense with all boundaries and with retention of the present status of membership — make an agreement as to how future changes could be "organized" or permitted.

Before we complete our visit to Australia with a festive note I want to pass on something which startled me. I had to rub my eyes a few times before I could believe what I read.

Under "Armadale" I saw the following: "Voting at congregational meetings. To clear up any misunderstanding, it is restated that in the case of husband and wife both being present, only one may vote."

That such a provision exists for school society meetings, where each family is a member and when at such meetings it is "one member-family, one vote," this is correct. At such meetings voting is restricted to paying (and paid-up) members.

But to have the same provision for congregational meetings appears totally incorrect and is plain silly in my view. Church membership is not a "family-membership" but each and every member who has made profession of faith has the right to speak up and to vote on the matters which the consistory puts before the congregation for its advice. If there is a son, or a daughter for that matter, who has made profession of faith and who is still living at home, such a communicant member is then supposed not to have the right to vote on proposals by the consistory but only the father, if present, or otherwise only the mother? And if such a son or such a daughter does have the right to vote, why should the mother then be excluded when her husband is present? Something is drastically wrong here.

If the underlying thought is that the sisters are not supposed to have the right to vote, it would be wrong to let them vote in spite of this in case their husbands are not present.

And now the festive note. Some time ago a brother brought a cassette along when he returned from a visit to Australia, and gave me one too. It was a cassette of a concert given by the Festival Fanfare Concert Band. I was reminded of this anew when seeing that the Band was scheduled to give a concert on July 22nd. Since I am aware of what preceded the establishing of this Band, I am the happier to report that they have made great strides in their development. It was a joy to listen to the tape and I am certain that their youngest concert was a success.

Is it not about time that we return to our own country? Let's do that then with haste.

Various congregations will have their coffee-hour by now, especially after our long trip to Australia.

Having landed in Vancouver, with a stopover in Honolulu — too bad there isn't a sister church there! — we travel up north to Houston and Smithers.

At Houston's consistory meeting, "during the *Question Period*, the point is brought forward that too many people make use of the Bibles and Books of Praise belonging to the church, for at times there are not any left to give to visitors. Also there

are many people who have the habit of leaving their Bibles and *Books of Praise* in the pews. In this way it is difficult for visitors to sit anywhere where they do not feel they are intruding on someone else's spot. It is decided to ask those who have to leave (are used to leaving? VO) their Bibles in the pews to take them home from now on. The janitor will be instructed to put all books left in the pews in the back of the church."

About another book: Carman's "History Book" is nearing completion. The price is quite steep, as may be evident from the following: "If we can come up with a total order of 300 copies, the price will be approximately \$36.00. In case of 500 copies we would look at a price of \$24.00. As you can see, cheaper by the dozens." Anyone who is willing to help Carman keep the price down? Address of Church: see Yearbook.

Ottawa's efforts to secure a property on Richmond Road were not successful. They were not able to remove the obstacles, the owner did not want to extend the deadline for a decision, and the lot has been sold in the meantime to someone else. Back to square one.

From the most eastern church came some questions to a classis via a report on church visitation. Rev. Nederveen related some of the questions in the Brampton bulletin. "Why is it that in local churches some of us visited there was such a 'coldness' for visitors? Should not the elders especially show leadership in this respect?"

Usually we have no complaints personally, but it does not happen too often that we attend services in a church where we do not know any of the members. It was different when we visited the Netherlands some three years ago. Although there were elders in one church who knew us from earlier years and although the minister who conducted the services one Sunday was one we still knew from College days, no one except one family who knew my youngest brother made any effort to talk to us or to approach us, although we were the last ones to leave the yard. This made a very bad impression on us, and we can understand the questions from Lower Sackville.

Let it be said that the one Sunday we were in Zwolle it was different. There a few brothers spoke to us, and Rev. W.G. DeVries who conducted the service came running after us when we returned to our car to talk to us and to invite us over for coffee. Alas we could not accept this kind invitation, but it did us good to have a different reception there.

It is good when we are reminded anew of the command of the Lord to show hospitality to strangers, so that we make them feel at home and give them ample reason to come back another time.

Nearby Orangeville discussed a "Letter from the brothers and sisters from the Thornbury area re: desire to start a house congregation. Advice from classis will be asked." They did ask for advice and received it, too. Insofar as I understand it, it amounted to: go very carefully about it.

"Thirty-seven children from the surrounding neighbourhood showed up to participate in Bible Study and crafts. It was good to see a lot of familiar faces from past years. We even had a former student who had completed the whole program show up as a helper this year."

The above refers to the Vacation Bible School, as our readers will have understood.

About another school: The Burlington bulletins (all three of them!) contain a note in which room or room and board are asked for some students who intend to attend our Theological College. "It appears that at least five students will enter the College in September." It is a reason for gratitude that this information could be passed on. It may not help the many vacant churches at the moment, it does give hope for the future.

The Ebenezer Church in Burlington will be vacant shortly, when the Rev. D. DeJong retires for health reasons. The consistory followed what we consider to be a very wise course

by not mentioning the name of a minister they wanted to propose to the congregation in the bulletin. "It was decided to make known to the congregation the name of a minister on Sunday, July 23, 1989, after the morning service, when this proposal can be further discussed and be voted on."

The course "A Gift from Heaven" appears to be appreciated left and right. Smithville reported that "already over sixty people have responded to this course, while Burlington East's committee stated that "almost seventy courses have been mailed out! We (the group of six churches in this area) have just received a new shipment of 97 courses from the Reformed Evangelism Taskforce in B.C., and they told us that we used up all their supply already."

When there are many vacancies in the churches, the churches as true sisters help and assist each other in any way possible. Thus it has been customary for as long as this writer can remember that at a classis vacant churches come with a request for pulpit supply, which is gladly given.

Now a strange development has taken place. In Ontario South it was discovered that "it is really not in the province of Classis to grant such pulpit supply. Classis recommends that vacant churches approach the sister churches directly for pulpit supply." This clarifies the passage from the Watford bulletin in which it was reported that "one change that was made is that Classis will no longer grant the churches classical preaching assignments. Instead vacant churches must now approach the sister churches and ask them for help in granting pulpit supply."

Must the conclusion be that the churches all over the country have always done wrong and done something which was not in their province and thus overstepped the boundaries of their jurisdiction? Have the churches, when it comes to the point, lorded it over the other churches by assigning the ministers to a vacant church for specific Sundays so as to help their vacant sisters? And should also the churches in other regions of our country hastily return from this hierarchical path? Who made this grisly discovery?

What is wrong with a classis organizing the help to a vacant church and making arrangements with "common con-


sent"? This also made sure that the vacant church would get pulpit supply at regular times, and could set up a schedule. Now, at least in Ontario South, the vacant churches depend on the "goodwill" of the few churches that have a minister, and I see it happen already: "What! Do you think that we let our minister go again after such a short while? He has been away so many Sundays already, no, he stays here now for the time being." Pity the vacant churches!

Perhaps I am unduly pessimistic, and perhaps things will turn out to be better than I anticipate. But I would like to know why drawing up a preaching schedule for vacant churches is not in the province of a classis. It would be a new element to me, but I am willing to learn also in this respect. If proof is given, I'll pass it on for the instruction of the other churches.

Having come to the end of this medley, I may commend in to your prayers all those who labour in the field of politics. Ask the Lord to give them courage and steadfastness in spite of and over against scorn and slander. I was again reminded of the need for prayer when reading a newspaper clipping in which one of our brothers councillors protested against an "AIDS program budget." "HALTON'S AIDS education program should tell homosexuals to give up their 'disgusting habit,' and heterosexuals to wait until they're married before sex, says a regional councillor."

"In an interview after the meeting, Mr. Scholtens said he stands by his words. 'It's time that someone stands up and addresses the issue,' he said. 'I think the education program should provide education about the source of AIDS and not just skirt the issue of how not to get AIDS.'"

People want to know only how to avoid the consequences of their sinful actions, but they do not want to hear that they are to abandon their sinful actions themselves. We are thankful that there are still men and women who dare to stand up and "call a spade a spade," thereby trying to put up a dam to stem the tide of sin and filthiness, in order that the anger of the Lord may be held back for the sake of the elect.

Have a safe holiday or, if this medley appears when you are back already, much joy in your work. 

Australian Free Reformed Relief Foundation

The need for a Free Reformed Relief Foundation was discussed with the deacons of the Free Reformed Church of Armadale. The motive of the discussion was, among other things, that we, as Free Reformed people in Australia had no official channel available to practice charity in cases of catastrophes or problems for refugees.

In the past money was collected and sent to some places in the world. However, it was difficult to organize such actions. Sometimes use of Canadian channels was made.

Thankful for the advice of the above-mentioned deacons, initiatives were undertaken and the Relief Foundation in the Free Reformed Churches was established as from the first of January 1989.

A Constitution was drafted and adopted. We quote the following essential articles:

Article 1: Name

The name of the organization is "The Australian Free Reformed Relief Foundation."

Article 2: Basis

The basis of the Foundation is the Bible, the Word of God as the only rule of faith and life, as confessed in the doctrinal standards of The Free Reformed Churches of Australia, namely, the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession of Faith and the Canons of Dort.

Article 3: Aim

The aim of the Foundation is to give Christian charity to any area in the world that is in need of such. This aim is based on the conviction that all that we possess is entrusted to us by God and we should be good stewards of it also to the benefit of our neighbor. From the Bible we learn that we should show generosity, charity, mercy and kindness to the poor, to

hereby show our thankfulness for the great salvation that we have in Jesus Christ.

Article 4: Structure

The Foundation shall consist of an Executive Committee made up of at least seven members of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. This Committee shall manage the affairs of the A.F.R.R.F.

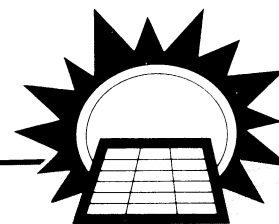
Article 15

The articles 2, 3, and 15 cannot be changed.

Executive Committee as per December 1988:

Chairman
General Deputy
Corr. Secretary
Minutes Sec.
Treasurer
Member
Member
Member

Rev. K. Bruning
Mrs. C. Leeflang
Mrs. R. Brouwer
Mrs. Y. Van Dyke
Mrs. F. Janssen
Mr. H. Strating
Mrs. I. Griffioen
Mrs. J. Scholz



By Mrs. J. Mulder

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and so you will become My disciples.

John 15:8

Dear brothers and sisters,

Due to our fall in Paradise, we have become selfish, inclined to put our own well-being, our own comfort and pleasures before anything else. By nature we are self-centered people.

Only through the grace of God, redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ and being renewed by the Holy Spirit, we become a new creation, living not for ourselves but for the glory of our Father in heaven. Being blessed, we will become also a blessing for others.

In this Scripture passage Christ Jesus compares Himself with a vine of which the believers and their children are the branches. Not all the branches, however, bear good fruit. If our relationship with Christ, the Vine, is merely outward, we are dead branches. If we confess Him with our mouth, but in the meantime keep up an unchristian lifestyle, we are like fruitless shoots, only worthy to be cut off and to be burned by fire.

But those who abide in Christ, who always again embrace Him with a living faith, will also bring forth the fruits of faith. Those fruits will come and grow as certainly as Christ is a real Saviour. Then the purpose of our lives is that the Father of Christ is glorified and honoured.

Forsaking our own will and doing the will of our Father in heaven, does not come natural to us. Being justified in Christ, we need daily renewal. Also the branches that bear fruit need to be pruned to make them more fruitful. At times that can be a painful experience. But God's purpose of that pruning and cleansing is that we keep living near unto Him in order that we may grow in love and commitment towards Him and His service.

The Lord Jesus Christ continues His redeeming work in this world through the service of the believers and His church.

United with Him, loving what He loves and hating what He hates, we will become more and more disciples of our Lord and Saviour, true witnesses of His grace. Seeking salvation not in ourselves, but in Christ only, we will proclaim in our life and conduct the glory of the Father of Jesus Christ, who also has become our gracious and loving Father. He will fulfill His purpose for me; His steadfast loves endures forever.

Trusting Him and entrusting ourselves to Him we also pray, "LORD, do not forsake the work of Thy hands." Psalm 138.

From the mailbox:

On request of a brother in Langley, BC, I pass on the following:

Mrs. Hennie Lieuwen, nee Gelderman, has waged a two-year battle with cancer, but the prognosis is not very good. Our brother writes further: "Hennie's courageous attitude has been an example for us all." She, her husband and five children entrust themselves to the LORD in these difficult times. I was asked to include Hennie's name in this column "to increase the prayers sent up to God on her behalf."

By sending her a card or letter, we can show our concern and support her and her family.

The address is:

MRS. HENNIE LIEUWEN
4581-203 "A" Street
Langley, BC V3A 5W2

Our birthday calendar for October:

ALAN BREUKELMAN
Box 666
Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

On October 17th Alan hopes to celebrate his 23rd birthday.

HELENA HOF SINK
6705 Satchel Road, Box 40, "Bethesda"
Mount Lehman, BC V0X 1V0

Helena will turn 29 on October 22nd.

JOHN FEENSTRA
RR 1
Wainfleet, ON L0S 1V0

John's birthday is on October 25th, when he will become 31 years old.

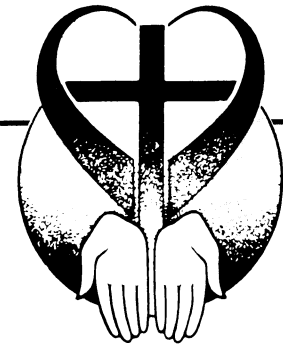
MARY ANN DEWIT
6705 Satchel Road, Box 40, "Bethesda"
Mount Lehman, BC V0X 1V0

Two birthdays in "Bethesda" this month! Mary Ann's is on October 28 and it will be her 33rd birthday.

I wish you all a happy birthday and the Lord's blessing! Also a sincere "Thank You" to all who sent me a card and best wishes on the occasion of my own birthday. It was very much appreciated!

Greetings from

Mrs. J. Mulder
1225 Highway 5, RR 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4



CRWRF

Development work in Bangladesh

Life in Bangladesh

If everyone in the world were crammed into the continent of the United States, the population density still would not equal that of Bangladesh. Over 110 million people live in this small delta area which is plagued by recent floods and droughts. Even though its rich soil and year-round growing season can produce three rice crops a year, Bangladesh relies heavily on outside aid for its food supply. The majority of its population is Muslim, and life expectancy is a low average of 47 years. Approximately three quarters of the population is illiterate. The increasingly severe flooding each year (over 25 million were displaced last fall alone!) is compounding the problems of an unbalanced economy, inadequate food production, disease control, and infrastructure deterioration. The people in this country do not know what the future holds, and reach out for assistance and hope.

How can we respond to such immense needs?

It is impossible to embrace the needs of all the people, but we can help some of them. For many years already, the Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC) has worked in Bangladesh, attempting to replace despair with *hope* — hope born from a growing spiritual awareness of God's love through Christ, and hope brought through development programs which bring results. We at CRWRF have been a small part of this worthwhile work in the past, and are glad to once again be able to support it.

How and where is assistance given?

Development programs aim to improve the conditions of a targeted group of people within a specific area. They are designed to become self-sufficient over time, allowing CRWRC to leave and begin in another area.

The poorest of the poor in Bangladesh are the landless and their families. CRWRC works with the landless and has



Embroidering

also targeted marginal farmers (farmers in danger of losing their land) to be the recipients in their agriculture extension program. These farmers own less than 2.5 acres of land and depend entirely on

agriculture to support their immediate and extended families.

In 1975, work began in the district of Bogra where a program among marginal farmers was begun. This program grew over the years to include a women's program in 1979, and a landless program in 1983. The Bogra program which became independent in 1986, now serves over 10,000 families. Two new programs in new areas based on the Bogra model are now underway. Khanjanpur began in 1984 and now serves approximately 690 families. The work is done in conjunction with the Church of God among the Shantal tribal people, many of whom, unlike the Moslem majority, are Christians. In Jamalpur, begun in 1985, CRWRC works in conjunction with the Australian Baptists within a Muslim majority community.

You may recall that the Ysselstein family (from the Guelph congregation) spent about three years in Bangladesh, contributing first to the program at Bogra, and then setting up the entire program in the *Khanjanpur* area. National Christian staff were trained, literacy and health programs were set up, women were trained



Catching fish from the pond

in marketable skills (e.g., handicrafts), and co-operatives were organized to allow the landless poor to save funds and together initiate profit-making projects. Such projects, including fish-stocking, livestock raising, etc. have already realized their goal of promoting self-sufficiency and a better standard of living.

Peter and Geraldine were sent out by CRWRC who also supported them, but we were able to contribute to this vital work by covering all costs associated with the program itself, i.e., salaries of national staff, and equipment. When the Ysselsteins returned in 1986, we reluctantly discontinued support of what had impressed us as a true example of appropriate technology-development which was really meeting the poor at their level and giving them the skills and means to grow towards greater self-sufficiency.

Since that time, increased giving on your part combined with funds freed by discontinuation of our Health Care Unit in Korea (the government there now provides this service to the poor) have allowed us to consider a renewed commitment. We feel that this project does further our basic goals and are enthused to once again be a part of it. Our responsibilities will include all program costs associated with the Khanjanpur project in-



Planting rice

cluding national staff salaries, health and literacy programs, and community development — an annual commitment of close to \$25,000.

The Ysselsteins set up the program with self-sufficiency as a goal and since their departure, the program has been able to function with trained national staff only under the supervision of CRWRC staff. Therefore we will not be recipients of the kinds of personal letters and reports we formerly received and which we trust you enjoyed reading in *Clarion*. However, CRWRC field workers do regularly

monitor all aspects of the program and will keep us informed.

Please pray that the Lord will bless the work in Khanjanpur and bring about positive results in the hearts and lives of the poor living there. Developing a relationship of trust is perhaps the greatest challenge facing development workers in Bangladesh. Once trust has been established, the Good News can be cast as a seed to those caught in the paths that lead to destruction and despair. May such sowing multiply and bring about miracles through the power of the Holy Spirit.

I.L.P.B. — update

When reflecting on the I.L.P.B.'s work since we last reported to you two years ago, we may thankfully conclude that much has been accomplished during that time.

You will remember that the I.L.P.B. is made up of delegates from the leagues of men's, women's and young people's societies in Ontario. I.L.P.B.'s mandate is to prepare study-aids for publication and distribute the printed product. These study-aids are to be written by members of the Canadian Reformed churches or their sister churches, or translated from the Dutch language.

Usually, these study-aids take the form of outlines in which the scope of a specific section of a Bible passage is delineated and its chief parts explained. These outlines, explaining the theme and context of the section to be studied and giving pertinent explanations, inspire further thought and study. In this way outlines serve especially to stimulate discussions at Bible study society meetings.

The greatest share of I.L.P.B.'s work

is done by the administration committee, based in London. Most of this committee's members have joined it in the last two years. Because of this they had a lot to learn about the work involved: keeping up with the progress of current projects, preparing and sending out orders, translating, editing and printing processes and the mounds of correspondence to be written and records to be kept. It certainly gave the new committee members an appreciation of the work accomplished by those who previously performed these tasks.

At the same time the new members could contribute a fresh outlook and new enthusiasm. New routines were established, streamlining the work and resulting in better communication with Board members, who must make well-informed and considered decisions.

One of the decisions currently under consideration is the member/non-member system with its resulting different prices. This has been a source of great confusion and causes a lot of extra ad-

ministrative work. However, the leagues in Ontario and a small number of other societies and individuals have faithfully supported I.L.P.B. for many years, so we must be sure to discuss all the ramifications of a change in this procedure which was instituted 26 years ago.

Late in the fall, I.L.P.B. was able to offer a series of outlines on the book of *Ecclesiastes* by Rev. M. Blok, translated from the Dutch language. Since that time the first volume of outlines on the book of *Revelation* by Rev. L. Selles has been prepared for print and is now ready! These outlines have been revised by Rev. Selles and the text is now compatible with the Revised Standard Version. The second volume of these outlines, also extensively revised by Rev. Selles, is now being edited and should be ready for publication later this year. A series of outlines on the *Minor Prophets* by Rev. P. Lok is also in the final stages of editing and we hope to have it ready for distribution before the next society season.

C

Installation of Rev. W. den Hollander

By J. Van Bodegom

The 16th day of July, was a day of joy for the Orangeville congregation, for on it we received a shepherd and teacher from the Lord in the person of Rev. W. den Hollander.

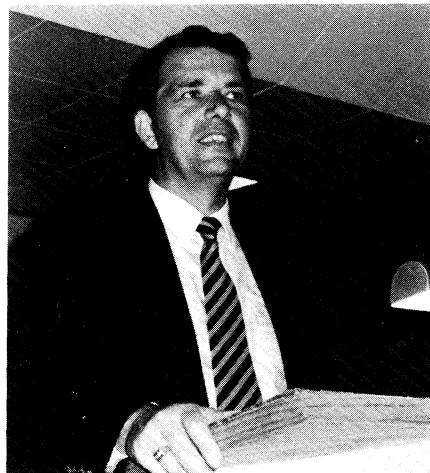
Our first contact with Rev. den Hollander was last September when a call was extended to him. Rev. den Hollander accepted our call, but he would not come over to us until July 1989 because of the school year for the children and the preparation for Synod '89 in Winnipeg.

This gave us also some time to get a few things in order; we had to get a new parsonage and sell the old one, while also the church building was under renovation.

Then finally there was the Sunday morning of July 16. The church building

was filled well before time. The Rev. J. Mulder, who was the guest preacher, had chosen as text: "This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." 1 Corinthians 4:1.

It has pleased the Lord to take care of His church through human office-bearers as His instruments. Is that not risky? Are not all men inclined to all evil? In history we see many cases of office-bearers lording it over the flock as if it was their own. Nevertheless it pleased the Lord to use men to take care of the church. One of the foremost needs of an office-bearer is to take heed to himself, that he lives and works as a good instrument in God's hand (Acts 20:28). In order to do that he must not say and do what



Rev. W. den Hollander

is attractive to people, but he must display God's grace and mercy to men. In the text we find how we should regard our office-bearers: it defines their position and their task.

The church of Corinth had problems. They considered the preaching of Paul not as the Word of God but as Paul's ideas. And so they had their preferences; one had Paul as his "party leader," others chose Apollos or Cephas. This was an application of the philosophical wisdom of the Greek world to the church. Paul warns the Corinthians not to exchange the Word of God for this wisdom of the world, for the two are basically and methodically different. Paul's wisdom is the wisdom of God and therefore he does not work to get followers of his own, but to make followers of Christ. If you consider the officer-bearers in this light then you are on the right track.

Office-bearers are not the slaves of the congregation to please men but are servants of Christ. Therefore their authority is not their own, nor is it received from the people, but it is from Christ. Therefore, when also ministers have the temptation to please people and to be selective in their contact with the congregation, they must remember that ministers are stewards over the wisdom, the mysteries of God. These mysteries cannot be known in any other way than from the Scriptures, i.e., the gospel of Jesus Christ as Saviour and Judge.

Rev. Mulder encouraged the congregation to obey and submit to their leaders when they disseminate to them the mysteries, the treasures of that gospel. And Rev. den Hollander was encouraged to take heed to himself and his



The new pastor and his family

teaching, because by doing so "you shall save both yourself and your hearers" (1 Tim. 4:16).

After the sermon the installation took place. Our minister wholeheartedly answered: *I do with all my heart*. Thus he became our shepherd and teacher, a gift from God.

Congratulations were received from: Classis Ontario-North through Rev. Mulder, who took this opportunity to enlighten the congregation on some of our new minister's strong points. A phone call was received from Dr. J. Faber and Dr. C. Van Dam. Representatives from the churches at Fergus and Grand Valley spoke, while letters were received from the churches at Toronto, Brampton, Burlington-East and Elora.

In his inaugural sermon Rev. W. den Hollander had as text: "But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows who are His" and "Let every one who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity" (2 Tim. 2:19).

The overriding theme in Paul's second letter to Timothy is the gospel of the resurrection of our Lord. Paul entrusts Timothy and all ministers with this gospel. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, the powers of death are conquered, and in Christ we rose from death. This is the word of life that must be preached. While power corruption, disruption, and revolution become more intense in the world as the last days come closer, and in the church the struggle against apostasy intensifies, the church is under the Word of life.

Rev. den Hollander preached: the gospel of the immovable foundation of the church.

1. The church is sealed by Christ the Lord with the Spirit of the covenant.

2. The church is known by Christ the Lord in the promise of the covenant.

3. The church is sanctified by Christ the Lord by the demand of the covenant.

1. God's firm foundation stands. What is this foundation? First of all it is the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11); it is also the foundation laid by the apostles. Jesus Christ bought and owns His church and, therefore, sent His Holy Spirit. As believers, we are sealed with the Holy Spirit to be God's people, we are temples in whom the Holy Spirit lives. Pentecost is our origin; the Spirit joins us all together into a spiritual house until we will finally be presented to the Lord with all the elect. Nothing will be able to separate us from Christ.

2. "The Lord knows who are His." These words are not a theoretical teaching about election; they are not a thesis. No, they are a promise to the people of the church. Christ knows them also in their troubles, in the struggle against

apostasy. Paul draws a line from the rebellion of Korah (Num. 16:5) to the troublemakers of his day (verse 16-18). Korah and his followers rejected the mediator Moses. They wanted a different foundation. When God knows who are His, this includes also a threat of punishment for those who rebel. Also in our days the church is faced with those dangers. There are, for instance, those who promote the "new hermeneutics" which makes the Bible say what man wants it



Rev. J. Mulder with the newly installed pastor

to say. The promise that "the Lord knows those who are His," guarantees the safety for the church.

In the morning service we heard what is required of your minister, namely, that he preaches Christ crucified (1 Cor. 1:23).

3. There is also a demand for the congregation: sanctification. If you call yourself a Christian you must depart from all iniquity. Can you be a Christian if you love yourself and the treasures of this world more than the Lord? You must not be mismatched with unbelievers. We may have the name of true church, but is the way we walk, that of true Christians? We have to die unto sin and live unto Christ. However, this is only possible if we stay on the one foundation: Christ.

Rev. den Hollander concluded with the words: "It will be the glory of our ministry to remind you of Christ risen from the dead, in Whom and by Whom and for Whom we are united to the glory of God."

Thus, this inaugural sermon is not just a first sermon; it is a program. We are looking forward to its unfolding.

The following Monday a welcome evening for the den Hollander family was held. The chairman of the council opened the meeting in the Christian manner, and after a few words of welcome, called on the M.C. for the evening, br. H. Van Eerde.

The first presentation was from br. A. Endeman who, speaking on behalf of the "Senior's Tape Club," told the den Hollander family a bit of Orangeville's history.

The ladies of the Women's Society introduced each other in song. The choir, under the direction of Mrs. Scheper sang several selections. Then the chairman of the Men's Society presented the minister with a framed map of the Orangeville area. The Couple's Bible Study Club tested our minister's ability as "match maker."

Jamie Jonker introduced the tune of Psalm 150 on the organ (some nice pedal work!) and then accompanied the singing of stanzas 1, 3.

The chairman of the school board of the Dufferin area said that he hoped that Rev. den Hollander had not lost his love for the field of education. The children of the Dufferin Area Christian School sang some of their favoured songs: Psalm 116, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," "This is the day the Lord has made," "Praise the Lord for He is good."

Mark Veenman played J.S. Bach's "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring;" well done!

The children of DACS showed, in a skit, that you must be careful mixing languages when making a business deal especially when you have nein (nine) children.

The young people, knowing how to appreciate a good meal in a restaurant, presented Rev. and Mrs. den Hollander with a meal certificate.

Next we listened to a musical interlude by the Doekes trio, playing a selection from Händel's "Occasional Oratorio".


The girls and boys club gave us a sampling of how they spend their meetings, especially their recess.

The chairman of the Evangelism Committee, being of Irish descent, did his thing in his "mother tongue."

The band "Soli Deo Gloria" accompanied the congregational singing of Psalm 138:1, 3.

At the end of the evening the minister introduced to us the den Hollander family. He told us that the family felt very welcome, and that he looked forward to doing his work in Orangeville.

After Hymn 46:1, 2 was sung, Rev. den Hollander led in prayer, and thanked the LORD for His goodness.

A social hour with refreshments followed. 

A warm welcome to Rev. Bosch and family

By J. Bruning

It has been a festive week for the congregation of Kelmscott, Western Australia. After a vacancy of almost two years, the Bosch family was greeted by a lively, banner-waving crowd at Perth airport. During the days that followed there was the "colloquium doctum" at the church of Byford; the official welcome evening; Rev. Bosch's installation as minister of the Word and his inaugural sermon. In all, it was a very memorable week and one for which the church of Kelmscott and the bond of churches may be very thankful to our Heavenly Father.

Welcome evening

It was evident from the outset that the welcome evening, held on Friday evening, would be delightful; an evening in which the communion of saints was very evident. School children were dressed in their Sunday best, decorations were put up, mysterious boxes and parcels carried around and plates with cakes carried in; it was an air of festivity.

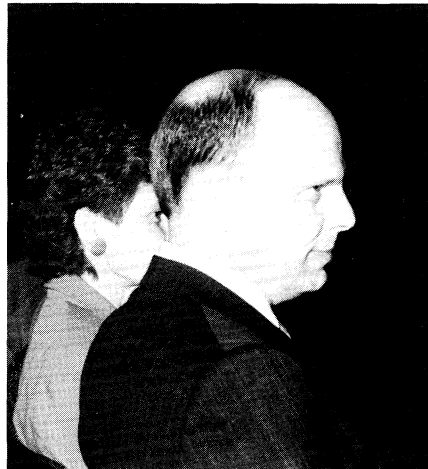
The Chairman of the Consistory, br. L. Schoof opened the meeting; in prayer, Bible reading and the singing of Psalm 100 the congregation professed its thankfulness to the LORD for His greatness. The Chairman expressed gratitude for the assistance received from the bond of churches during the vacancy, in particular from the Rev. C. Bouwman (Kelmscott's counsellor), Rev. W. Huizinga, Rev. K. Bruning and Rev. G. van Rongen who conducted many church services. He welcomed the Bosch family.

Br. D. Pot, the M.C. for the evening, announced that there was a second reason for the decorations: Mrs. Bosch's birthday.

The festive evening was filled with many items of great interest and entertainment. We heard musical contributions from various talented people; some "sing alongs" by the youth clubs which they used to introduce the Bosch family to some Aussie idiosyncrasies like thongs (not flip-flops); snaggers (elsewhere known as sausages); the correct pronunciation of tomato sauce; pie and sauce, T-shirts, black shorts and, of course, the

inevitable jar of vegemite, which according to Rev. Huizinga is only "good for the chooks."

The evening was also interspersed with speeches (5-minute limit according to the M.C., which some ministers found hard to cope with) by men from all walks of life. Rev. A. Veldman assured everyone that it did not rain in Albany as much as people said. He welcomed Rev. Bosch to the bond of churches, and foreshadowed



Rev. and Mrs. Bosch — visibly enjoying the welcome evening

pulpit exchange, visits to Launceston and Port Moresby and "other work." Rev. W. Huizinga of Armadale held that Aussie land is back to front and upside down: on the road left is right and right is left; up is down and down is up (referring to *Dwellingup*, *Manjimup* and *Kojunup* being towns *down* south and places like *Sophie Downs*, *Nita Downs*, and *Frazier Downs*, being *up* north). I suppose one day the Reverend will get used to us, even if he doesn't lose his Canuck accent. Rev. Bouwman of Byford, wearing three hats, welcomed the new Rev. and from under his yellow hat, hoped Rev. Bosch's name would appear in the *Una Sancta* from time to time (hear, hear!). Representatives of the Men's Bible Study Club, the School Association and the church of Bedforddale also spoke.

The Kelmscott congregation spent considerable time and resources building a very big manse, so big, said the new Reverend, that the children contemplated taking their roller skates to bed to make sure they'd be back in time for breakfast. The Youth Clubs had raised some \$3,000 for the manse by means of a car wash day, a canoe trip, a dinner and other ingenious means.

Rev. Bosch closed the evening. He expressed his and his family's sincere thanks for the wonderful welcome; he commented that his ties with the congregation had been built up over the past twelve months, initially with his visit in May 1988 and then with a suitcase full of letters he received from down under in the following twelve months. He was above all thankful to our Heavenly Father for His grace and for having established churches in W.A. It was a beautiful thing, to travel some 21,000 km and find a church having the same faith and confession and the same LORD. He also reminded the congregation of what the family had left behind in Smithville; a vacant church and also Mike Bosch and his wife. Canada now has a vacancy rate in the churches of some 30%. We should remember that in our prayers.

The evening was closed in prayer after the singing of Psalm 150.

Rev. Bosch's installation

On Sunday, June 11, Rev. Bosch was installed as minister of the Word. Rev. C. Bouwman conducted the church service. He chose as text Hebrews 13:17 "Obey your leaders and submit to them; for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account. Let them do this joyfully, and not sadly, for that would be of no advantage to you."

The theme of Rev. Bouwman's sermon was that the congregation should obey and submit to their leader because he preaches not his own word but that of the *Lord Jesus Christ*. Ministers are charged by God to preach the Word; that charge will, furthermore, be followed up by punishment if not executed according

to God's Word. The minister must preach the whole Word, the grace as well as the demand, the love and the exhortation.

The congregation is also exhorted, in this text, to accept gladly and willingly the minister's, and the other office-bearers' leadership. The congregation should, in faith, respond in obedience and thankfulness to both facets of the preaching; then the "reward" in eternal life will be great.

On Sunday evening, Rev. Bosch held his inaugural sermon, using as text 2 Corinthians 4:5, "For what we preach is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus sake." Rev. Bosch's theme was that the exalted Christ confirmed Paul's glorious ministry in Corinth in the proclamation and demonstration of Jesus Christ as Lord. Paul did not preach his own message, but only the glorious gospel given to him by the omnipotent Christ. Rev. Bosch said it was the preacher's task to preach the unadulterated Word — and with God's grace he undertook to do that. The minister and other office-bearers are also slaves to the congrega-

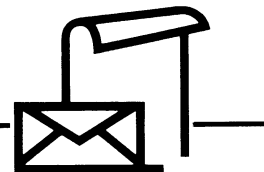


Jenna Postmus (5) offering congratulations and flowers on behalf of the Kelmscott John Calvin School "Happy birthday, Mrs. Bosch!"

tion for Christ's sake — slaves who devote their being to Christ's Kingdom by the work in the congregation and by equipping the saints. The congregation was also called to acknowledge this in faith by word and deed.

It was indeed a beautiful Sunday, one which was rounded off by a cup of coffee in the church hall. Let us all be thankful that the Lord has provided a new shepherd and pastor for the church at Kelmscott and in the bond of churches.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



In the April 28 and May 26, 1989 issues of *Clarion*, the editor reacts to an article I wrote in the church bulletin. I would like to make the following remarks in answer to the comments made by Prof. Geertsema.

1. I get the impression from Prof. Geertsema's reaction that he feels that I was too one-sided in my article. In his feelings I want "to criticize and look for things that must be wrong" (April 28, page 195). I will readily admit that the article from which Prof. Geertsema quotes was one-sided. In that article I reacted against a particular issue of *Clarion* which had come out just before General Synod 1989 and was, in my opinion, one-sided as well. My intent with this article in the bulletin was to give to the members of the congregation another side of the issue as well. This context certainly makes the article one-sided.

However, Prof. Geertsema in his reaction treats this article as a comprehensive analysis of the relationship between the Can. Ref. Churches and the OPC. I feel that in doing so he did in-

justice to the intent of my article. Some of the conclusions which he draws from it are then also not justified. I did not give a detailed and comprehensive study on the relationship, but, over against the one-sidedness of one *Clarion* issue I gave another side.

2. I do not recognize myself in the following summary made by Prof. Geertsema: "The reasoning can be so easily: An open table is a neglecting of discipline; discipline is the third mark of the true church; conclusion: the OPC misses the third mark of the true church of Christ." (May 26, page 243)

In the first place, I did not refer to discipline in connection with the marks of the true church, but to the proper celebration of the Lord's Supper. And in the second place, a conclusion as Prof. Geertsema draws cannot be found in my article. I have nowhere stated that the OPC misses one of the marks of the true church.

More often I have noticed that as soon as one criticizes something about our relationship with the OPC, right away

far-reaching consequences or accusations are made, which make an open discussion very difficult. What I stressed was this: we know that there are in the OPC practices with regard to the Lord's Supper that go against Scripture. We know this from the situation at Laurel and the answer the 50th General Assembly of the OPC gave to the brothers and sisters there. What do we do about this?

If you want to summarize what I said then it could be done this way: Because the proper administration of the sacraments is one of the marks of the true church, and we call the OPC true church, we are obligated to make it a very important matter in our relationship. I wrote not so much with the OPC in mind (for I agree with Rev. Boersema that the OPC in this whole matter has not changed, only we perhaps did not realize it), but the Can. Ref. Churches. Now that we know about their practices, what do we do about this in the light of 1977?

In 1977 we have made a judgment with regard to the OPC. I might not like that particular judgment. I indeed believe

it was made hastily and that Synod 1977 entered into a false dilemma. But it was made and was upheld by subsequent Synods. (Another question is how long we can maintain this judgment of 1977 without coming to full unity). My concern is that as churches we live up to the statements and judgments we officially adopt. For otherwise we, Can. Ref. Churches, say one thing, with the confession in our hand (1977) but in practice we do something else. This could empty out our confessional language and endanger our character as churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I hope that these comments will contribute to a further discussion of this matter.

D.G.J. AGEMA

Comment:

I am thankful for this reaction of the Rev. Agema. It makes a few things clear. I did get the impression that my colleague was "one-sided" and wanted to criticize from his reaction to what Dr. G.I. Williamson wrote. I found that not diplomatic but positive, and thought that this had to be recognized as well, even in a reaction to one-sidedness.

Further, regarding the reasoning "open table — lack of discipline — false church," I did not say that Rev. Agema, in what he wrote, stated that the OPC is a false church. I thought I had to warn: Let us be careful and not make such a simplistic reasoning. This can so easily be done. It is clear that Rev. Agema did not write this, and conclude that he did not want to make a suggestion in this direction either. Nevertheless, I do think that there was some basis for my cautioning, because also in this reaction Rev. Agema makes the connection with the judgment of Synod Coaldale 1977 which stated that the OPC is a true church.

When Rev. Agema writes that this practice "is a neglecting of discipline" and that it remains an important point of continued discussion, I agree with him. Brothers and sisters in a congregation have to help each other in living by what the gospel teaches; they have to sharpen each other up in discovering what the will of the Lord is (Phil. 1:9f., Col. 1:9). The same counts also for fraternal ecclesiastical relations. How long in a brotherly relationship a discussion has to be continued, especially in case there is and remains a deaf ear, is another matter. In our concrete situation matters are complicated through events and decisions concerning "Laurel" and "Blue Bell." Further discussion is needed, indeed, with patient, consistent, humble Christian love.

J. GEERTSEMA



Dear Mr. Editor,

I feel that I must react to the fact that you decided to print (in *Clarion*, Vol 38, No. 16, 17) a letter from (Rev.) Ralph Boersema requesting publication of further "details" (provided by himself) about a decision of General Synod 1989 in addition to what was published in the official Press Release.

It would have been more proper to respond to Rev. Boersema that if the Press Release of Synod (for which *Clarion* is not responsible) is not detailed enough to his liking, the complete text of the deci-

sions can be found in the Acts which will be published for all to read and study.

What has now happened is that we have a decision of Synod published upon the request of an appellant. This decision is "highlighted" with the interpretative and suggestive comments of the appellant himself. Does it occur to you that these comments do not necessarily do justice to the decisions themselves but instead may prejudice the proper understanding of these decisions?

I am especially concerned about the fact that in this regard names of brothers are mentioned whose "views" were never an issue at General Synod 1989. Whatever is being discussed among some members in the churches about the views of others, Synod 1989 did not deal with anyone's views on the doctrine of the church, but refuted conclusions wrongly based by appellants on certain decisions of a previous General Synod.

It is not correct to suggest that General Synod 1989 in doing so made room for any positions which are defended in these appeals or are being promoted in any other way. On the contrary, Synod 1989 fully upheld the decisions made by Synod 1986 (Articles 184 and 185) and rejected misinterpretation of these decisions.

It is not a case of *now* moving "forward in unity on the matter of the doctrine of the church," for this was the case also in 1986 and in 1983.

Yours in Christ,
CL. STAM

OUR COVER

Old barn
Cooks Creek, MB

Photo courtesy:
John F. Vanveen
Oakbank, MB



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Thank you for your letters, poems, pictures, puzzles and more!

I was very happy to hear from so many of you. Keep up the good work!

Let's start with a "poem and picture" from Busy Beaver *Jessica Beintema*.

Letters

Letters, letters, all over the place!
 Piled high on my desk,
 And shoved in my face!
 I'll read the friendly ones at home.
 (But all the mean ones I'll leave alone.)
 I need a seven-week vacation.
 Oh those letters,
 They keep coming and coming!
 I'll just let myself off
 At the "Take a brake!" station,
 But between just you and me,
 Before my mother writes,
 Just call me!



FROM THE MAILBOX

You have been busy, *Janine Vanderhoeven!* I see you are a good puzzler, and you like to keep the other Busy Beavers busy too. Thank you for your letter and the wordsearch, Janine. Bye for now.

Hello, *Alida Knol*. I see you've been busy this summer, too. But you didn't work the whole time, did you? You did a good job researching your answers to the quizzes, Alida. Keep it up!

How do you like your new school *Gredina Jaspers*? Are you looking forward to moving? Be sure to write and tell me your new address if you do. Write again soon Gredina. (You're all better now, right?)

Hello, *Lee-Ann Beintema*. I was happy to get your letter and the wordsearch to share with the other Busy Beavers. Did you have a good summer and are you happy to be back in school now, Lee-Ann?

I really enjoyed the rhyme, and your word choice in the long poem, *Jessica Beintema*. But it was a bit "gloomy," don't you think? Keep up the good work, Jessica. I hope you'll share your poems with us again really soon.

Do you miss your rabbits, *Judy Bysterveld*? And have you done a lot of swimming? Thanks for the cartoons and puzzle, Judy. Thank you for sharing.

What did you sew this summer, *Janneh Jaspers*? Do you get to see very many horses? Will you share a picture of yours with us some time, Janneh? Bye for now.

Have you got your new desk, *Peter John Sikkema*? I hope you get one that's comfortable to work on and has lots of storage space. I hope you got the tickets you wanted, Peter John. I'm glad you had such a good summer. P.S. Were you allowed to snack on the food you worked with?



Busy Beaver *Anna DeVries* has been doing some reading this summer. She writes: "Another book I really enjoyed is *Jane Eyre*. The author is Charlotte Bronte. It is about a girl whose mother and father have died, and she now lives with a cruel aunt and cousin who both are so mean. Then she goes to a boarding school where she gains two friends, a kind girl of her own age, and the teacher, Miss Temple. Soon the friend falls sick and dies. Miss Temple falls in love and gets married. Once again she must start from scratch. Then she gains a friend and a student out of school. What will happen to her now?"

Quiz Time!

WORDSEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Christine Lodder*

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

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------|---------------|---------------|
| trillium | bluet | petunia | snapdragon |
| anemone | fuchsia | cosmos | chrysanthemum |
| columbine | tulip | iris | cloth of gold |
| crocus | rose | aster | nasturtium |
| geranium | daffodil | begonia | marigold |
| gloriosa | phlox | spider flower | |