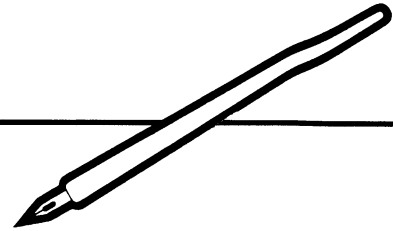




Clarion
THE CANADIAN FORGIVENESS MAGAZINE
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THANKSGIVING

Beyond Madness and Folly

*And I applied my mind to know wisdom and to know madness and folly.
I perceived that it is also but a striving after wind. Ecclesiastes 1:17*

And let our people learn to apply themselves to good deeds. . . . Titus 3:14

Give thanks?

We have shared the fruits and harvest of another season, and have again experienced the goodness and the kindness of God in supplying all our needs with an abundance of earthly gifts. Again one can say: God's promise holds true, for seed-time and harvest continue as long as the world remains, Gen. 8:22.

And yet Qoheleth, the teacher of wisdom among God's people who was God's instrument in writing the book Ecclesiastes, does not appear to us as such a thankful figure. He observes the regular recurrence of the seasons and the flow of the generations, and only concludes: All things are full of weariness! "What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done; and there is nothing new under the sun," Eccles. 1:9. What is there to give thanks about? All this has happened since the beginning of the world, and we can only expect things to continue in this way. What do we gain by all our toil? It is all vanity and a striving after wind. Wisdom, madness and folly — they are all the same. What difference does it make if you pursue one or the other?

Vanity of vanities . . .

Like all books of the Bible, Ecclesiastes must be understood in the context of its time. The writer takes the name of Solomon and so is clothed by God with the authority of Solomon. Yet he does so in such a way that it is clear that he had a certain edge on Solomon: he lived much later than Solomon did. He had that much more history and knowledge to work with, living as he did in Israel's time of decline, under Greek or Persian rule. In fact, through him God presents to us as in a mirror what the ultimate end of the wisdom and glory of Solomon was. No one surpassed this king in greatness of wisdom and understanding. But what was its end? It all came to nothing. Vanity of vanities . . . it was all a striving after wind.

Wisdom, madness and folly

The world has changed since Solomon's day, yet there are many similarities between his time and ours. His was a time of unparalleled prosperity, a time of expanding possibilities in Israel. "Judah and Israel were as many as the sand of the sea, they ate and drank and were happy," 1 Kings 4:20. Solomon had made friends with neighbours and brought foreigners into subjection, and during his reign the land enjoyed peace and tranquility. The years of strife and bloodshed appeared to be gone forever.

And Solomon himself? He had "largeness of mind" (1 Kings 4:29) and his years were spent in learning and discovery. He became Jerusalem's greatest builder. And according to the style of the day, from wisdom he ventured to madness and folly, the pursuit of human pleasure and sensual delights. "Madness" here is the excessive frivolity and dissipation of the idle rich. Here we think of foods, music, the arts and even carnal pleasures. In this respect, Solomon was also a child of his time. He loved many foreign women, and his wives turned away his heart after other gods, 1 Kings 11:1,4.

Now the LORD uses Qoheleth to show us what the result of all the investigation and striving of man is. Solomon functions as a type for all those after him. And the rule is the same: the pursuit of all these ends does not bring any essential change in man's condition. Indeed, wisdom is better than folly, as light excels darkness, cf. 2:13. Yet no one really accepts wisdom, and in the long run people will indulge in dissipation, reveling and folly. Riches is better than poverty, but also brings no lasting reward. In the long run, all go to the grave, and everyone loses the wealth he gained under the sun.

The way of the king

So we touch on the divine truth that rings forth so clearly in this book, the truth that makes this book so important in the canon: our human nature always has a propensity to evil, and no amount of human searching or striving can change our condition. The writer sums it up from Solomon to the close of the kingdom, from beginning to end, and he concludes: there was not one king who brought us anything more than what Solomon brought. And all of Solomon's pursuits testify to the same result: a striving after wind. For what was left of it in Qoheleth's day?

The tenor of the book is thus qualified by its place in the canon. Indeed, the fear of God remains an essential theme in the book. And the knowledge of God is presupposed. He is mentioned no less than thirty-seven times! Yet He deliberately appears distant, and almost removed from the world. His justice and longsuffering with men — these virtues are accentuated. In fact, the book explicitly alludes to the delay in divine judgment, 8:11. God never reaches in to punish men before it is absolutely necessary, or before their guilt is manifest to all.

Precisely this delay allows one to get a clear picture of the result of all things under the Old Testament theocratic ruler. There was much good in Solomon's works — unsurpassed wisdom, upright service, the building and dedication of the temple, and so on. But the passing years also saw a multiplication of evil in the style of the kings of the age: the acquisition

of horses and chariots, many wives, and other marks of opulence and decadence. Solomon went from wisdom to folly, and from sobriety to madness. His kingship was unsurpassed throughout the Old Testament. Yet it was at bottom a *mixture* of a kingship moulded by divine revelation and humanistic motivations.

In this light, all ends in vanity. Indeed, because divine *delay* so keenly stamps the book, the sense of the fear of God, while distinct and present, is almost outweighed by the sense of the futility of all things. So the book seeks to awaken a deeper sense of allegiance to the longsuffering God and perseverance in faith as well as a patient and enduring waiting upon Him, — because all else fails. God appears here as the One who is outstanding, and the One who in righteous longsuffering delays His vindication beyond all human capabilities of patience and endurance.

Solomon's greatness

Qoheleth surely does not want us to think lightly of Solomon. Indeed, there was no greater king of all the kings of the earth! But Solomon followed the way of the king: that is the way of human nature. In the days of Qoheleth, the prophetic line had died out; the kings had disappeared, and the priestly line was at a low ebb. So we are directed to see how incomplete the forms and gifts of the old covenant are when taken in themselves. Indeed, this book cries out for the new dispensation! For everything is present in the book: God's goodness, His faithfulness, His justice and His longsuffering. Only one thing is markedly outstanding: His coming! His visitation! His salvation! Qoheleth yearns for the dawn of a new age! Only God's hand can break the vicious cycle of weariness on earth!

One greater than Solomon is here!

This is what has been given to us. Solomon surpassed all the kings of the earth, and all the kings after him; and Qoheleth, as a disciple of his school of wisdom, had a slight edge on him. The mirror he holds up presents us with the *true* Solomon. So Qoheleth looks for the King who will radically and essentially surpass Solomon and every earthly king: the Messiah! This was the only kind of light that could put the dark shadows of vanity to flight. And the light appeared in Jesus Christ! With His coming all delay has ended! His coming brings renewed hope and expectation! Indeed, it brings more: through the Spirit the reality of the kingdom may be solidly embedded in the hearts of men. The kingdom of God, which had already shown brightly in the days of Solomon, but later had dimmed due to the frailty of human nature, now takes on new and enduring light, finding an enduring place among men through the dwelling of the Spirit in our hearts. One greater than Solomon is here!

Give thanks!

If even in Solomon's day there was still reason enough to be thankful, how much more today! For Christ appeared and gave Himself for us, "to redeem us from iniquity and to purify for Himself a people of His own who are zealous for good deeds," Tit. 2:14. The gift of the Spirit gives a new shape to the desires of our hearts and the pursuits of our minds. No longer do we apply ourselves to idle pursuits. Rather, knowing the day and the hour, let us, as Paul says, learn to apply ourselves to good deeds! The last hour has come! And this gives a new urgency to our life: be thankful! And let your deeds be filled with thanksgiving every day!

For the cycle of the seasons has now become an instrument in the hands of Jesus our Saviour and King, and He wields and uses it for the good of His Church. He has brought meaning to all the loose ends of the old covenant, filling our vanity with life! And we are called to live for Him in the world.

Our deeds are no longer our own, and cannot be done in ourselves. Indeed, in the measure they are done in our own strength, they are subject to the law of vanity, futility and decay. But in the measure that our deeds are done in Christ through faith, we bear lasting fruit. Of His own Christ says, It will be seen that their works are wrought in God.

Let us then be zealous to live in thankfulness, apply ourselves to good deeds, and so inherit with all the saints the crown of righteousness in Christ — our only King! **C**



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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — Thanksgiving — Beyond Madness and Folly — J. De Jong	438
The Twentieth Anniversary Meeting of the College — J. Geertsema	440
Principal's Report 1989 — J. Faber	442
The sifting effect of preaching ₁ — K. Deddens	445
Press Review — Recent ecclesiastical assemblies — C. Van Dam	447
International — W.W.J. VanOene	448
Ray of Sunshine — Mrs. J. Mulder	449
Some thoughts on the ICRC — Cl. Stam	450
Press Releases	452
School Crossing — Reflecting on the "Image of the Learner" — A. Witten	454
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty	455

The Twentieth Anniversary Meeting of the College

By J. Geertsema

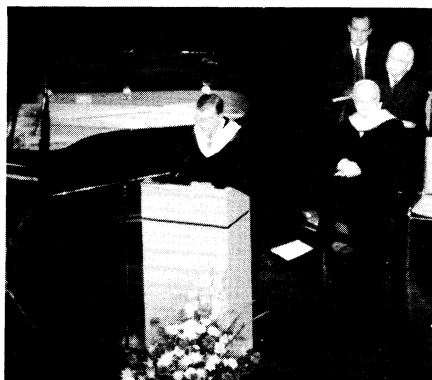
Opening

On Friday, September 8, 1989, the twentieth College Evening was held. After the singing of Ps. 36:2 and 3, the reading of Hebr. 4:1-11, and thanksgiving and prayer, the Rev. Mulder, former president of the Board of Governors, in his opening word, welcomed all present, in particular Rev. and Mrs. H. Versteeg, on furlough from Irian Jaya. Rev. Mulder characterized the evening as very special, not so much because there was no graduating student, or because six new students had entered the College, but because, "beyond our expectations," he could welcome Dr. and Mrs. N.H. Gootjes and their family, so that the installation could take place, and "because we had to say farewell to two retiring professors": Dr. J. Faber per January and Dr. K. Deddens per June 1990.

Rev. Mulder mentioned how Dr. Deddens had been appointed by the Synod of Cloverdale 1983 for a period of six years and began his work at the College the following year. At the end of the present academic year this period will have come to completion, and the task will be taken over by Drs. J. De Jong, also present. It was and still is quite a task to teach all the subjects in two departments: in Diaconology (concerning preaching, and pastoring, concerning elders and deacons, concerning mission and evangelism) and in Ecclesiology (the history of the church and the matters of church order). However, as the Rev. Mulder went on to say, Prof. Deddens was not only a travelling professor (to Brazil, to South Africa, to the churches in the West) but also a professor who felt at home both in Canada and in all his subjects.

At this moment not much was said regarding Dr. Faber, for this was to be done at a later point which was not mentioned on the program but would be "sneaked in." The evening was further special since also five governors had retired and had been replaced by others, in accordance with the Act of the College, which determines that governors may serve only for a period of nine years, although afterward they can be appointed

again. The chairman thanked them also for all the work they had done and the many hours they had spent for the College, in particular the members of the Finance and Property Committee, the brs. H. Kampen and C.M. Loopstra. Rev. Mulder stressed that giving thanks to all who had worked in and for the College for their labours meant giving thanks to God for all that He gave in these labourers in His kingdom. He concluded his



Dr. K. Deddens delivers his farewell speech

opening words with reminding all of us of Christ's word in John 12:26, "If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honour him." This promise is for all of us, for any faithful member of the church, Rev. Mulder added, namely, that the Father will honour those who serve Christ. It is the greatest honour possible for sinful people. With these words he declared the evening opened. Congratulations and good wishes from the church at Kelmescott, Australia, sent by Rev. C. Bosch, were read.

The Principal's Report and the farewell speech

After Hymn 47:3,9 was sung, Dr. J. Faber presented, for the last time, his Principal's Report. It was somewhat longer than at other evenings. It was followed by the singing of Ps. 119:4,5, and 34, after which Dr. Deddens addressed the audience with his farewell speech on the "Sifting Effect of Preaching." We sang

Ps. 19:3 and 4. Since both addresses will be published in their entirety, we shall continue with the next point.

The installation

At this point Rev. Mulder introduced to us Dr. Nicolaas Hendrik Gootjes. He was born on the 16th of July, 1948, at Leeuwarden, the Netherlands; in 1976 he was ordained as minister of God's Word in the Reformed Church at Leiden; in 1980 he became guest professor at the Korea Theological Seminary in Pusan, South Korea, to teach Dogmatics and Greek New Testament; in 1985 he obtained the Doctor of Theology degree at the Theological Seminary of our sister churches in Kampen, the Netherlands. Rev. Mulder said, "We are very happy that the Synod of Winnipeg 1989 appointed Dr. Gootjes, and that Dr. Gootjes accepted his appointment." Hereafter he read the Form for the Installation of Professors at our College with the questions:

First: Do you believe the writings of the Old and New Testament to be the only infallible Word of the sovereign God? Do you acknowledge the doctrine which is contained in Holy Writ and in the doctrinal standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation and do you reject all doctrines which conflict with them?

Second: Do you promise faithfully to discharge your office, as previously described, according to the same doctrine, and to adorn it with a godly life?

Third: Do you promise to submit yourself, in case you should become delinquent in doctrine or in conduct, to the admonition and discipline of the appointed organs of the Churches as described in the Form of Subscription?

Dr. Gootjes' answer was: "I do with all my heart." Rev. Mulder asked all present "to rise and sing the song of blessing, Ps. 134:3." Dr. Gootjes, then, signed the Subscription Form for the Faculty of the

Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, indicating his agreement and promise to teach accordingly.

A Festal Book for Dr. J. Faber

The next point was not printed on the program, because it had to remain a surprise, especially for Dr. J. Faber. Rev. Mulder invited the Rev. G. Van Dooren to offer to Dr. Faber a "Festschrift" (the German name for a book in which colleagues and former students honour a scholar with scholarly articles at a special occasion, as, e.g., a special anniversary or a retirement). Not all that the speaker said is quoted here since it can be read in the book. Rev. Van Dooren referred to his "Foreword" for it in which he writes about the "Visio Dei per Essentiam" (seeing God in His essence) which, he said, "means, approximately, a certain interpretation of the promise of the Lord Jesus, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'" Rev. Van Dooren told us why he had chosen this title and topic. It was "because I remembered very clearly that, during a meeting in honour of the Faber family where only those were invited who had the privilege to say 'Jelle' to him," professor Selles had said that he was always struck by the fact that Dr. Faber so much loved Dogmatics, especially the doctrine about God, and that Dr. Faber's response had been: "Yes, I look forward to enjoying God." After having formulated some questions regarding the meaning of this seeing God in glory, Rev. Van Dooren quoted from the old Dutch rhymed Psalm 17:

*Maar — blij vooruitzicht dat mij streelt —
ik zal, ontwaakt, Uw lof ontvouwen,
U in gerechtigheid aanschouwen,
verzadigd met Uw godd'lijk beeld.
[But — joyful prospect which delights —
I shall, awaked, unfold Thy praise,
in justice, then, behold Thy face,
with Thy divine form satisfied.]*

Rev. Van Dooren characterized Dr. Faber as a universal man: capable of teaching all the subjects in the College. And in grateful appreciation for all his work, an international team of colleagues and friends "now give Dr. Jelle . . . a book with the title *Unity in Diversity: Studies presented to Dr. Jelle Faber on the occasion of his retirement.*" Rev. Van Dooren concluded with these words: "Brother Jelle, may the Lord grant you in the years of your life to come that He may put the crown on your head, the crown of a faithful servant, so that you have something to cast at His feet when you may see Him in glory." He, then, offered the (beginnings of the) book, which will be published, D.V., in December.

A "short musical interlude" followed, presented by Mrs. Christine Van Halen-Faber, descant recorder, and Margriet



Board of Governors and Faculty

Deddens, piano. They played the *Concertino in D* (Concerto No. 6) for descant recorder and piano composed by John Baston (1730). It was a very nice performance by these two daughters of the retiring professors.

The Women's Saving Action

Now Mrs. E. Mulder, spouse of the chairman of the evening, and the new president of the Women's Saving Action, spoke to us. This is what she said:

It is indeed with some hesitation that I accepted the honour to address you tonight. As you know, this presentation on behalf of the Women's Saving Action has now for years already been a point on the agenda of this evening. For some of us it was even one of the highlights. It is not so difficult to understand. Of course I would not dare to minimize the contributions made by our scholared Faculty members and other persons. However, we must all admit that without the enthusiastic assistance of your humble sisters our Theological College would not have prospered the way it did and would not have become what it is today. Looking back, we remember that nineteen years ago, at the instigation of Mrs. Ger Selles, the Women's Saving Action came into being. With the able assistance of two generations of the Lindhout family she has kept it going and growing. We gratefully acknowledge the drive and enthusiasm with which she did the work for our College. It was she who in her own unique way addressed us on these evenings and made the presentations on behalf of all the Canadian Reformed sisters. There was always a touch of humour when she spoke. I would like to quote a few lines from her first address held in 1970. She said:

The Women's Saving Action celebrated its first anniversary. All of us who participated are proud of

this baby, if we may call it so. We hope that it may grow to be very old and wise and bear fruit for the Theological College. If you love someone, you want to show it by word and deed. You do this by helping and assisting. To be help-mates is our calling. In such a way we regard the Saving Action work. We like to show the Faculty of our College how much we care.

It is in this spirit that we hope to continue the work Mrs. Selles and others once started: a simple saving action which the LORD has blessed in so many ways. When a new building was needed, we could help. We also assisted in keeping the library up to date. New books could be bought regularly, and also teaching and learning equipment could be installed. To achieve all this we have depended on the activities of our local representatives and their helpers, and, last but not least, on the generosity of all church members. We sincerely hope that also in the future we can count on your continued support, for there is and always will remain much to be done. A library needs to grow steadily in order to be of real benefit for professors and students. And the Women's Saving Action likes to help in doing this. Let us keep up the enthusiasm and dedication with which we began our saving action and so enable the faculty and the students to do their work fruitfully.

As you have read in the last *Clarion* issue, and as Professor Faber has told you already, Mrs. Loraine Lindhout has resigned as treasurer after many years of faithful service. We also thank her sincerely for all the work she did and all the time she put into this work. Mrs. Carla Zietsma has been found willing to take her place and Mrs. Joanne Van Dam has agreed to become our new secretary. Together, as your committee, we hope to

serve the saving action to the best of our ability. Mr. Principal, I hereby present to you, on behalf of the Women's Saving Action, the token of our pledge in the amount of twenty thousand dollars. . . . On behalf of the Women's Saving Action, I wish you, and the Faculty, and the students the Lord's guidance and blessing in the coming year.

The words and the gift were received with great thankfulness.

There followed another musical interlude. Margriet Deddens played Frederic Chopin's *Fantaisie-Improptu*, Opus 66 (1834) in a beautiful, professional way.

A collection followed and the singing of Psalm 56:1,4. The Rev. Cl. Stam, the new president of the Board of Governors, closed the evening with thanksgiving for

God's many blessings and with prayer for God's continued gracious guidance and help for the sake of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Saviour. Hymn 41, Luther's hymn, was the closing song.

The social gathering after the official evening was used to congratulate the coming and going professors and to chat with each other. With thankfulness we can look back to a fine evening. **C**

Principal's Report 1989

By J. Faber

1. Convocation and Anniversary Meeting

The sixteenth convocation and nineteenth anniversary meeting of the Theological College took place on Friday, September 9, 1988.

Dr. J. Faber delivered his farewell address, entitled, "The Catholic Character of the Church."

The Master of Divinity degree was conferred on Mr. Hendrik Anne Bergsma, Mr. John Gerrit Reyer Kroeze, Mr. Laurens Roth, and Mr. Willem Barend Slomp.

Mr. Bergsma now is minister of the Free Reformed Church at Mitchell, Ont., Mr. Kroeze, ordained missionary of the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton for the work in Brazil, temporarily assists the congregation of Lower Sackville, N.S., while Mr. Slomp accepted the call of the church at Houston, B.C.

The alumni of our College thus serve in the ministry as far as the East is from the West, *a mari usque ad mare*, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

The College evening was well-attended and we enjoyed the presence of many brothers and sisters not only of the Canadian Reformed Churches but also of the Free Reformed Churches. In passing I mention that the 1989 Synod of these churches instructed the Deputies Theological Education to report to Synod 1990 about the possibility of establishing a Free Reformed seminary.

2. Students and lectures

Of the two students enrolled as freshmen, Mr. John Ludwig, M.A., completed the year. Four other students followed the lectures of the Senior Year. Mr. John Kroeze completed the Advanced Missiology course.

The lectures for the general public in

the fall of 1988 dealt with aspects of eschatology (Dr. J. Faber) and liturgics (Dr. K. Deddens).

Since this year no student graduates and the Senate admitted seven new students for the academic year 1989-1990, we hope to instruct twelve young men. Ten of these students are Canadian Reformed while two of them belong to a Free Reformed Church.

During the past academic year special discussions were held between the Faculty and the students concerning the work load and the practical pastoral training. Next year the Senate will investigate the possibility of special guest lectures, e.g., in psychology and paedagogics. We also think of practical training in Catechism instruction under the guidance of some ministers in the Hamilton area.

3. Extracurricular activities

Dr. C. Van Dam gave a paper on Urim and Thummim at the Chicago conference of the Society of Biblical Literature and delivered a guest lecture at Redeemer College on the significance of the Mosaic law for today. Prof. J. Geertsema continued his studies at the Toronto School of Theology. The College community shared in the joy and thankfulness of the Geertsemas for their twenty-five years in marriage and ministry. Dr. K. Deddens published extensively in both English and Dutch. He also represented the College in the congregations of Canada's Far West. Three of the four professors participated in the International Conference of Reformed Churches at Langley, B.C., in June 1989. Dr. J. Faber received an invitation from the University of Pretoria for a lecture tour through South Africa and an invitation to participate in the 1990 International Congress on Calvin Research. Synod Winnipeg decided

that he and his wife should also travel to Australia in order to strengthen the bond of the College with our sister churches down under. But these are plans to be realized, under the condition of James, in the new era after the Principal's retirement.

4. Library and building

Dealing with the library, we remind you of the joyful letter of the Women's Savings Action d.d. September 6, 1988, written by Mrs. Geraldine Selles and read in her presence during the last Collège evening. She announced that the contribution of the Women's Savings Action towards the purchase of books and subscriptions was increased from \$10,000 to \$15,000. In the same month God took our sister Geraldine Selles away from us to be with her Lord. At the funeral the Principal spoke of her "joie de vivre" and of our comfort in the promise of the joy and happiness of eternal life. He may now thankfully mention the organizational skill and unflagging zeal she displayed in organizing and stimulating the library action of our sisters in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

There is a new era also with respect to the Women's Savings action. The P. Lindhout family in Edmonton deemed that the moment had come to terminate also their activities in this Action Committee. For many years the Lindhout name has been connected with the administration of the monies of the Women's Savings Action and we are especially grateful for the investor's talents that our sister Lorraine Lindhout and her husband displayed.

In order to have a good continuation of this very worthwhile endeavour Mrs. Carla Zietsma of Hamilton was appointed treasurer of the Committee. The Zietsmas

also have banking experience and therefore we look to the future with trustful expectation.

Mrs. Lies Mulder and Mrs. Joanne Van Dam, too, serve in the Women's Savings Action. Let us also not forget that several women from the Hamilton area perform volunteer work in our library. I mention the ladies Irene Flach, Marsha Ostermeier, and Allison Schutten. Miss Petra Boersma was our hired summer help.

How important the monetary contributions of the Women's Savings Action also for teaching aids are, was manifested in the purchase of video equipment for our sermon sessions. It is a good, though somewhat humiliating, experience for students to see their own gestures and eye contact, or lack thereof.

The College also purchased a fax machine and a special software program for subject cataloguing. The main improvement in the building during this year was the installation of air conditioning in the library. It made the library with its hermetically sealed windows for the first time accessible also during the summer months. Therefore it was no luxury but a necessity.

We also renewed a program of having the issues of our most valuable journals bound with a view to better preservation.

The present Principal has been the librarian of the Theological College during the first two decades of its existence. He enjoyed building up a collection of approximately 20,000 volumes and giving it a well-balanced division over our five theological departments. The Reformed nature of our academic institution and its Dutch background lend to our small library its own character beside, for instance, Mills Memorial at McMaster University.

5. Ontario Task Force

In December 1987 the government of Ontario established a task force to report on the policy governing applications for a charter to allow for independent religious/theological degree-granting status. This task force consisted of three professors. They visited also our Theological College to consult with its Principal. One of the items he brought forward regarded the establishing of a Canadian accrediting agency. We are now dependent on an American Association for which the rule "Big is beautiful" is so important that they will not recognize a Theological Seminary with fewer than twenty-five students. A really Canadian organization could be more open to the multicultural theological variety of small theological institutions.

In March of this year the Minister of

Colleges and Universities sent us a copy of the Report of the task force.

It was gratifying to notice that the task force not only proposes to set up an Advisory Council for Bible Colleges and Seminaries in Ontario but also promotes the development of a voluntary Canadian accrediting agency. If our Theological

proval of a charter should be subject to periodic review, normally every five years.

In his reaction to the Minister of Colleges and Universities the Principal, however, questioned the following proposal: "The institution must also agree to provide . . . an annual statement of 'full disclosure' listing all relevant information



From left to right: Prof. J. Geertsema, Dr. C. Van Dam, Prof. L. Selles, Dr. J. Faber, Dr. K. Deddens, Dr. N.H. Gootjes

College would be accepted as member, it would undoubtedly facilitate transfer of credits for doctoral studies at, e.g., the Toronto School of Theology. Our alumni would then have a choice of continuing their theological studies in Canada instead of going either to Kampen or Philadelphia.

As far as the nomenclature is concerned, the task force recommends that the term "college" be used by an institution offering a bachelor's degree. The term "seminary" should be applied to an institution which offers graduate degrees in theology. Our College is entitled to grant, among other things, the degrees of Master of Divinity and Master of Theology. Our name should therefore be changed to *Theological Seminary*.

The Report states further: "The program of instruction should be offered by a faculty of whom 75% of regular faculty members must be qualified in the sense of possessing an earned degree at least one level higher than the degree for which they offer instruction" (p. 18). One cannot raise any reasonable objection against such an academic standard and should even applaud it. One can also not take issue with the proposed rule that the ap-

proval of a charter should be subject to periodic review, normally every five years. In his reaction to the Minister of Colleges and Universities the Principal, however, questioned the following proposal: "The institution must also agree to provide . . . an annual statement of 'full disclosure' listing all relevant information concerning the educational and administrative function of the institution" (p. 21). Does this requirement of a full annual disclosure not obscure the difference between a public and a private institution? I explained to the Minister that our Theological College is governed by a Board of synodically appointed men who send the budget and other financial statements to the sustaining churches year by year and who have to report on all academic and financial matters to a general synod once per three years. Does the requirement to report yearly to the government not obfuscate our identity as a private institution? In the case of complaints concerning obvious abuse of the degree-granting status the ministry could inaugurate an investigation, e.g., via the proposed Advisory Council for Bible Colleges and Seminaries in Ontario.

We cherish our degree-granting status and we appreciate the good intention of the task force. But at the same time the academic and administrative freedom of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches is very dear to our hearts. Therefore, the Board of Governors will certainly be alert and want to keep abreast of developments.

6. General Synod Winnipeg 1989

General Synod Winnipeg 1989 was an important event in the life of the Canadian Reformed Churches and their seminary.

Synod appointed Dr. N. H. Gootjes professor of Dogmatics and Drs. J. De Jong professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconology. I will not repeat the remarks I made in *Clarion*, when I introduced these brothers. We are looking forward to the beginning of their teaching, respectively in January and September 1990.

On behalf of Faculty and students I heartily welcome the Gootjes family to their new country Canada and we pray that the LORD our God be with them now and in the future. Tonight we rejoice in the installation of Dr. Gootjes and we acknowledge God's undeserved goodness upon us.

Dr. K. Deddens hopes still to teach during the next academic year. However, since he and his wife will return to the Netherlands at the end of May 1990, and therefore will not be present at the next Convocation and Anniversary Meeting, I now already want to thank them publicly, on behalf of the entire College community, for the six years of life and labour they have dedicated to the Canadian Reformed Churches and their training for the ministry. The LORD our God be with them in their retirement at their beloved Bierliet.

Synod Winnipeg appointed as new Governors the Rev. B. J. Berends, the Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, the Rev. C. Van Spronsen, Mr. A. Van Egmond and Mr. K. J. Veldkamp.

In the most gracious manner Synod Winnipeg entertained my wife and me for a few days and so created an opportunity to exchange farewell greetings between the synodical delegates and the Principal.

In most American institutions the principalship is almost exclusively a full-time administrative function, but at our College this is not so, for the Principal also has a full teaching load. Moreover, besides his principalship and his professorship he holds the functions of Academic Dean and Librarian. In order to alleviate this burden, Synod 1989 accepted the proposal of the Senate and the Board of Governors that from now on there be a rotating principalship for periods of three years. Dr. C. Van Dam will be Principal from 1990 till 1993 and Prof. J. Geertsema is designated Principal for the period of 1993-1996.

7. Conclusion

In the light of the foregoing I am keenly aware of the fact that these are the last public words I speak as Principal after twenty-one years in the service of the

Canadian Reformed Churches and their Theological College.

Let me in this last anniversary meeting add some words to the farewell address to General Synod 1989.

First of all, also now I thank God that I was allowed to do this work.

Second, I express my gratitude to the brothers and sisters for giving me their confidence and support. When I came to this country, I saw it as one of my tasks to help preserve the unity of faith in the Canadian Reformed Churches after a schism in our liberated sister churches in the Netherlands during the sixties. It goes without saying that my first duty was training young men for the ministry of the

“The establishing of this bursary is also an expression of deep gratitude . . .”

Word of God by way of solidly Reformed and thoroughly academic instruction. But at the same time I have always seen the Theological College as a means to bind the churches together. Fidelity to the truth of God precisely requires that we discern and maintain the unity of faith in His catholic church.

To use a familiar simile, the dogmatist is the conductor of the theological orchestra. Therefore, the combination of dogmatist, principal, academic dean, and librarian was a felicitous one. How I cherished the work! I gladly learned and I gladly taught. I thank my former students for their patience and endurance, their help and their simple presence during the lectures, especially those in Dogmatics, Symbolics, Ethics, and Contemporary Theology, lectures that at least I myself tremendously enjoyed.

With special fondness I think of the first decade, of the classic building 374 Queen Street South and, last but not least, of my first Faculty fellows: Selles — he foremost —, Kouwenhoven, Ohmann, Scholten, and Van Dooren. I thank the brothers VanOene, Van Dam, Deddens, and Geertsema for their cooperation in later years. On January 1, 1990, I will be glad to transfer the principalship to one of our first students. It will be the first day of a new year and of a new era, but at the same time, by the grace of God, there will be continuity in the history of this institution.

Allow me as yet to mention a few names. I think of the former and present personnel in administration and library: the ladies Ann van Sydenborgh, Teresa Bouwman, Catharine Mechelse, Janet Marren, and Marian Van Til. What could I have done without them?

Then there are the sisters of the Women's Savings Action — again Mrs. Selles first of all — and last but not least, the former and present Governors. The departing chairman, the Rev. J. Mulder, welcomed me at Toronto Airport on November 28, 1968, on behalf of the Synod of Orangeville and for many years he chaired the Board of Governors in his well-known pastoral manner. The Academic Committee always stimulated me through the presence of some of its members during some lectures, since I saw in them the representatives of the churches that had commissioned me to teach and defend God's truth. I thank the Governors for the trust given me to prepare and defend Faculty appointments.

Of the founding Trustees br. Albert Oosterhoff, LL.B., was instrumental in drafting the first constitution. Brothers such as Van Grootheest, Medemblik, Dantuma, Hordyk, Kampen, Vanderhout, Buist, and Heeringa were of great help in all financial matters. When I mention some of those names, I also think of the purchase and the renovation of our new building. Mr. C.M. Loopstra, LL.B., is the son of a theologian and I am the father of a lawyer. It made for a good cooperation, especially for the Theological College Act 1981 of the Ontario Legislature and its accompanying bylaws that structure the present administration of our institution. Due to this, the consultation of Principal and Faculty by the Board and its committees has considerably improved over these years.

In order not to forget any name, let me now simply thank all brothers and sisters who helped me during these two decades to fulfill the duties of my office. I only make one exception yet. It is the name of Wytse Holwerda, the wife God graciously gave me.

To honour her I established a Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund. Its interest is yearly to be allotted as an extra financial aid to needy students. The establishing of this bursary is also an expression of deep gratitude to my Lord Jesus Christ for the fact that I myself was enabled to study the most wonderful of all sciences, Reformed theology.

And now I commend the Canadian Reformed Churches and their Theological College to God and the word of His grace.

From God and through God and to God are all things. To Him be glory for ever. Amen.

The sifting effect of preaching¹

By K. Deddens

*Address at the Twentieth Anniversary Meeting of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches on Friday, September 8, 1989.

Important matter

If we reflect for a moment on the sifting or the separating effect of the preaching of God's Word, we have to realize that the preaching as such is an enormous event. We have to do with a very important matter, which can only fill us with awe and wonder if we consider that God is coming to men in the form of speech. God's kingdom comes to us in, with, and through the preaching of God's Word. The kingdom of God and especially He in whom this kingdom is represented and realized, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the contents of preaching. But also special aspects of God's kingdom are called the contents of preaching. The New Testament speaks more than once about a preaching of *conversion*. God's coming kingdom is realized in the way of conversion in those to whom the preaching of the kingdom comes.

Moreover preaching is also a preaching of conversion *for the forgiveness of sins*. If the kingdom comes in the preaching, it brings with it forgiveness of sins, and not only that, but also the complete, full salvation in Christ. Therefore we can also speak of the preaching of the *gospel*.

It is very important to see in the first place this positive function of preaching.

But we have to be aware also of the negative side. "By the preaching is also realized the *judgment* of God." This happens in a twofold manner: First in those who believe. They are and have been condemned and damned in Christ. The preaching of Jesus Christ is the most imaginable crushing sentence. For in Him the *forgiveness* of sins, *grace* is proclaimed. But there is only talk of forgiveness and grace for ungodly people! Forgiveness and grace *can* not be granted and *are* not to be granted except to those who are struck by God's condemning judgment. Therefore there is nothing in the world so totally destructive for man than the preaching of forgiveness and grace. For this preaching is the absolute and permanent condemnation of everything that is man himself, what he has and what he is doing. Added to this, how-

ever, the preaching brings about judgment to those to whom the proclamation of the kingdom proceeded but who did not believe it. Paul declared to the Corinthians, "... we preached Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:23,24).²

Element of judgment

It is clear from the preaching of our Saviour Himself, especially from His preaching in parables, that the preaching of the kingdom contains not only God's blessing but also an element of judgment. Christ causes sifting, exactly by this way of preaching. The parable of the Sower shows that the seed brings to the light the condition of the soil. When the disciples ask the Saviour what this parable means, the answer is, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are (preached) in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand" (Luke 8:9, 10). After this parable Christ declares, "For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. Take heed then how you hear; for to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what he thinks that he was will be taken away" (vs. 17, 18). The light (about which also vs. 16 speaks) means undoubtedly the gospel itself, which is preached by the Saviour. What is hid but what has to come to light is the unbelief and sin, which the hearers of the gospel bear in their hearts, but which have to become manifest by the preaching which reveals the hearts. So there is a great responsibility in hearing: Christ impresses upon His people both the blessing and the curse of the covenant, grace as well as judgment.³

Blessing and curse

The Holy Scriptures are full of the two sanctions of the covenant, the twofold effect of blessing and curse.

Extensively in Leviticus 26, God's blessing is promised to the people of Israel if this people listens to the LORD. But, "... if in spite of this you will not hearken to Me, but walk contrary to Me, then I will walk contrary to you in fury ..."

(vs. 27). I think also of Moses' preaching of the sanctions of God's covenant when the people were standing upon the Ebal and the Gerizim (Deut. 27: 11-26, and also chapter 28). The notes on the old Dutch translation speak in this connection typically of "the register of the blessings" and "the register of the curse."⁴

The prophets further develop the theme of covenant blessing and covenant wrath.⁵

The preaching of God's Word is given in order to be accepted, not only in the course of time, when it suits, but right away, "today," Psalm 95 says. The hearing to God's *voice* is the listening to God's *Word*. Otherwise, hardening can appear, as was the case in the desert (vs. 9ff.). Later on, this Psalm is quoted, not only in Romans 10 (where Paul deals especially with the preaching of God's Word), but also in Hebrews 4, in the context of the proclamation of the gospel.

To take offence at the Word

Scripture tells us that one can also take offence at the Word. In the preaching of Isaiah, it is said of the LORD Himself, "... He will become a sanctuary, and a stone of offence, and a rock of stumbling to both houses of Israel, a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many shall stumble thereon; they shall fall and be broken; they shall be snared and taken" (Is. 8:14,15). See also Isaiah 28:16, where it is said that God is laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone. Psalm 118 deals with the stone which the builders rejected, which however has become the head of the corner. The Saviour applied these words to Himself as the Messiah (Matt. 21:42 and 44) and the apostle Paul applied "the stumbling block" to the Jews, that the gospel went to the gentiles. The same is done by the apostle Peter before the Sanhedrin when he was defending himself (Acts 4:11), and in his first letter he made a contrast between "you who believe" and "those who do not believe" (1 Peter 2:7). The first category is building faith on the cornerstone Jesus Christ, while the second category "stumble because they disobey the Word" (vs. 8). That Word, Peter just argued at the end of the first chapter, "is the good news which was preached to you" (1:25). The unbelievers are stumbling.

But they were destined to do so (2:8). The Word itself hardens them so that they stumble and fall.

To death and to life

The idea of a twofold function of the preaching is also found in another form in the second letter of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians. In the framework of the progress of the preaching of the gospel it is said that God "spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life" (2 Cor. 2:14-16).

It is remarkable that the apostle calls himself "the aroma of Christ." What is first said of the proclamation of the gospel is now applied to Paul himself. The apostle says, I myself, in my work, in my travelling, in my struggle for the church, in my prayer and care for the flock, I am the aroma of Christ. In other words: he identifies himself actually with the service of the gospel as such. This is possible indeed because this service demands total commitment. The fragrance of the knowledge of God is at the same time the aroma of Christ. For in Christ the knowledge of God comes to its fullness and depth. If this service of the gospel is executed by the whole person, the apostle says it will have a double effect. That double effect is totally different. The same gospel will work life to the one and death to the other.

This is a very remarkable idea!

The same Word, the same gospel has two effects which stand diametrically over against each other. The same Word works for the one death and for the other one life. But it is the one, indivisible Word. So there is not a twofold Word, a twofold preaching and a twofold proclamation. No, exactly the same Word has a twofold effect. It brings to the unbelievers God's judgment of death and it causes destruction. But in those who believe precisely the same word works life by the power of God's grace. While it causes in the one an action from death to death, an action that leads inevitably and irresistibly to death, that same Word causes in the other an action that leads unquestionably to life. That means: it is indeed wonderful, to hear the Word of God and to obey it. Then more light will be received, more glory, a going on from strength to strength, from the beginning of eternal joy to fullness of joy. But it is also terrible to be touched by the same Word, to hear it, but then to lay it aside. Then it means to go back from death to death, from death to eternal judgment, from condemnation to even heavier punishment. But always there is happening something, the one or the other.⁶

Resistance against the Holy Spirit

It is clear from the Scriptures that one can resist the Word of God. One resists then at the same time the Holy Spirit who is working with the Word. Stephen reproaches in his redemptive-historical sermon the Jewish leaders of his days, "You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you" (Acts 7:51). The fathers have persecuted the prophets who brought the good Word of God. These prophets announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One. But the Jews of his own days have betrayed and murdered Him. They have received the law — God's own Word — as delivered by angels. But they did not keep it. They rejected the Word of God (vs. 52,53).

This resistance against the Holy Spirit is also clear from the last book of the Bible. The exalted Christ writes in Revelation 2 and 3 His letters to the seven churches in Asia. Seven times the Saviour ends these letters with the admonition, "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." For His Word comes with grace and with judgment, with advantage and with disadvantage. He who resists that Word, undergoes the hardening effect of the Holy Spirit with that Word. It must be brought to the light, according to the Word of the Saviour in the gospel, in which direction it goes with the hearers. The antithesis will increase to its climax, and there are only two possibilities: "Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy" (Rev. 22:11). Meditating upon this text, K. Schilder called it "the two-edged sword, driven into the flesh of the church by the Bishop of the souls Himself."⁷

John wrote these words precisely in the context of the mandate that the words of the prophecy of his book must not be sealed (vs.10). The prophetic Word must be passed on and the preaching of the antithetical Word has to go on until the very end of history.

Always efficacious

Especially the letter to the Hebrews stresses extensively that God's Word is efficacious. Always a strong, powerful effect of God's Word is present, also regarding those who outraged the Spirit of grace, although they had become partakers of the Holy Spirit, had tasted the goodness of the Word of God and had once been enlightened (Hebr. 6:4f., cf. also 10:29f.).

"A powerful effect is ascribed to the goodness of God's Word — so the gospel or the promise — also in the unbelieving members of the church. Without a doubt

it is not saving. It is not the beginning and the guarantee of the ultimate fulfilment of God's Word in the new world. But it is indeed very real and very far-reaching. One must also be aware that it is even said of these apostates that it is impossible to restore them again to repentance — here considered as a change of insight. So there came about in these men indeed by the word such a repentance, which is now annulled in and through their apostasy and will never be renewed any more. But it was there once!

Moreover it is significant that it is said of those apostate members of the church that they crucify the Son of God on their own account and hold Him up to contempt.

One wonders how this is possible *stricto sensu*. However, this expression is completely transparent for him who understands the nature of the Word, drawn by this letter. The crucified and resurrected Saviour is presented in the goodness of God's Word with all the gifts which He obtained and distributes. In that Word He comes to the people and He gives Himself to them. Therefore the rejection and the contempt of that Word is in the full sense to assault Christ Himself and to hold Him up to contempt. In this way the letter to the Hebrews is preaching the mighty truth that the Word of God is always efficacious, although not always in the same measure, in the same direction, and with the same effect. The Word of God is like the rain, which descends from heaven always as the same rain. But land which has drunk the rain that often falls upon it, and brings forth vegetation useful to those for whose sake it is cultivated, receives a blessing from God. But if it bears thorns and thistles, it is worthless and near to being cursed; its end is to be burned (Hebr. 6:7,8). In this way the letter to the Hebrews teaches and illustrates the saying of Paul that the Word of God is always a penetrating fragrance, for many certainly to life, alas for most people to death.⁸

²Cf. C. Veenhof, *Prediking en Uitverkiezing*, Kok, Kampen, 1959, p. 227; cf. also B.J. de Klerk, *Die Heilige Gees en die verhouding Skriflesing, Prediking en Gebed in die Erediens*, Potchefstroom, 1987, p. 106: "Die woord van die kruis het 'n oordelende en skeidende werking, en daarom sit daar energie en aktiwiteit daarin wat 'n verandering in die bestaanswyse van die hoorders bring."

³Cf. J. Geentsema, *The Gospel Brings to Light what in your Heart you Hide*, *Clarion* 37, 1987, p. 52ff.

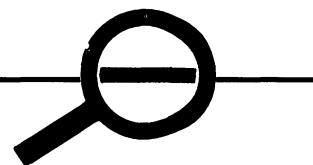
⁴*Kanttekeningen Statenvertaling*. In Dutch: "Register der zegeningen en register der vervloekingen."

⁵C. van der Waal, *Search the Scriptures II*, Paideia, St. Catharines, Ont., 1978, p. 33.

⁶J. Douma/K. Deddens, *Verkondiging en Triumf van het Evangelie*, Van Wijngen, Amersfoort, 1965, p. 20ff.

⁷K. Schilder, *Schriftoverdenkingen III*, Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1958, p. 223.

⁸C. Veenhof, *Het Woord Gods in de brief aan de Hebreëen*, Littooy, Terneuzen, 1946, p. 22ff. 



Recent ecclesiastical assemblies

During the spring and summer, synods of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) and the Fræe Reformed Churches (FRC) as well as the General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) convened. Let us briefly consider these in chronological order as reported in their respective news media and note some items of special interest to the Canadian Reformed Churches.

The Reformed Church in the United States

The RCUS has been the topic of a *Press Review* in the issue of 12 May 1989. Originally formed by German immigrants, their first synod was held in 1747. Through much trial and tribulation these churches have remained a faithful remnant of what was once a very large church. The RCUS has also been instrumental from the very beginning to help the Reformed Confessing Church of Zaire (ERCZ) get established. Our Dutch sister churches have also become involved with assistance given through their "Mission Aid" (*De Verre Naasten*).

At the Synod of the RCUS (held May 15-18) the relationship with our Dutch sister churches received attention. "Synod agreed to principles of sister church relations with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated), and this should prove helpful in efforts to aid the growing ERCZ (in Zaire)" (*The Reformed Herald*, June 1989, p.6). This is important news and again raises the question of our relationship to these churches. That point was on their agenda! The Interchurch Relations Committee was "encouraged to continue studying the specific differences that exist with the Canadian Reformed Churches on the doctrine of the church, and to continue interaction with these churches" (*The Reformed Herald*, p. 6). I was not aware that there was official study of and interaction with the Canadian Reformed Churches. (Presumably with Classis Alberta-Manitoba?) I am not sure what this report means by "specific differences that exist . . . on the doctrine of the church." The doctrine of the church which we maintain is that summarized

and confessed in our confessional standards. Perhaps the fact that the RCUS officially subscribes only to the Heidelberg Catechism could be reason for discussion on this point. On the other hand, if the doctrine of the church presents no difficulty in their relation with our Dutch sister churches, it should also present no difficulty in their relationship with us. Nothing beyond what we confess in our confessions on this matter is asked of members or office-bearers in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

The synod of the RCUS also mandated their Interchurch Relations Com-

"It is very unfortunate that the FRC are not able to make use of the Book of Praise."

mittee "to pursue avenues of 'closer working relationships' with our Orthodox Presbyterian brethren" (*The Reformed Herald*, p. 6). This was also something that the Rev. G.I. Williamson of the OPC had called for in his address to the synod. Further, in response to the OPC's request, it was decided to respond to their paper "Biblical Principles of Church Unity."

The synod decided to send an observer to the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC).

With respect to the work in Zaire we read that:

One of the great sources of joy for the denomination has been the work of helping the Reformed Confessing Church in Zaire (ERCZ). As noted earlier in this report, the RCUS has been working with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) to oversee and aid the infant Zairian church. One of the recommendations adopted by Synod was to continue close cooperation. Funds received in the past for construction and pastoral instruction are presently being held until projects for their use are arranged. It is a goal of Synod to send

someone to Zaire during the next year to have personal contact as well as opportunity for instruction of Pastors and Elders of the ERCZ.

Several home mission projects also received the attention of synod.

Another item of interest is that in the Guideline for Giving, both Mid-America Reformed Seminary and Westminster Seminary (California) are included.

The Free Reformed Churches

Among matters discussed at their synod (held May 31-June 2) were mission (including among the Jews through Christian Witness to Israel) and evangelism. Two observers were delegated to attend the ICRC. Of particular interest to us is what we read about the *Book of Praise: Anglo-Genevan Psalter*.

In view of the fact that the publisher of the "Book of Praise" will only grant permission to use this psalter if we use it in its entirety (which means that we would not be allowed to edit any translations with which we may not agree) and since there was a lack of interest in the entire project expressed by many of the delegates, it was decided that it is no longer feasible for us to pursue the project of adding the "Book of Praise" to the "Psalter." Furthermore, the Synod accepted a recommendation of the Liturgy committee (ad hoc) to "mandate the Publications Committee . . . to study the contents of our ecclesiastical forms published in the 'Psalter,' and update the language of these forms. Each form thus revised, is to be submitted to Synod for its approval." It was then decided to discharge the ad hoc committee Liturgy.

It is very unfortunate that the FRC are not able to make use of the *Book of Praise*. It would have given us this book in common which would be important considering we already share so much in terms of our confessions and heritage.

Synod also decided, in response to an overture from one of the churches, to instruct the Deputies Theological Education to examine the possibility of estab-

lishing our own seminary and to report on their findings to Synod 1990 (*The Messenger*, July/August 1989, p.10). What church federation would not want its very own training for the ministry? As such this decision is most understandable. However, I do regret this. Should we not be working towards a closer co-operation in as many ways as possible and seeking the full unity of the faith by eventually merging our respective federations, rather than erecting more potential points of division? There is so much that we agree upon. Is such a new training for the ministry really necessary, given the fact that the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches continues to open its doors wide to Free Reformed students?

Another decision taken with respect to the training of ministers is that the Deputies Theological Education were "instructed to study an overture . . . concerning mentors for ministers in the first year of their ministries, work out the details and report to Synod 1990" (*The Messenger*, p.10). It will be interesting to see what develops from this.

The Orthodox Presbyterian Church

The 56th General Assembly of the OPC convened on June 9 and dealt among other things with matters of Christian Education (Great Commission Publications), and Home and Foreign Missions. Currently the Committee on Foreign Missions "administers 31 missionaries on seven fields in three continents, although only 6 missionary families are completely funded by OPC giving" (*New Horizons*, August/September 1989, p.3). The emphasis on mission found in the

OPC is most commendable and can serve as a stimulus to us. How the funding is arranged for those not completely financed by the OPC is not stated.

With respect to ecumenicity we read that:

The Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations reported on their conversations with various churches. Fraternal delegates were sent by sister denominations with whom the OPC has formal ties. This year the GA welcomed fraternal delegates from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Canadian Reformed Churches, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Korean Presbyterian Church in America, the Reformed Church in the U.S. and the Christian Reformed Church.

The close relationship that the OPC has with the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is understandable considering how the OPC was helped and encouraged by the CRC early in its history. Indeed for years there were even special committees from both the CRC and the OPC labouring to achieve an ecclesiastical union between them. However, in 1967 the General Assembly of the OPC "became apprehensive about and directed the concern of its committee toward what it saw as a 'trend toward liberalism' in the CRC." The most critical issue concerns the infallibility and inspiration of the Scriptures (*The Outlook*, December 1972, p.16). Understandably, the Canadian Reformed Churches have also warned the OPC of maintaining too close a contact with the CRC in the light of worrisome developments there.

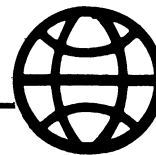
Also the OPC decided to send observers to the ICRC.

The General Assembly of the OPC as well as the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America (the so-called Covenanters, RPCNA) which were meeting concurrently adopted recommendations that the two churches "work toward organic union, including another concurrent Assembly/Synod in 1991, although both groups recognize that any process of union, if achieved, will unfold over a long period of time" (*New Horizons*, p.4).

As far as the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) is concerned, the General Assembly "voted in favor of holding substantive discussions with the intent of moving towards union" although the PCA "has not responded to initiatives made by the OPC this year" (*New Horizons*, p.3). The fact that a number of churches have left the OPC and realigned with the PCA (see *Press Review* in *Clarion*, Jan.2, 1989) has caused grief and some polarization in the OPC. This issue also surfaced at the General Assembly within the context of a debate on whether to authorize a committee to evaluate the development of the OPC and to suggest to the next General Assembly "what should be the principles underlying the purposes and programs for the future." Although the motion was narrowly defeated, "there was general agreement that the OPC as a whole is uncertain of its current identity and future direction" (*New Horizons*, p.3). May our gracious God bless the OPC in this hour of great need and enable this church to continue to give a faithful testimony to the Reformed faith. C

INTERNATIONAL

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene



DELFT

Thirty percent of teachers who completed their training in 1987 and 1988 appear to be employed in the business sector. Forty percent are engaged in teaching. Sixteen percent continued studying for higher qualifications and over ten percent remained unemployed. On the other hand, there is still a serious shortage of teachers of economics, mathematics, and science. (DNC)

HAARLEM

Last year interest in emigration grew in the Netherlands. A total of 2358 persons left for other countries. Canada especially appealed to those from the agricultural and business sectors (923),

followed by New Zealand (600) and Australia (405). The United States followed as fourth with 349 emigrants. In 1987 the total number of emigrants was 1901 and in 1986 it was 2040. (DNC)

GRONINGEN

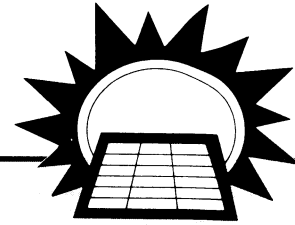
At their forthcoming General Synod, the Christian Reformed Churches (Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken) in the Netherlands will discuss the question whether they will join the International Conference of Reformed Churches. The Rev. P. de Butter and the Rev. J.C.L. Starreveld will report shortly to their deputies on their visit to the ICRC conference which was held in Langley, B.C. Rev. de Butter stated, among other

things, that he noticed that "the liberated people from the Netherlands were sometimes broader in their views than their sister churches in the 'emigration countries'." (ND)

WOERDEN

The number of members that break with the Reformed Congregations is higher than that of any other "denomination." Last year 1735 members broke with the Reformed Congregations: 671 communicant and 1064 noncommunicant members. On the other hand, 720 persons joined them: 327 communicant and 393 noncommunicant members. The number of withdrawals amounts to 2 percent. (ND) C

RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. J. Mulder

*Come to Me, all who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest.
Matthew 11:28*

Dear brothers and sisters,

During His earthly ministry the Lord Jesus Christ had to cope with the strong opposition of the rulers of Israel. The scribes and pharisees were hard taskmasters. They burdened the people of God with all kinds of rules and regulations teaching them that only by strictly observing the law and the prophets they could secure 'rest' for themselves.

The result of this way of teaching was uncertainty, fear and despair. For who could keep the law of the LORD perfectly and live? And then all those man-made commands! There was no end to it!

Christ Jesus addresses those burdened men and women. They were heavy laden and there was never any rest. Their obedience was never sufficient and finished.

"Come to Me and I will give you rest," the Lord says.

He revealed the good news of salvation to the "babes" [vs.25], to those who realized that they were forever unable to save themselves.

In His teaching the Lord Jesus Christ distinguished Himself very clearly from the rulers of Israel. He spoke with authority [Matthew 7:28]. In Him God Himself was speaking to His people. The Lord Jesus has authority to forgive sins here on earth. [Matthew 9:6] He did not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them and so to obtain salvation for all those who believed in Him.

We can never deliver ourselves from the slavery of sin.

If we think so, we underestimate the power of sin and overestimate our own strength and abilities.

Christ Jesus did this for us and instead of us. He is the only Saviour!

And now He calls, "Come to Me." Learn to confess your own helplessness, your total dependance upon Me.

Only when we heed His call and come to Him in faith, we will find rest.

That rest is not only the absence of fear and anxiety because of our sins and shortcomings. It also includes peace of heart and mind.

"Our heart is restless until it finds rest in Thee," Augustine wrote long ago. Rest is not idleness, inactivity. It means that a certain work is accomplished a goal has been reached and that we now may enjoy the finished

work. Rest is that, redeemed by grace and being renewed by the Holy Spirit, we now may live a life of thankfulness and obedience in order that the Father may be praised and by our godly walk of life our neighbour may be won for Christ.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest. [Hebrews 4:11]

Our birthday calendar for November:

WILMA VANDRONGELEN

31827 Forest Avenue
Clearbrook, BC

Wilma hopes to celebrate her 32nd birthday on November 3rd.

ROB LUINGE

34395 Immel Street
Abbotsford, BC V2S 4T6

Rob will be 15 years old on November 13th.

I wish you both a most enjoyable day!

"Come unto Me, you weary,
And I will give you rest."
So the voice of Jesus
Comes to hearts oppressed!
It tells of benediction,
Of pardon, grace and peace,
Of joy that has no ending,
Of love which cannot cease.

"And whosoever cometh,
I will not cast him out."
O, welcome voice of Jesus,
Which drives away our doubt!
Which calls us, very sinners,
Unworthy though we be
Of love so free and boundless,
To come, dear Lord, to Thee!

Greetings from

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

Some thoughts on the ICRC

By Cl. Stam

As one of the delegates to the meeting of the ICRC held at Langley from June 19-29, 1989, I am most interested in what is being published in *Clarion* about this assembly and its history. I wish to contribute to the discussion by way of this rather lengthy letter which may be more appropriately termed as an "article."

How did we get into the ICRC?

I must agree with many aspects of the Rev. D.G.J. Agema's analysis (*Clarion*, August 18, 1989) of the history of the development of the ICRC in this sense: the ICRC at present is not what the proposing Free Reformed Churches of Australia originally envisioned. They suggested a meeting of *sister churches* with the same confessional standards, but the Dutch sister churches unilaterally changed this into a larger gathering by inviting various other churches, "with whom preliminary ecclesiastical contact was established." The sister churches were placed before an accomplished fact at the constituent assembly in 1982 in Groningen that various churches other than sister churches had been invited (not just the Koreans but also many others).

It is not fair to downplay the significance of this fact by stating "... the time, the situation was leading towards such a development. . . ." That sounds somewhat evolutionistic. One might also conclude: we were led down a path which we did not have to follow! The Constituent Assembly being thus organized, placed us before problems which have still not been resolved today. I believe that Rev. Agema makes very valid points here which should not be disqualified with the words "formalistic" or even "legalistic."

Our own Synod in 1983 has warned about getting into "third party relationships" and has asked the sister churches to keep pace with each other in recognizing other churches, and this was never considered to be "formalistic" or "legalistic." To use such terms, in my understanding, clouds the discussion. You might be interested to know that because the ICRC is not a meeting of sister churches, the Free Reformed Churches of Australia are seriously considering to terminate their membership in the ICRC.

Furthermore, our Canadian Reformed Churches have been very cautious with respect to joining the ICRC. We did not jump into this matter lightly. We expressly refrained from any official endorsement. It is true, as Prof. Geertsema correctly observes, our churches decided to send "delegates" and not "observers" to the Constituent Assembly. However, this was done not because we wanted "to join" so badly but because we felt that delegates would have *more input* than observers.

These delegates were not given a clear and concrete mandate from the

"Our concern is: unity in faithfulness, that is the issue!"

beginning. They acted in the given circumstance according to their best insights, and should not be faulted for this. The purpose and direction of the ICRC was in 1980 still very unclear and this made things rather difficult for our delegates. Nevertheless, it may be asked whether our delegates to that assembly displayed the caution which was expected of them by our churches.

Joining conditionally?

Be this as it may, in 1983 our churches decided to join the ICRC "with the clear instruction to move the following amendments to the proposed Constitution. . . ." This means, in my understanding and recollection, that we joined *provisionally and conditionally*. We even said: the constitutional matters have to be given absolute *priority!* Our continued membership would depend on a proper resolution of these matters.

Because of technical reasons, our amendments could not be dealt with at the First ICRC held in Edinburgh in 1985. So we persevered in anticipation of the discussion on this point. We persevered

indeed, for contrary to the requests of our contact committee, Synod 1986 strongly *maintained* the proposed amendments and decided that these be placed on the agenda of the ICRC in Langley in 1989. This means, in my opinion, that our membership of the ICRC was still conditional or provisional: subject to the discussion and approval of these amendments!

You may be interested to know that our main proposals regarding the constitution of the ICRC have been flatly rejected by a great majority in Langley, in 1989. Only the Australian sister churches agreed in these matters with the Canadian Reformed Churches. The question now becomes very important: seeing that our concerns were not met and our proposals not accepted, can we still continue to participate in the ICRC? This vital point must be dealt with by the next Synod at Lincoln in 1992, the Lord willing.

For these proposals touched on one very key issue, namely the relationship between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards. In the Basis of the ICRC the two have been put side by side. We were prepared to accept this in the framework of a "conference." But our churches asked that it be specified that "delegates *subscribe* only to the standards of the churches of which they are members." We wanted it to be very clear that although we had given much recognition to the Westminster Standards, enough to cooperate in a conference, still we are bound only to the Three Forms of Unity. We explained that this is not to be construed as an attack on the Westminster Standards but must be seen simply as a measure to clarify our position at the Conference and to safeguard our own heritage.

The strange thing was: at the Conference in Langley I was assured from all sides that *implicitly* it is true: we all subscribe only to our own standards. But any attempt by the Canadian Reformed Churches to make this *explicit* was met with extreme suspicion and great opposition. Such an explicit statement would "prejudice the entire Conference," we were told. We subscribe only to our own standards? Of course, fine, as long as this is not specified in the Basis! You sub-

scribe only to your own confessions, yes, but you may not clearly say it, for then you imply that the other standards are below par!

I came away with the impression that — as it now stands — membership in the ICRC does mean a greater acceptance of the Westminster Standards than I was initially led to believe. Many members went one step farther: if we recognize each other here in the ICRC, they felt, we have principally accepted each other as sister churches, with creeds, church government and all. Some representatives from other churches publicly spoke of the fact that they felt *offended* because there was no “pulpit exchange” and intercommunion at the ICRC.

The Westminster Standards: a fully Reformed Confession?

Now Prof. Geertsema takes it quite ill of Rev. Agema that he has objections to the Westminster Standards and even lets Rev. Agema say that the Westminster Standards contain “false, unbiblical doctrinal statements . . .” etc. (I personally did not read this in Rev. Agema’s presentation). But if that is the case, according to Prof. Geertsema, Rev. Agema should have written an appeal against the decision of Synod 1977 that the Westminster Confession is “a fully Reformed Confession.”

I do not know where Rev. Agema was in 1980, but I remember exactly where Rev. Geertsema was at that time! Prof. Geertsema was at the Synod in Smithville where 7 churches appealed the decisions of the 1977 Synod precisely on this point and related points! These appeals were rejected, as Prof. Geertsema well remembers, after much heated discussion with a very slim majority. The matter was never so clear cut as it is now made to appear. Similar appeals were made at later Synods in 1983 and 1986. It is a bit “formalistic” to suggest that Rev. Agema must appeal decisions which were unsuccessfully appealed many times in the past by others!

So our Synod of 1977 “took over” the Dutch assessment of the Westminster Confession as “a fully Reformed confession.” Let us not act now as if there can be no serious objections levelled anymore at the Westminster Confession and as if it has been declared once for all as “a fully Reformed Confession.” It all depends on how you evaluate and interpret such a sweeping statement, even in the different Dutch and Canadian contexts.

Our churches have said: while we recognize the Reformed character of the Westminster Standards, — and these Standards may in themselves not form an impediment to recognition of others — we still want it to be clear also at the ICRC

that we do not subscribe to these standards. But we were not given this room at the ICRC. It was made quite clear: all or nothing!

If one understands the qualification of the Westminster Confession as a “fully Reformed Confession” to mean that as a creed it historically belongs fully in the “Reformed” category (as opposed to e.g. Romanist or Arminian creeds), I have no problem whatsoever with this statement. Indeed, then, a fully Reformed Confession with many most beautiful and moving Scriptural declarations! But if this means that I must accept each and every article or formulation as being undisputedly “Reformed,” I dare say that I disagree with such a statement and that many other members of our churches have the same opinion. It is not without reason that our churches have for many years discussed a whole list of “divergencies” with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church precisely because we felt that our rich Reformed heritage — preserved in the struggles around 1944 — was at stake. Why else bother? It is not an academic debate but a vital discussion.

Ambiguity in the ICRC?

I feel that at the ICRC we must be able in a frank and brotherly manner to discuss the divergencies between the standards mentioned in the Basis. This is not a matter of mistrust of Presbyterians or being “adversarial” — I heard that word too many times in Langley — but is a matter of being faithful to the Lord and forthright to brothers. I received the impression, however, that the prevailing trend is: let’s quit talking about divisive doctrines but get together on vital actions.

I must agree fully with Rev. Agema that there is an ambiguity in the Constitution of the ICRC. I am happy to note that

also Prof. Geertsema basically agrees with this assessment, as he says, “I can agree that there is much of what Rev. Agema calls ambiguity.”

I have observed firsthand at the 1989 ICRC that this “ambiguity” leads to major differences of understanding on key points: preaching, sacraments, and discipline. Basically it boils down to a difference in understanding of God’s covenantal dealings and how Christ gathers His Church, despite excellent speeches on these topics at the ICRC in 1985. And this, in turn, goes back to the serious divergencies which there are between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards.

The belated evaluation of these divergencies (in 1986 almost ten years after the original statement in 1977) seeks to confirm that these divergencies do not form an impediment to recognizing Presbyterian Churches as true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. This evaluation was indeed “received” by our Synod in 1986 as a worthy document, but it was never adopted as the final statement of our churches on the position of the Westminster Standards. Perhaps Prof. Geertsema remembers the discussions on the meaning of the word “received.”

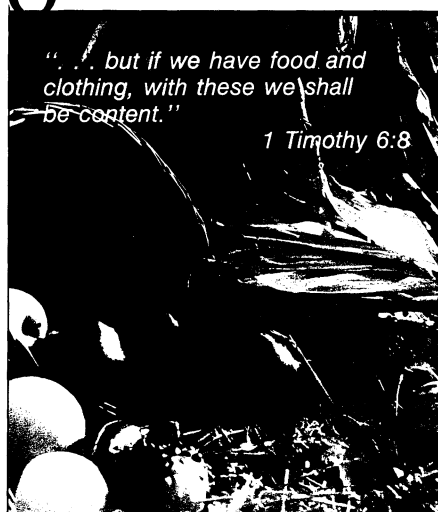
An agreed statement of faith: what is a true church?

Some see the ICRC as a *Synod* which must make binding declarations. They say that it must be an assembly with some clout which dares to deal with current issues and publish statements of policy, e.g. on “Apartheid,” otherwise it becomes a talk-show, a “holy huddle.” Others want it to be nothing more than a *Conference*, for otherwise it becomes some kind of a “super-church.” Many are hanging somewhere in the middle. Well, what will it be now? At the Langley Conference a delegate said to me, “I do not like meetings of which I do not know precisely the purpose and function.” My sentiments exactly.

Permit me a final note to underscore Rev. Agema’s concerns. Upon the proposal of the moderamen, the 1989 ICRC has appointed a “theological affirmation committee” which must submit a report to the next Conference (Seoul, 1993) presenting an *agreed statement of faith* as to what is a true church and how the relations between these churches are to be regulated. So the trend is: work towards agreed (doctrinal) statements, which all member churches ought to accept and implement. And the first topic is: what is a true church?

I strongly opposed this proposal because I felt that we as Canadian Reformed Churches *already* confess in the Belgic Confession clearly what is according to

OUR COVER



Scripture a true church. We also for many years have had excellent "rules for correspondence" which govern the relations between true churches. The "Presbyterians" have never accepted these things, and that is their privilege. But we do not need an ICRC committee to solve this alleged "problem." To agree with a proposal to appoint such a committee constituted in my opinion a compromising of the standard to which I have bound myself by subscription.

As I see it, this theological affirmation committee with its mandate is proof of the ambiguity in the Basis of the ICRC. If we truly shared the same confession as sister churches, we would not need a committee to draft an agreed statement as to what a true church is. Now this committee must "reconcile" two different confessions with respect to the church. I see this as a very dangerous and potentially divisive development about which we need an open and frank discussion in our churches.

Some of my Canadian fellow delegates to this Conference do not share my fears on this point and felt that I was over-reacting, and I respect their insights and

esteem them for their integrity, but I must caution here — without sounding as an alarmist — against what I perceive to be a very dangerous course.


The ICRC and the future

What can you do? Please remember the Committee for Contact With Churches Abroad in your prayers as it seeks to formulate a responsible report to the next General Synod also with respect to the ICRC. Further, all the proceedings at the sessions of the ICRC as well as the speeches delivered there are to be published in book form. Buy and read, and get involved in a very important discussion. Make it a point of discussion at study societies. When the "report" of this theological affirmation committee is published, study it carefully.

I do not suggest that we must immediately terminate our membership in the ICRC. I believe with Prof. Geertsema that "the catholicity of the church implies the calling for the churches . . . to practice international unity and to help each other as faithful churches in this world." We should not take this lightly, and we have not done so. I believe that also Rev.

Agema principally agrees with this statement.

Our concern is: unity in faithfulness, that is the issue! The question is: is the ICRC the proper expression of this unity? Is it going in the right direction? This is a legitimate question which needs broader discussion and greater awareness.

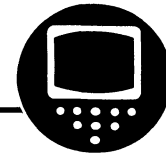
Needless to say, I am sad that within the ICRC our Canadian Reformed Churches were not given the room for which we asked with respect to the Basis. Our proposals were rejected. Instead we may be pushed into a wrong direction, increasingly so when more churches join who have a pluriform concept of the church. If that becomes absolutely clear, our churches will have to step out for the sake of true unity. If only we will then still have the insight and the courage to make such a move. 

Editorial note:

Lack of time prevents me at this moment to reply to what Rev. Stam writes in response to my article. My basic point was to warn against the danger of placing "law" before "gospel."

J. GEERTSEMA

PRESS RELEASES



Classis Contracta Ontario North at Burlington East; July 7, 1989

1. *Opening.* On behalf of the convening church (Burlington South) Rev. J. De Jong welcomes those present after reading Psalm 68:11-14 and prayer.

2. *Examination of the credentials.* The delegates from the church at Burlington East examine the credentials.

3. *Constitution of Classis Contracta.* Classis is constituted.

4. *Appointment of Officers.* The following officers are appointed: Chairman: Rev. J. De Jong, Clerk: A. van Overbeeke.

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

6. *Approbation of the call of Rev. W. den Hollander to the church at Orangeville.*

Documents needed for this were examined by the chairman and by Rev. D. De Jong. Whenever needed these documents were read to all those present. These documents were:

— Letter from the Canadian Reformed Church at Orangeville containing the request for approval of the call and the information that the proper announce-

ments have been made and that the congregation has given its approval.

— Letter of call.

— Letter of acceptance.

— Declaration of honourable release by the church at Winnipeg.

— Act of release from classis of the Canadian Reformed Churches of Alberta/Manitoba of March 14, 1989.

— Attestation from the Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg to the church at Orangeville for Rev. W. den Hollander.

Proposed and seconded to approve the call to Rev. W. den Hollander by the church at Orangeville. This proposal was unanimously accepted.

7. *Question Period.* No one made use of the question period. One brother took the opportunity to bring greetings from Rev. den Hollander to the classis.

8. *Censure according to Church Order, art. 44.* This was not needed.

9. *Adoption of Acts and Press Release.* The acts were read and adopted. The press release was approved.

10. *Closing.* The chairman led in prayer and thanksgiving and closed the meeting. A. van Overbeeke, clerk

Press Release Classis Ontario North, September 15, 1989 held at the Rehoboth Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington

1. *Opening:* On behalf of the convening church at Burlington South, Rev. J. De Jong calls the meeting to order. He invites the delegates to sing Ps. 48:1, reads Psalm 48, and leads in prayer. He extends a welcome to the delegates of the churches, and especially to the two new ministers to this classical area, the Rev. P. Aasman, minister of the church at Grand Valley and the Rev. W. den Hollander, minister of the church at Orangeville. As well, he welcomes the Rev. H. Versteeg, missionary in Irian Jaya, minister of the church at Toronto, who is seated as a delegate.

2. *Examination of the credentials:* The delegates of the church at Burlington East examine the credentials and report that all the churches are properly represented.

3. *Constitution of classis:* Classis is constituted. Appointed as officers are: Chairman — P.G. Feenstra; Clerk — J. De Jong; Vice chairman — G.Ph. van Popta.

The chairman thanks the church at Burlington South for making preparations for and convening this classis. He also mentions that the Rev. J. Mulder has received and declined the call which the church at Fergus had extended to him.

4. The agenda is adopted.

5. The two new ministers in this classical area, the Rev. P. Aasman of the church at Grand Valley and the Rev. W. den Hollander of the church at Orangeville, sign the classical form of subscription.

6. *Reports:* A number of reports are read:

- a. from the classical treasurer;
- b. from the church (Burlington West) for auditing the books of the treasurer. All things are in order;
- c. from the committee (Guelph) for financial aid to students for the ministry. This fund is not being utilized at present;
- d. the report from the church (Fergus) for auditing the books of the committee for financial aid to students for the ministry is not present. The church of Fergus is instructed to present it to the next classis;
- e. from the committee for needy churches (G. Lodder, et al.) a financial statement. As well, a proposal that the church at Ottawa receive \$15,000 in 1990 and that the churches be assessed \$8.60 per communicant member. This proposal is adopted;
- f. from the church (Orangeville) for auditing the books of the fund for needy churches. They report that all is in good order;
- g. report of the visitation brought to the church at Guelph.

Classis receives all of these reports with gratitude for the work done and for that which could be reported.

7. Question period according to art. 44 C.O. is held. The chairman asks each of the churches whether:

- a. the ministry of the office-bearers is continued;
- b. the decisions of major assemblies are honoured;
- c. there is any matter in which the consistory needs the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church.

Each of the churches is able to answer the first two questions in the affirmative and the last in the negative.

8. *Proposals or instructions of the churches:*

- a. In response to the request of the church at Burlington East, classis appoints Dr. C. Van Dam as the counsellor of this church (art. 45 C.O.).
- b. The church at Elora requests pulpit supply for one Sunday per month. Granted.

In this context, the church at Guelph informs classis that it is exempting its minister from classical preaching appointments.

The following motion is made, seconded and adopted: Classis requests the church at Guelph to reconsider its decision because:

- i. it upsets a system which has worked well in the past;
 - ii. it has not been proven that this system is against the Church Order;
 - iii. this decision of the consistory has not been submitted formally to classis via an instruction.
- c. In response to the request of the church at Elora, classis appoints the Rev. P. Aasman as the counsellor of this church.
 - d. The church at Fergus requests pulpit supply for one Sunday per month. Granted.
 - e. In response to the request of the church at Lower Sackville, classis appoints the Rev. G.Ph. van Popta as the counsellor of this church.
 - f. The church at Toronto requests that when classis appoints examiners of candidates for the ministry, their own field of special studies or interest be taken into consideration whenever possible.

Classis decides to take the instruction of Toronto into consideration as one of the considerations when appointing examiners.

Pulpit supply: Elora: Jan. 21 — J. De Jong; Feb. 18 — P. Aasman; Mar. 18 — G. van Popta; Apr. 15 — R. Gleason; May 20 — W. den Hollander; June 24 — J. Mulder; July 22 — P. Feenstra; *Fergus:* Jan. 28 — R. Gleason; Feb. 25 — J. Mulder; Mar. 25 — G. Nederveen; Apr. 22 — P. Feenstra; May 27 — J. De Jong;



June 24 — G. van Popta; July 29 — P. Aasman.

9. *Correspondence received:*

- a. A letter from the Rehoboth CaRC requesting that the Acts of Classis June 9, 1989, be amended by adding to art. 13, (2), "When this ruling is challenged, Classis upholds it by a majority vote."

Classis declares this request inadmissible on the grounds of art. 30, C.O.

- b. From the CaRC of Burlington South re: the text of Acts of Classis Ontario North, March 10, 1989.

Classis takes note of this letter and receives it as information.

- c. From a brother re: Acts of Classis Ontario North, June 9, 1989, art. 13, (2).

Classis declares this letter inadmissible because:

- a. it is not an appeal;
- b. a classis cannot acknowledge or duly note the comments made by a delegate at a previous classis.

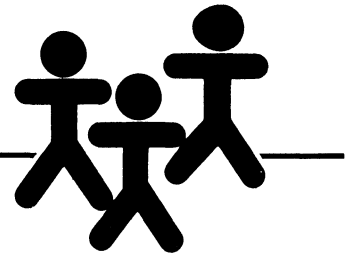
10. *Appointments:*

- a. Delegates to Regional Synod East to be held October 18, 1989, in London: *Ministers: primi (secundi):* J. De Jong (W. den Hollander); P. Feenstra (G. van Popta); J. Mulder (R. Gleason); G. Nederveen (P. Aasman). *Elders: primi (secundi):* J. Boot (W. Horsman); J. Gelderman (U. Krikke); H. Kottelenberg (B. Harsevoort); K. Lindhout (P. Witten).
- b. Convening church for next classis: Burlington West. Date — December 8, 1989, 9:00 a.m. Place — Rehoboth CaRC of Burlington West.
- c. Officers for next classis: Chairman — R.N. Gleason; Clerk — P.G. Feenstra; Vice chairman — J. De Jong.
- d. Church visitors: Classis appoints the Rev. W. den Hollander to replace the Rev. D. De Jong as visitor according to the schedule in Acts of Classis September 16, 1988, art. 10 (b).
- e. Examiners: Classis appoints the Rev. P. Aasman as examiner in New Testament exegesis and the Rev. W. den Hollander as examiner in the diaconological disciplines. The other ministers are reappointed as per Acts of Classis September 16, 1988, art. 10 (a).

11. After an opportunity is given for the personal question period, and after it is determined that there is no need for censure to be exercised over any delegate, the Acts are adopted and the Press Release is approved.

12. The chairman thanks the sisters for their excellent care and the delegates for the brotherly way in which the proceedings could be conducted. He then invites the delegates to sing Ps. 89:7, leads in a prayer of thanksgiving, and closes the meeting.

G.Ph. van Popta
Vice chairman, et.c.



Reflecting on the “Image of the Learner”

In various School Newsletters among the comments from Board members and principals our blessings are recognized in relation to the many learning possibilities our students enjoy at school. With the naming of all the school activities one can indeed be impressed by the long list of learning experiences made available. The full range of capabilities of the “whole child” is considered in the many social and physical activities sponsored by the school and organized by the staff as extra curricular activities which support the “academic” work. Skating outings, camping trips, volleyball tournaments, and “birthday” party events, are a few of the many possibilities mentioned. Students are active participants in these out-of-the-classroom events allowing their many and various talents to be developed in an “dynamic” manner.

When reflecting on the variety of learning situations the “Image of the Learner” description used as an introductory statement for course guidelines by the Ministry of Education in Ontario comes to mind. This basic position statement or starting point for public education programs reads as follows;


The image of the learner implicit in Ministry of Education guidelines and policy statements is complex. Recognizing the diversity of individual abilities and interests, the Ministry views the learner as an active participant in education who gains satisfaction from the dynamics of learning. The concept of the learner as a mere processor of information has been replaced by the image of a self-motivated, self-directed problem-solver, aware of both the processes and uses of learning and deriving a sense of self-worth and confidence from a variety of accomplishments. This learner is guided by values consistent with personal religious-ethical beliefs, cultural traditions, and the common welfare of society. The image also reveals a methodical thinker who is capable of inquiry, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as well as a perceptive discoverer capable of resourcefulness, intuition, and creativity.

As we direct ourselves toward educating covenant children after reading such an introduction one is reminded of the reality of Matthew 10:16 “be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.” For also our students should be capable problem solvers, clear methodical thinkers, who are active participants, who gain satisfaction from the dynamics of learning in a variety of accomplishments. Upon reflection, however, one notes with the Canons of Dort, Ch. 3/4, Art. 3, that all men are conceived in sin and are born as children of wrath, incapable of any saving good, inclined to evil, dead in sins, and slaves of sin. We believe that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

However, with Dort, Ch. 1 Art. 3, we also know that in order that men may be brought to faith, God mercifully sends heralds of this most joyful message, His message of salvation, to whom He will and when He wills. Man cannot depend on himself, his own self-worth and confidence, for through the fall into sin man has brought upon himself blindness, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment in his mind. This is a reality for the unregenerated man which the Ministry of Education does not men-

tion when it describes “a methodical thinker who is capable of inquiry, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, as well as a perceptive discoverer capable of resourcefulness, intuition, and creativity.”

To be sure, our students should be very capable and self-disciplined, and according to Dort, Ch. 3/4, there is left in man after the fall, some light of nature, whereby he retains some notions about god, about natural things, and about the difference between what is honourable and shameful, and shows some regard for virtue and outward order. But he is so far from arriving at the saving knowledge of God and true conversion through this light of nature that he does not even use it properly in natural and civil matters. It is God, according to Dort, Ch. 3/4, Art. 11, who opens the closed and softens the hard heart, . . . instils new qualities into the will. He makes the will, which was dead, alive; which was bad, good; which was unwilling, willing; and which was stubborn, obedient. He moves, motivates and directs and strengthens it so that, like a good tree, it may be able to produce the fruit of good works. Thus the mind of a Christian is regenerated. Believers, however, cannot fully understand the way in which God does this work of regeneration. According to Dort, Ch. 3/4, Art. 16, this divine grace of regeneration does not act upon men as stocks and blocks and does not take away the will and its properties, or violently coerce it, but makes the will spiritually alive, heals it, corrects it, pleasantly and at the same time powerfully bends it.

Hopefully, the diversity of learning situations made available to our children can be utilized to allow all their talents to be developed to the fullest and properly “bend” so that they may use their skills whether physical, social and/or cognitive (thinking) skills in inquiry, analysis, synthesis or evaluation for a life of service to Him who gives us to long for the goal of perfection for which He preserves us. 

*“Teach me
Thy way”*



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

Have you thought of making a leaf collection this fall?
Or a seeds collection?

Think of all the different, colourful leaves around.
And what a lot of seeds!

Take a little walk and you can gather more stuff
than you'll need for making pressed
leaves, seed pictures, seed col-
lections, leaf prints, and more.

I thought I would have
some fun with leaf prints. The
maple and oak prints were

made by colouring out over the
edge of the leaf, onto the paper.

The locust print was made by putting
the leaf *under* the paper and colouring
right over top.

Which one do you like best? Give it a try yourself. You'll
like it!

Leaf prints make great decorations for pictures, cards,
letters, notes, etc.

Lots of success! Have fun!



MAPLE



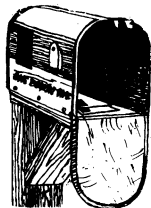
OAK



LOCUST



The veins in the
POPLAR leaf make a very
pretty pattern, don't you
think?



FROM THE MAILBOX

What a special birthday you had this year,
Nicole Roodzant. You could use your goggles right
away! Did you enjoy swimming in the big waves,
Nicole? Bye for now. Write again soon.

Did you get some sunshine after all the rain, *Lydia Viersen*?
I'm glad you enjoyed doing the quizzes. Thank you for the word-
search, *Lydia*.

That was quite a few blackberries you picked, *Anna De-
vries*! Do you have some more orders like that? How is your
horse training coming along? And how's school? Thank you
for the picture jokes, *Anna*. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will en-
joy them.

Thank you very much for sharing your trip with me, *Michelle
Peters*. I really enjoyed the story and sometimes felt I was right
there with you! I think some other time the Busy Beavers will
enjoy reading (part of!) your story, too. Bye for now.

Hello, *Trina Jelsma*. It was nice to hear from you again.
Thank you for sharing with the Busy Beavers. Are you glad
to be back in school with your friends again, *Trina*?

Now we have a poem for you, written by two Busy Beavers.
Thank you for sharing with us, *Laura and Nicole Aasman*.

Candyland



One day I took a big jet plane
Over the sea and through the rain
Until I got to Candyland!
I found myself shaking hands
With a boy named Wayne,
Eating a candy cane!

Then I looked down
And saw how high
Was little I

Above the town.

Then Wayne

Offered me a candy cane.

So I started to feel at home

And I began to roam

Around the cloud

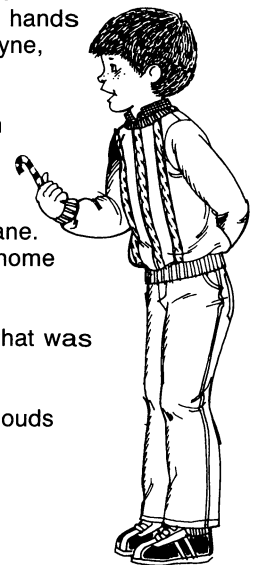
Until I heard a sound that was
too loud.

It was the jet plane

To take me over the clouds

And through the rain

HOME!



DECORATION by Busy Beaver *Lydia Viersen*

RIDDLES AND JOKE

by Busy Beaver *Trina Jelsma*

1. What did the ocean say to the shore?
2. Why did the man throw the clock out the window?
(Answers below)

Knock, knock.

Who's there?

Scold.

Scold who?

Let me in. Scold out here!

Quiz Time!

ALIKE

The following people shared something alike. Match the persons with the thing they had alike.

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Nebuchadnezzar and Aaron | a. witnessed to kings |
| 2. Jesus and Jonah | b. longed for by father |
| 3. Miriam and Naaman | c. received a slap |
| 4. Daniel and Joseph | d. built golden images |
| 5. Joseph and Zechariah | e. had leprosy |
| 6. John the Baptist and Paul | f. gave death kiss |
| 7. Naboth and Jesus | g. stopped a storm |
| 8. Jesus and Joseph | h. angels told of birth of a son |
| 9. Judas and Joab | i. interpreted dreams |
| 10. Jesus and Micaiah | j. accused by false witnesses |
| 11. Joseph and the Prodigal Son | k. sold for silver |

(Answers below)

CODE

by Busy Beaver Nicole Roodzant

A-10	F-11	K-24	O-4	S-14	W-3
B-13	G-16	L-21	P-7	T-8	X-15
C-25	H-20	M-9	Q-2	U-26	Y-22
D-1	I-18	N-12	R-17	V-23	Z-6
E-5	J-19				

16 17 4 3 18 12 8 20 5 16 17 10 25 5

10 12 1 24 12 4 3 21 5 1 16 5 4 11

4 26 17 21 4 17 1 10 12 1

14 10 23 18 4 17 19 5 14 26 14 25 20 17 18 14 8

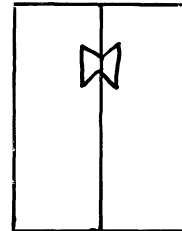
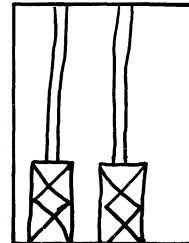
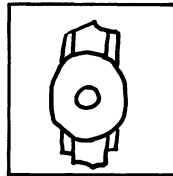
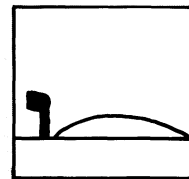
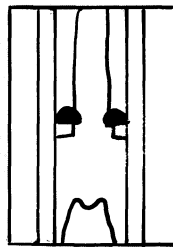
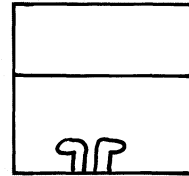
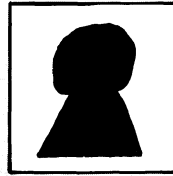
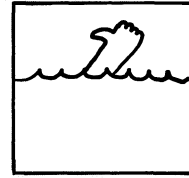
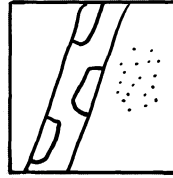
8 4 20 18 4 13 5 16 21 4 17 22

13 4 8 20 12 4 3 10 12 1 11 4 17 5 23 5 17

REWARD! for telling me where Nicole finds this text.

PICTURE JOKES by Busy Beaver Anna Devries

WHAT ARE THEY?



See answers

Answers

Alike: 1. d; 2. g; 3. c; 4. i; 5. h; 6. a; 7. j; 8. k; 9. f; 10. c; 11. b.

Riddles

1. Nothing, it just waves. 2. He wanted to see time fly.

- A. Giraffe with dandruff walking by a window
- B. Skin diver hitchhiking
- C. Santa Claus seen through a keyhole
- D. Clumsy tightrope walker
- E. Man on stilts talking to a short cowboy
- F. Fat man smoking a pipe in a soft bed
- G. Stork wearing argyle socks
- H. Woman in big hat in a sports car
- I. Man with his bow tie stuck in the elevator

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.
Hope to "see" you all next time.

Love,
Aunt Betty