



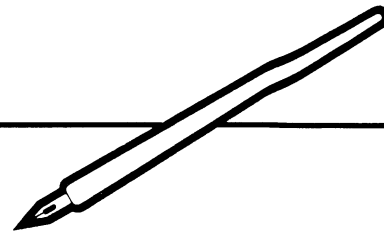
# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## TV at fifty: cause for celebration or concern?

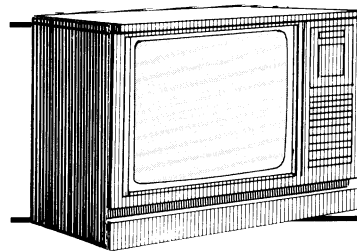
Fifty years ago, television was inaugurated in North America at the New York World's Fair. Understandably hopes for the future with such an exciting invention soared. Would this easy and graphic means of communication not lead to better insights and higher truth? Well after fifty years, age has not brought more respect to television. As one *Globe and Mail* columnist put it (April 29, 1989), the TV is derided as the idiot box and the boob tube. Yet the average home has at least one and the hours spent in front of it stagger the imagination of those who prefer to do without. Studies and polls indicate that the average Canadian watches six to eight hours a day.<sup>1</sup>

This saturation of the minds of their countrymen has alarmed a whole array of secular psychologists, educators, and those concerned with long-term trends for it is clear to these sages that the vast majority of the offerings of the tube are not in the best interests of the viewers or of society collectively. TV stations, being what they are — business enterprises, are constantly trying to appeal to more and more viewers and so increase their ratings and profits. The result is a seemingly endless downward spiral of violence, sex and just plain garbage, leading some to call TV's offerings as "junk food for the mind."<sup>2</sup> Since the lowest common denominator seems to be getting lower all the time, both morally and intellectually, there appear to be no limits as to how far TV will go to make their offerings "exciting." What was once considered off limits or not in good taste for children and teens, is now openly shown on prime time television, or is readily available to virtually anyone in the ubiquitous video shops.<sup>3</sup>

All this of course raises numerous questions about our own attitudes as Reformed people to this medium. The moulding power of the tube is enormous. The attitudes and morals of today's society are largely shaped by what it sees on TV. If it is alright for those on TV, it must be fine for us too. Often the influence is subtle, but nevertheless very potent. If what I've heard and read about the subject is true, (and I have no reason to doubt), then for example, the casualness with which authority is derided or marriage is trivialized in many so-called innocent entertainment programs has a moulding effect that should not be underestimated. The same goes for foul or blasphemous language, drunkenness, and violence that occur in many of these "family programs" that are often very popular with Christians because they seem so innocent. Are we as Reformed community immune to these influences? Absolutely not. Our natural heart is as inclined to sin as that of our unbelieving neighbour. "Bad company ruins good morals" (1 Cor. 15:33). For example, research in the Netherlands into the sexual activities of unmarried youth from the conservative Reformed Alliance in the state church (Gereformeerde Bond), our

sister churches, and evangelical groups (De Evangelische Beweging) were devastating. The trends of the world were clearly discerned among those who officially consider themselves children of God.<sup>4</sup> Similar negative and disturbing results were attained from a study of students in America.<sup>5</sup> Obviously everything cannot be blamed on TV alone. Yet, there is a justified consensus that television has certainly made its impact felt to the detriment of the morals of many young people who consider themselves Christian.

What must be our attitude or course of action? If we have not yet done so, we must first face up to the fact that in spite of some positive offerings on television, the vast majority of what appears on the screen is a conduit for the unholy influence of the spirits of this decadent age. Especially when impressionable children are still in the home, the question must be asked regularly and honestly, "Who is in charge? Do we control the tube or does it control us?" (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12). This question is pressing when we consider that our children are also and in the first place God's children to whom the Lord has at-



**"All things are lawful for me," but not all things are helpful.**

tached His glorious Name and given His promises. However, it is not just for our children that we should be concerned. Also older and old members of the body of Christ can become captivated to the seductive influences of this medium. But Christ calls us to be holy and separate from this world. He calls us not even to associate with the workers of darkness with their fornication, impurity, filthiness, silly talk or levity (all terms the apostle uses in Ephesians 5:3-7). "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them" (v.11).

We are involved in a titanic struggle against principalities and powers and spiritual hosts of wickedness. For that we need the full armour of God. A key element in the weapons God gives us is His Word which is the sword of the Spirit (Ephesians 6:10-17). Is the time spent watching TV strengthening us for this life-and-death battle? Do we spend enough time ponder-

ing Sunday's sermons and studying the Scriptures on our own so that we feel confident enough to test the spirits whether they are from God? (cf. 1 John 4:1). How does the time spent absorbing secular material from the tube stack up against that spent preparing for Bible study, meditation, personal reading of Scripture and reading good solid Christian books, be they fiction or otherwise? What are our hearts full of? As Reformed confessors our future will be very bleak if we allow ourselves and our children to be influenced by the unholy spirits working through the tube. We are children of God and must be moulded after His image and not that of the world! It is through His Word and Spirit that God moulds us as His children and equips us to be a new creation.

There are undoubtedly good exceptions both in what is offered and in the edifying use that can be made of this medium. However, at age fifty, the offerings on TV are not getting any better. If there was concern about TV years ago in our midst, there should be all the more now. Due to its power to shape reality, the continuing negative development of what TV offers should be viewed with great concern. Years ago already Malcom Muggeridge, a life-long commentator on radio and television, decried television as a medium because it is not true to reality (which for Christians is the new reality in Christ) and remarked, "If you want to know my absolutely candid opinion,

I think the best thing to do is not to look at television, and to that end, I have, as has been said, disposed of my set."<sup>6</sup> Coming from a veteran media man, such a remark cautions us to be too optimistic, especially about secular TV's potential for good. It also reminds us that doing without is a viable option.

It is through the Word that our God graciously equips us to be a new creation in Christ so that we can readily distinguish the new from the old and the clean from the unclean. In that Word He gives His norms to guide us through life, also regarding the question of the television set in what is steadily becoming a neo-pagan world. Some of those norms are listed for us in Philippians 4:8. "Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

<sup>1</sup>See, e.g., D. Suzuki, *The Globe and Mail*, 29 April 1989, p. D8.

<sup>2</sup>Steve Allen in *U.S. News and World Report*, 13 March 1978, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup>See, e.g., R.M. Anker, "Yikes, Nightmares from Hollywood," *Christianity Today*, 16 June 1989, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup>A.G. Knevel as quoted in "Persschouw," *De Reformatie*, 22 April 1989, p. 628.

<sup>5</sup>*Christianity Today*, July 14, 1989, pp. 42-43.

<sup>6</sup>M. Muggeridge, *Christ and the Media* (1977) 82, cf. pp. 90 and 96.



## The sifting effect of preaching<sub>2</sub>

By K. Deddens

### The Word of the Spirit

The Word of God is the Word of the Holy Spirit. Christ said to His disciples before He left, "When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak, and He will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take what is mine and declare it to you" (John 16:13,14). This is worked out in the letter to the Hebrews. "For the Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebr. 4:12). Prof. C. Veenhof wrote in connection with this, "He who hears the Word of God has to do with the Holy Spirit, who is pushing the work of God in this world to its completion. He will come inevitably in the grasp of the Spirit. Wherever the Word of the Scriptures is raised, there is the working place of the Holy Spirit. He who is listening to the Word, lets the Holy Spirit work in him. This Word may never be separated from the Spirit. He never lets it go. It is even wrong to say that the Word is an instrument of the Spirit. For He IS always His Word. He is always Himself addressing the people in His Word. He is seizing

them and He is achieving in them the Father's good pleasure. Therefore to speak about the Word 'as such' is a folly and a blasphemy. As the Word of the Spirit it calls the dead to life and it drills through the hardest walls of hearts. But as the Word of the Spirit it also hardens the hearts of all who resist against God and makes them at last inaccessible to each and every working of grace. In short, as the Word of the Spirit it is the seed of regeneration and the food of the soul, but also the hammer, which is mercilessly smashing everything that rises against God (. . .) The Word is pushing through to what is deeply hidden and is growing together in the dark shafts of human life. It tears asunder everything and it draws what was first tucked-away into the blinding light of God's holiness. Everything that comes up in the heart of man such as desires, endeavours and thoughts are sifted and judged by the Word according to the holy right of God. That is — according to the letter to the Hebrews — the majesty and the power, the salvation and the terror of God's Word which is preached among us."<sup>9</sup>

### Old Testament

We see this double effect of God's Word and the preaching of God's Word already in the Old Testament. Time and

again there is the preaching of God's promise, but at the same time also the preaching of the threat of God's covenant. Noah was an instrument in God's hand for God's judgment, according to Genesis 6 and 7. But beforehand he warned the people. Therefore he is called "a herald of righteousness" (2 Peter 2:5) and it is also said, "by faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed the ark for the saving of his household; by this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness which comes by faith" (Hebr. 11:7).

When God later gives His promise to Abraham, the LORD says about his descendants, "they shall come back here in the fourth generations; for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete" (Gen. 15:16). First they were warned, but when the iniquity is complete they will be destroyed completely.

Not only in the historical books of the Old Testament is this double effect of God's Word shown, but also in the prophetic books. Isaiah writes in his prophecy, ". . . as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not

return to Me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Is. 55:10,11). God's Word and its preaching is not empty, so that nothing will happen when it is brought to the people, but it is the living Word of God, which always has effect.

The LORD says to His prophet Jeremiah, "I am watching over My Word to perform it" (Jer. 1:12). The prophet has to proclaim that Word to the people and because of the iniquity it is even called first the *destructive* Word, and after that the *constructive* Word: "Behold, I have put My Words in your mouth. See, I have set you this day over nations and over kingdoms, to pluck up and to break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (1:9,10). There is a separating effect of the preaching of God's Word, and that effect is shown in both the Old and New Testament of the Bible.

### Calvin

This sifting effect of preaching is clearly understood by the Reformers and especially by John Calvin. In his *Institutes* he quotes with respect to this the calling of Jeremiah and the mandate to preach the breaking and building Word. Then he continues, "But the prophecy of Isaiah presses it even farther home, for the Lord sends him out thus: 'Go and say to the children of Israel, Hear and hear but do not understand; see and see but do not perceive. Make the heart of this people stubborn, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they perchance see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed' (Is. 6:9,10; cf. Matt. 13:14,15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40; Acts 28:26,27; Rom. 11:8). Observe that he directs his voice to them but in order that they may become even more deaf; he kindles a light but that they may be made even more blind; he sets forth doctrine but that they grow even more stupid; he employs a remedy but so that they may not be healed. And John, applying this prophecy, states that the Jews could not believe Christ's teaching (John 12:39), for this curse of God hung over them."<sup>10</sup>

Calvin stressed very much that the first function of the preaching is the power of God for salvation, according to Romans 1:16. It is the *gospel*, good tidings. But preaching of the Word of God can also have a condemning, a deadly effect. With respect to this Prof. C. Veenhof wrote, "In an intensive way Calvin deals with the fact that the preaching of the gospel can have this twofold effect. However, and with that we touch immediately the kernel of his expositions in this respect, Calvin does not think one moment to place this double effect on the same line. On the contrary, he states with emphasis that the

relation between the preaching and the salvation worked by it, is totally different from the relation between the preaching and death, worked by it. Or, to say it in another way, Calvin teaches that, from the point of view of preaching there is a discongruity on principle between the working of the gospel with an effect of salvation and the other one in which it



Professor C. Veenhof

functions as a power of perdition. That the preaching of the gospel is working salvation is namely its specific nature, its genuine character, its proper office. If the preaching becomes a reason of condemnation and death for those who reject it, that is concerning this preaching something accidental, something occasional, even something that is clashing with its real nature. If the preaching of the gospel in contrast with its nature changes in a deadly, condemning power, that has to be ascribed to the malice, the sin, the guilt of men. The deadly and condemning effect of the preaching of the gospel is indeed regarding the godless people some-



Dr. Abraham Kuyper

thing proper, something genuine, but concerning the gospel this effect is always something accidental, something occasional, something that goes directly against its nature."<sup>11</sup>

I purposely gave this extensive quotation of Calvin by Prof C. Veenhof. In his reproduction of Calvin concerning the so-called occasional, accidental matter of preaching he went a little bit too far, according to my opinion. The condemning working of preaching is indeed not the first function of preaching according to Calvin. But at the same time the Reformer warned more than once against oneness and exaggeration with regard to this. Prof. J. Kamphuis pointed already to the fact that Calvin used more than once the softening expression "in a manner of speaking," or "so to say" with relation to the deadly effect of preaching.<sup>12</sup> Calvin did not promote complete inequality in the matter of the quickening and mortifying effect of preaching. L. Goumaz elaborated on that in his summary of Calvin's commentaries on the New Testament concerning the office in the church, namely in a chapter about "The twofold authority of the office."

I quote, "Christ has assured on the one hand those who are His of the grace which is promised to them in the gospel in such a way 'that they expect this with an equally great certainty as if He had come down from heaven in order to testify it personally'; on the other hand the LORD has frightened the hardened sinners; by assuring them that their contempt of the ministers of the Word and the proclamation of forgiveness will receive its sanction. The ministers are but human beings, 'earthly vessels'; this weakness causes that they see their preaching constantly questioned. But Christ assures that in reality this weak human word proclaims the forgiveness of sins for those who receive it with confidence, but also the judgment of God to the wicked who refuse to accept the promise of grace."<sup>13</sup>

Calvin was very pessimistic concerning the number of unbelievers and hypocrites in the church. He wrote, "If the same sermon is preached, say, to a hundred people, twenty receive it with the ready obedience of faith, while the rest hold it valueless, or laugh, or hiss, or loathe it."<sup>14</sup>

### A. Kuyper

Later on also A. Kuyper stressed the first function of the preaching, namely the proclamation of the kingdom of heaven. "But also the other way around," he wrote in *E Voto*: "From week to week has to be announced in the name of God the judgment of condemnation to everyone who resists faith and who does not convert to God wholeheartedly. Like a ham-

mer that smashes the rock, this terrible Word of our God has to come down on the souls of those who are hardening their hearts. As a two-edged sword that horrible word of judgment and eternal condemnation has to penetrate between the separation of soul and spirit and between the separation of joints and marrow. It has to be made impossible to you more and more to resist your God, so that you are doing finally one of the two: to give in over against God, or: to go out and to say: no, I do not come back under such a preaching. But in that way the key-power is executed."<sup>15</sup>

### K. Schilder

When the Holy Spirit is hardening the hearts of those who hear the Word of God but refuse to accept it, He abandons at the same time these unbelievers to Satan. Meditating on the text about Judas "after the morsel (or the sop), Satan entered into him" (John 13:27), K. Schilder wrote, "The sop which Jesus gives has the same effectiveness and the same effect as the Word which God gives. That Word, also, never returns void; it achieves whatever pleases God and quickly effects the purpose for which God sent it. That Word forces choices upon men. It converts men, or it hardens them. It makes men bow, or it stiffens their necks in haughty obstinacy. Both, the sop and the Word, send out the Spirit unto repentance, or Satan unto a hardening of the heart. Take the sop; listen to the Word. Afterwards men can say of you: Then entered the Spirit into him; or they can say: Then entered Satan into him. The one or the other effect will follow."<sup>16</sup>

I quote also something of what K. Schilder wrote in *Christ in His Suffering* about the text "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan demanded to have you, that he might sift you like wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail" (Luke 22: 31,32): "Christ knows that Satan is but the second, that God is the first cause of the sifting. Therefore He turns to God asking that faith may not abate — May they remain in Thy hands, Father! Thou dost sift; and Satan sifts. But Thy method is not his! — Satan wants to keep the chaff and blow the wheat away. Christ would retain the wheat and take the chaff out of it. By sifting, Satan wants to suppress the good by the evil; Christ, also by sifting, would overcome evil with good."<sup>17</sup>

### Opened and closed

Many texts from the Holy Scriptures are still to be mentioned, in which the sifting work of God the Holy Spirit is shown, as He is working with God's Word. For the Word of God is the sword of the Spirit, which cuts from two sides, as is said in

the Notes of the Old Dutch translation on Hebr. 4:12. They point then also to Revelation 19:15, where is said of the exalted Christ that He is called the Word of God and that from His mouth issues a sharp sword with which to smite the nations, and He will rule them with a rod of iron. When He smites with the sword of the Word, nobody can stop Him. In Revela-




Dr. K. Schilder

tion 3 He is called "the holy One, the true One, who has the key of David, who opens and no one shall shut, who shuts and no one opens" (vs.7). He gives in-

deed an open door in Philadelphia (vs.8), but it is also possible that one closes his ears to what the Spirit says to the church, and that one does not want to open the door, although the knock at the door is clearly to be heard." (3:20).

That brings us to what we confess in Lord's Day 31 of the Heidelberg Catechism about the keys of the kingdom, to which A. Kuypers already pointed. First the kingdom is opened by the preaching of the gospel. But in the case of hardening of hearts follows the closing of the kingdom. That is the double effect of preaching. In this way the Word of God comes to all the hearers, without distinction, with command of faith and conversion. I quote with regard to this Prof. B. Holwerda: "They all have to hear without distinction the promise. Then this promise itself will achieve separation: the one believes, the other one hardens his heart. They all have to hear without distinction the admonition. The one is converting, the other one refuses conversion. In this way the kingdom of God is opened for the one and closed for the other one by this comforting sermon. But also the one is brought to conversion and the other one to hardening by this chastising sermon. But always something happens, the one thing or the other. Nobody remains the same under the sermon. That is the enormous seriousness of each and every sermon . . ."<sup>18</sup> Elsewhere Holwerda wrote: "What about so-called distinctive preaching? Does the



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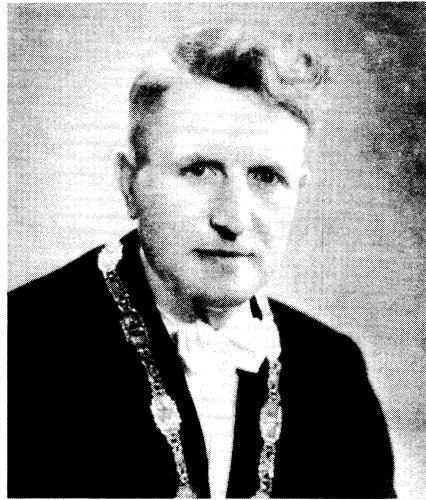
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minister have to divide the congregation into groups, and does he have to address himself to every part separately and distinctively? Let him preach the gospel to all of them! Then he uses the axe of Christ for all of them. Only then! Woe to the preacher who assumes there to be separations and brings the word of the text only to the one part. He has to bring it to *all of them*; in this way Christ will *make* separations! This makes the sermon a thousand times more dangerous."<sup>19</sup>

## Conclusion

I come to a conclusion. Besides the blessing effect of preaching there is also the condemning effect of it and this effect is not something accidental or occasional, but the reverse of the first effect. This twofold effect may never be neglected in preaching. Often the word of the apostle Paul is quoted that we can eat and drink at the Lord's Supper judgment upon ourselves (1 Cor. 11:29). But what about to *hear* judgment upon ourselves? Precisely in connection with the fact that we can spurn the Son of God and profane the blood of the covenant by which we were sanctified, and outrage the Spirit of grace, the letter to the Hebrews mentions the "fearful prospect of judgment, and a fury of fire which will consume the adversaries" (Hebr. 10:27). Then the Spirit hardens the hearts, He abandons to Satan. He abandons the unbelievers to themselves, to their own sins.



Professor B. Holwerda

Let us maintain our confession in the Canons of Dort, "It is not the fault of the gospel, nor of the Christ offered by the gospel, nor of God, who calls through the gospel and who even confers various gifts upon them, that many who are called through the ministry of the gospel do not come and are not converted. The fault lies in themselves" (III/IV,9). Indeed, "the fault lies in those who are called, in *their* culpable carelessness or slackness or worldly-mindedness."<sup>20</sup>

Take heed then how you *hear!*

But also: take heed then how you *preach!*

<sup>9</sup>C. Veenhof, *ibid.*, p. 42ff.

<sup>10</sup>J. Calvin, *Institutes* III, 24, 13. Calvin points in connection with this also to Matt. 13:11ff.: "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given."

<sup>11</sup>C. Veenhof, *Calvijn en de prediking*. In: J. van Genderen et. al., *Zicht op Calvijn*, Buijten & Schipperheijn, Amsterdam, 1965, p. 98ff.

<sup>12</sup>J. Kamphuis, *Onderweg aangesproken*, Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1968, p. 162ff.

<sup>13</sup>L. Goumaz, *Het ambt bij Calvijn*, transl. and introd. K. Deddens, Wever, Franeker, 1964, p. 114.

<sup>14</sup>J. Calvin, *Institutes* III, 24, 12; cf. also W.H. van der Vegt, *Inleiding*. In: *Het gepredikte Woord. Preeken van Johannes Calvijn I*, Wever, Franeker, n.d., p. 35. "In his sermons," Van der Vegt continues, "Calvin is often more pessimistic, when he says that no more than 10% of the congregation is free from unbelief. There are even pronouncements to be found that scarcely one percent is to be considered as believers."

<sup>15</sup>A. Kuyper, *E Voto Dordraceno* III, Kok, Kampen, 1892, p. 310.

<sup>16</sup>K. Schilder, *Christ in His Suffering*, transl. H. Zijlstra, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1938, p. 176ff.

<sup>17</sup>K. Schilder, *ibid.*, p. 263.

<sup>18</sup>B. Holwerda, *De dingen die ons van God geschonken zijn* III, Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1955, p. 82.

<sup>19</sup>B. Holwerda, *De wijsheid die behoudt*, Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1959, p. 77.

<sup>20</sup>H.J. Meijerink, *Canons of Dort, Third and Fourth Heads of Doctrine*. In: J. Faber et al., *To the Praise of His Glory*, Publ. Organ. of the Free Ref. Churches of Australia, Launceston, Tasmania, 1971, p. 44.

## PSALM 87

Geneva, 1562

1. Our gra-cious God has laid His firm foun-da-tions  
On Zi-on's mount, the courts of His de-light;  
Her gates of splen-dour, bathed in heav-en-ly light,  
He loves far more than Ja-cob's hab-i-ta-tions.

2. What glorious things, O city of God's favour,  
Are spoken in melodious tones of you!  
Rahab will I include, and Babel too,  
With those who know Me as their LORD and Saviour.

3. The Moor with the Philistine and the Tyrian  
Shall soon, O Zion, throng your holy gate;  
In songs of joy I'll hear her sons relate:  
"These all were born within the walls of Zion."

4. God will Himself confirm it with His blessing,  
And on the roll of nations He will count  
All these as born on Zion's holy mount,  
In many tongues one God, one faith confessing.

5. Then shall God's Name with holy adoration  
And joyful tones be praised by Israel's throng;  
Both harp and voice will blend in swelling song:  
"In Zion are the founts of my salvation."

---

# The elder as preserver and nurturer of life in the covenant: what the Bible says<sup>1</sup>

By C. Van Dam

## Introduction

A characteristic of churches in the Reformed and Presbyterian tradition is surely that the office of elder is dear to all of us. Indeed, there is good reason for statements such as that of G.D. Henderson: "The eldership is perhaps the most distinctive feature of those Churches of the Reformation which honour the Calvinistic tradition."<sup>2</sup> It would appear that if our coming together as churches in the ICRC is to be as beneficial as possible, basic issues like the office of elder, should be discussed for our mutual edification. The church cannot really function and flourish without a vibrant exercising of this office. The combination of our different heritages and our common purpose suggests that it would be profitable to start to consider this office in the ecumenical context of this conference in order that we may benefit from each other's insights as influenced by our different histories.

The purpose of this introductory paper is therefore to stimulate further discussion about this office with the hope that the result may be not only a renewed appreciation and love for this office, but also a deeper insight into how we regard the eldership, so that the functioning of this office may be as fruitful as possible in the churches.

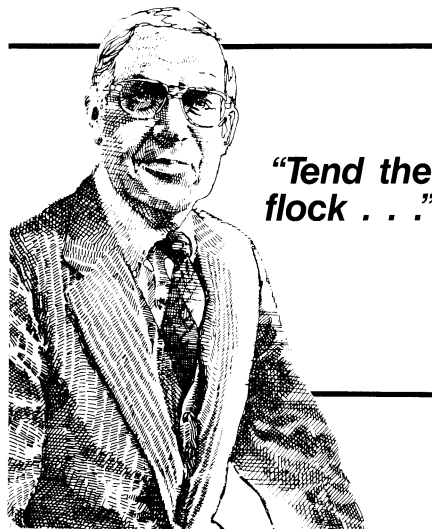
To this end let us first survey the biblical data and see the basic task of this office, namely, to be God's servants and instruments to stimulate and preserve the life with God in the covenant community and so to labour for the rule of Christ and His Word in the church. Next, let us briefly look at the development of this office in the subsequent history of the church and, finally, to bring the matter into a practical focus, pose two questions for further consideration.

## The Old Testament background

The office of elder in the New Testament cannot be understood without first considering the background of this office in the Old Testament and inter-testamental times. It is, however, especially

the Old Testament that should be carefully considered. The fact that this background is sometimes hardly acknowledged can lead to an insufficient appreciation of what this office entails.

The Hebrew term for "elder" derives from a noun meaning *beard*. Etymologically it thus basically refers to a man with a beard. The term practically always refers to old men or to the elders as of-



officials. We are interested in the latter usage. We do not read anywhere of the origin of this office (which as such was also well-known outside Israel, e.g., Gen. 50:7) and it may be assumed that it has developed from the tribal structure of Israel. An elder was probably a head of a family or tribe. Presumably after his death, his oldest son would take his place. However, if he was incompetent, then it could go to a younger son. The point is that to be an elder involved recognition by others, not only because of one's age as well as one's legal position, but also in view of one's gifts, one's authority and ability to lead and, if necessary, to represent the interests and wishes of the people. The basic criterion of age, inherent in the term for elder, was

important because it carried connotations of wisdom and experience associated with older age (Deut. 32:7; cf. Ps. 37:25; 1 Kings 12:6-8, 13). The elders, therefore, commanded respect and could be expected to know the history of God's people (Deut. 32:7; Lam. 4:16; 5:12).

It is an intriguing question how exactly the elders were organized in the nation of Israel. However, for our purposes this point can be bypassed for the most part. Suffice it to note for now that elders functioned on a national level as elders of the people (e.g., Ex. 3:16), on a tribal level as elders of a particular tribe (e.g., Judg. 11:5), and locally as elders of a city (e.g., Judg. 8:14). What especially concerns us now are the key duties that the elders in Israel had. These can be summarized as: first, the task of judging and discipline generally, and second, the task of ruling and guiding the people and the affairs of the nation in an orderly way. It is especially through these responsibilities that the elders were instrumental in preserving the life with God in the covenant community. It is no accident that these same two major elements also essentially constitute the task of the elders in our congregations today.

It is remarkable that in the early history of Israel as a nation we read three times of the special appointment of elders; twice specifically for judging, and once for ruling. In Exodus 18:24-26 we read that Moses appointed what were apparently elders (heads of tribes, cf. Deut. 1:15) to act as judges in the relatively simple matters of justice so that he could concentrate on the more difficult ones. It has been suggested (by W.H. Gispen) that Moses herewith perhaps restored them as elders to their former office. So important was this action that it receives a prominent place at the beginning of Deuteronomy, where we are told (Deut. 1:13) that Moses had said to the people: "Choose wise, understanding, and experienced men, according to your tribes, and I will appoint them as your heads" (these are the judges of v. 16), and the people agreed (v. 14). Notice how the

congregation of Israel was involved. With the appointment of the judges to help him, the normal functioning of justice became an attainable goal while Israel lived in the wilderness. At the same time it prepared God's people for a clear recognition of the importance of maintaining righteousness and justice also later in Canaan.

The command to appoint judges in Canaan as recorded in Deuteronomy 16 is a further development. "You shall appoint judges and officers in all your towns [lit. 'gates'] which the LORD your God gives you, according to your tribes" (Deut. 16:18). This command is addressed to the people; so once again they are involved in the appointing of judges, although we are not told how. Whereas during the wilderness wanderings the people all lived around the tabernacle, in Canaan they will spread out in the different towns and cities, and the local town or city gate becomes the place where God's law is upheld (by the elders of the city). In effect, there is a certain decentralization here (a principle dear to us in Reformed church polity). If, however, a case was too difficult, then (according to Deut. 17) "you shall arise and go up to the place which the LORD your God will choose, and coming to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days, you shall consult them, and they shall declare to you the decision" (Deut. 17:8b, 9). There was thus a higher tribunal, which however did not function as a court of appeal. It was for cases too difficult (cf. also Deut. 19:17). This reminds one of the place of Moses (in Ex. 18), who dealt with the difficult cases. With the coming of the office of king in Israel, the function of the chief judge fell to him (cf. 1 Sam. 8:5, 20, where Israel asks for a king to judge them [RSV "govern"], 2 Sam. 15:2-4; Ps. 72). As such a godly king could be expected to have a keen interest in the maintenance of justice in the land (2 Chron. 19:8-11).<sup>3</sup>

We also read of elders being appointed by Moses on the command of the LORD in order that Moses might have help with ruling the people. We read in Numbers 11: "And the LORD said to Moses, 'Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and officers over them; and bring them to the tent of meeting . . . and I will take some of the Spirit who is upon you and put Him upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with you, that you may not bear it yourself alone'" (vv. 16-17). These men are clearly different from those appointed by Moses in Exodus 18 to help in executing justice.

Elders remained involved with the rule of God's people subsequent to the

time of Moses, whether government was decentralized as in the period of judges or more centralized as Israel moved toward a theocratic monarchy. In accordance with their office, they exercised God's rule over the people on behalf of God Himself. The LORD made this rule possible by entrusting to them, along with the Levites, the care of His law and will, as well as the duty of imprinting this law on the hearts and minds of His people. We read in Deuteronomy 31 that Moses,

***“. . . their task of judging and ruling was to be in accordance with God's law.”***

after writing the law, "gave it to the priests the sons of Levi, who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD, and to all the elders of Israel." Then follows the command that this law be read to the people at the end of every seven years at the feast of booths (Deut. 31:9-13). The elders had a special responsibility to see to it that Israel knew the law and lived by it. Together with Moses they commanded the people to keep the law in Deuteronomy 27:1 and they were summoned first by Moses before he delivered his final song (Deut. 31:28), for they had a specific obligation to make sure that Israel would know its contents. Indeed, Moses told Israel in his final song that Israel should ask their fathers and the elders for instruction in the history of God's dealing with His people (Deut. 32:7). The weight of the office is also seen in Joshua 24:31, where we read: "And Israel served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua and had known all the work which the LORD did for Israel" (similarly Judg. 2:7). The implication is that the elders led Israel in the ways of the LORD. So the elders' rule of Israel included that crucial obligation of placing the demands of the great King of Israel, the LORD God, before the people. This made possible their guiding Israel in the ways of the covenant.

Now the task of ruling belonged to the elders from earliest times. Hence, in order that Moses' leadership over Israel might be recognized, the LORD instructed Moses to gather the elders of Israel together and there present, so to speak, his credentials; namely, that the God of their fathers had sent him to them because God was going to deliver them (Ex. 3:13-18). If the elders recognized his leadership, so would the people. This aspect of the ruling task of the elder continued after the time of Moses. During the period of the judges, the elders of Gilead saw to it that Jephthah became their leader to meet the threat of the Am-

monites (Judg. 11:4-11). It was also the elders who asked Samuel for a king (1 Sam. 8:4-5). The important place of the elders is later underlined in the words of Saul after Samuel told him that God had taken the kingdom away from him. Then Saul acknowledged his sin and said: "Yet honour me now before the elders of my people" (1 Sam. 15:30). With respect to David's kingship, the elders of Israel anointed him king over all Israel (2 Sam. 5:3; 1 Chron. 11:3; cf. 2 Sam. 3:17-18; cf. also the presence of the elders in 2 Sam. 17:1-4).

With this type of involvement in leading and ruling the nation, it is to be expected that the elders would also serve with their counsel and advice. Sometimes their advice was bad, as in the days of Eli, when they decided to send the ark into battle (1 Sam. 4:3). Generally, however, they could be expected to give good advice, and wise counsel became associated with the elder (cf. Ezek. 7:26 and Jer. 18:18).

In summary, elders were to be able men who feared God and were trustworthy (Ex. 18:21, 25), wise, understanding, and experienced (Deut. 1:13) and who were enabled by God with His Spirit (Num. 11:16, 17) to carry out their vital tasks of judging and ruling. The people were involved in placing elders in their office, and the authority of the elders was recognized. Their primary responsibility, however, was to God, for their task of judging and ruling was to be in accordance with God's law. Indeed, the latter task even included their having responsibility for imprinting the law of God in the hearts and minds of the people (Deut. 31:9-13). In this way they were to serve God and the people and work for the preservation and development of the life with the LORD in the covenant community.

## Transition

Although the period after the exile through to New Testament times was one of profound change, the office of elder basically stayed intact. On the national scale, with the effective dissolution of tribal units, the individual families grew in importance, and elders from the resulting nobility had the leadership. By the beginning of the second century B.C. there is evidence of the existence of "a council of elders" consisting of 70 (71) members, the Sanhedrin. At first the members were generally spoken of as *presbyteroi*, "elders." However, the term was used more and more to distinguish the "lay" members, who probably came from the patrician families in Jerusalem, from those with a priestly lineage as well as (after c. 70 B.C.) those drawn from the ranks of scribes. This situation is reflected



in the New Testament. The system of local elders continued (Ezra 10:7-17), and each Jewish community had its council of elders associated with the synagogue (cf. Luke 7:3), an institution generally dated from Ezra or during the exile. These elders were responsible for discipline in the congregation (cf. Matt. 10:17; John 9:22). It is this local eldership that is of particular importance for our topic, for it retained the essential features of the Old Testament office of elder and it lay behind the office of elder in the Christian church. This brings us to the New Testament elder.

### The New Testament elder

For our purposes the first thing that needs to be noted is that the first Christians were Jewish and that the office of elder was well-known to them from the synagogue. For that reason Luke can mention Christian elders for the first time in Acts 11:30 (regarding Jerusalem) without any need for explanation. The office was a familiar one, known also from what Luke had written earlier. On their first missionary journey Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church (Acts 14:23). The verb used for "appoint" leaves open the possibility that the congregation participated in the process. Paul also charged Titus to do the same in Crete (Titus 1:5). This office belonged to the local congregation (cf. also Acts 20:17; James 5:14; 1 Pet. 5:1).

In the second place, in the New Testament elders (*presbyteroi*) are also called bishops (*episkopoi*, in e.g., Acts 20:28), and, by implication, "shepherds," without implying any essential difference in the office referred to.<sup>4</sup> To be sure, the apostle Paul does distinguish between those elders who rule well, especially those who labour in the preaching and teaching (1 Tim. 5:17), whom we generally call ministers of the Word, and others. However, common to all elders is the task of oversight and discipline of the congregation as well as the responsibility to rule and guide the people of God with the Word in a manner that is pleasing to God. In other words, the task of the elders (not including all the implications of the specific mandate of the ministers of the Word) is basically the same as that of their Old Testament predecessors; that is, also elders in the new dispensation are to preserve and nurture life with God in the covenant community. They may do so in the service of the risen Lord and are enabled by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Coming to specifics, we note that the elders' task of oversight and discipline is described in various ways in the New Testament. Some examples: in bidding farewell to the Ephesian elders the apos-

tle Paul said: "Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers to care for the church of God which He obtained with the blood of His own Son" (Acts 20:28). Peter wrote: "So I exhort the elders among you as a fellow elder . . . tend the flock of God that is your charge, not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory" (1 Pet. 5:1-2). The pastoral and ministering nature of their oversight and discipline is obvious. They have to watch over souls (Heb. 13:17) and protect and nurture life with God in the covenant community. This may mean correction and admonition (1 Thess. 5:12; cf. Acts 20:31), and, if there is no repentance, it may eventually lead to excommunication (Matt. 18:17; 1 Cor. 5:13; Titus 3:10).

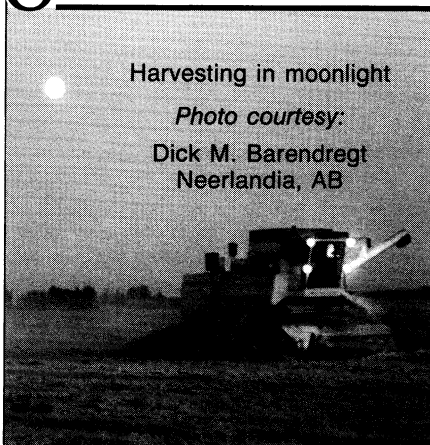
As far as the elders' task of ruling and guiding the congregation is concerned, it is clear from the New Testament that they have been set over the congregation in the Lord (1 Thess. 5:17). They rule (1 Tim. 5:17). The elder is also called a steward of God (Titus 1:7). The term "steward" literally indicates that the elder is a manager of God's household. However, the figurative meaning probably is uppermost here, meaning that the elder is an administrator of spiritual treasures (cf. 1 Cor. 4:1; Matt. 13:11, 52). This says something about the nature of the elder's position of authority. Uppermost in the ruling of the congregation is to be the administration of the glad tidings. Therefore false doctrine must be opposed and the truth safeguarded (Acts 20:28, 31; Titus 1:9-11). For that reason, like their Old Testament counterparts, elders have the responsibility to see to it that the gospel and the demands of the Lord are imprinted in the hearts and lives of God's

people (cf. 1 Thess. 2:11, 12; 2 Tim. 2:24-26).

With such responsibilities, it is no surprise that the prerequisites for the office are high. For our purposes now I would like to stress that, like his Old Testament predecessors, the elder in the last age has to command the respect of others by being blameless and God-fearing and by showing in his walk of life the fruits of the Spirit (1 Tim. 3:2-4,7; Titus 1:6-9; cf. Gal. 5:22-23). He also has to be able to teach others the way of the Lord (1 Tim. 3:2; cf. 5:17). As Paul wrote Titus: "He must hold firm to the sure Word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confute those who contradict it" (Titus 1:9). Although the office of elder is not in the first place a teaching but a ruling office, yet a good knowledge of the Word of God was essential. They needed to know it! Think of the crucial role of the elders in Acts 15:1-6, who with the apostles had to make far-reaching decisions. This knowledge of the Word and the ability to teach others also had to be accompanied by a mature sensibility, so that the elder would not be quarrelsome (1 Tim. 3:3) or enter senseless controversies (cf. 1 Tim. 1:3; 6:4-5).

All these requirements suggest that elders were to be chosen very carefully after they have clearly proven themselves and shown themselves endowed with the necessary gifts. If Jewish tradition and indirect biblical data are heeded, then a candidate for an elder must be at least 30 years of age. There are no direct biblical data informing us how long an elder is to serve. The Old Testament background of the office would, however, strongly suggest that the eldership is a lifelong office. There is also nothing in the New Testament to suggest otherwise. Indeed, it could be argued that the high requirements of the office would seem to indicate that it may not be easy to find suitable candidates for the office and that therefore the church will not too readily let go of good office-bearers.

## OUR COVER



Harvesting in moonlight

Photo courtesy:

Dick M. Barendregt  
Neerlandia, AB

<sup>1</sup> The first part of a paper prepared for the meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches held in Langley, 1989. In keeping with the nature of *Clarion*, the text has been simplified in places, especially in omitting virtually all the footnote material. For the complete text, see the upcoming *Proceedings* of this Conference.

<sup>2</sup> G.D. Henderson, *The Scottish Ruling Elder* (London: James Clarke 1935), p. 11.

<sup>3</sup> See further on elders and judging, C. Van Dam, "The Elder in the Gate," *Diakonia*, 1:4 (1988), pp. 11-16.

<sup>4</sup> In Acts 20:17, 28 and Titus 1:5, 7 *presbyteroi* and *episkopoi* are used interchangeably and the requirements for the office of *presbyteros* and *episkopos* are very similar; cf. Titus 1:5-9 and 1 Tim. 3:1-7. C

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# Church and revolution

## The secularization of society

By F.G. Oosterhoff

In the journalistic commentaries on the French Revolution in this bicentennial year, little attention has been given to the religious climate in pre-revolutionary France. This is surprising, in view of the nature of the event: the impact of the Revolution was felt not only in the socio-political, but also in the spiritual realm. Among its consequences were the destruction of the established church, a large-scale rejection of Christianity, and the inauguration of a secularized, post-Christian society.

To account for these developments one cannot refer simply to the social and political abuses in pre-revolutionary France, or even to the popularity of anti-Christian Enlightenment ideas among the revolutionaries. These factors were no doubt important, but by themselves they do not fully explain the spiritual reversal. They do not answer the question, for example, as to *why* the new theories became victorious, and *why* they led to the widespread rejection of Christianity. After all, does not the Christian message include that for which the revolutionaries were also striving: compassion, brotherhood, and social justice? Why was that message no longer proclaimed, or, if it was still proclaimed, why was it no longer listened to?

Although the French Revolution took place two centuries ago, it is still relevant to consider these questions. A study of the Revolution's background will not only teach us something about its spiritual roots — that in itself is instructive for present-day Christians — but it will also explain to us the nature of its fruits. And whatever one may say about the roots of the Revolution, its fruits are not a matter of historical interest only. They are still with us.

### The church in France

To gain an understanding of the background of the Revolution, it is necessary to consider the role of the church in eighteenth-century France. When I speak of the French church I refer to the Roman Catholic one. Roman Catholicism was the official and the only

accepted religion. Deviation within the church itself, such as the Augustinian Jansenist movement, was not allowed, and Protestantism was suppressed with great severity. In 1685 Louis XIV (the antagonist of William III of the Glorious Revolution) had ended all toleration for the French Reformed or Huguenots, and in the eighteenth century that group formed a small and cruelly persecuted minority.

On the eve of the Revolution, then, the Roman Catholic church held a

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***“The number of abortions alone in any one of these western nations far surpasses that of all the victims of the Terror.”***

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monopoly position. It had also reached a very low ebb in spirituality. Secularized, oppressive, authoritarian, and very materialistic, it appeared to have few other concerns than the maintenance of its monopolistic position and the protection and increase of its vast wealth. The fact that some of the clergy, especially among the lower ranks, courageously fought against the church's secularism and tried to take their calling seriously, did not greatly change the general picture, nor did it do enough to fill the spiritual vacuum that existed in France. The people were spiritually starved and as a result had little or no defence against the anticlerical and anti-Christian ideas that were now being spread by zealous Enlightenment prophets. In other words, the secularization of society was not simply a result of the revolutionary upheaval. The process of secularization had begun, especially in the urban centers, well before the outbreak of the Revolution.

### A comparison with England

This picture will get even more relief when we compare the situation in France with that of a number of other Western countries, such as, for example, England. In England also Enlightenment ideas had made important inroads, especially among the intellectuals. In fact, most of the Enlightenment theories originated in England and spread from there to France and other countries. In England, however, they did not succeed in eclipsing Christianity. To the contrary, in the age of the Enlightenment England provides us with a picture of considerable church growth and of a deepening level of spirituality among the population, not in the last place among the working classes. This happened in spite of the fact that England also had an established church which was influenced by the spirit of secularism and rationalism, and that here too all manner of dissent had long been suppressed.

Why, then, this difference? One reason was undoubtedly that the Church of England did not enjoy quite the same monopoly position as the Roman Catholic church in France, and that already at the time of the Glorious Revolution a measure of toleration was granted to most Protestant dissenters. The fruits of that toleration, introduced under William III, became evident during the eighteenth century. It was the very poverty and aridity of the Enlightenment religion in England that led to, or encouraged, various evangelical revival and reform movements. Together they had the effect of “re-Christianizing” much of England — the opposite development of what was happening in France.

### Alliance of church and state

To return to the latter country: the French church's exclusivism and its secularism were not the only reasons why it was held in contempt. Also important was the fact that, with a few notable exceptions, the clergy failed to speak out against the abuses that were rampant in France, but rather helped perpetuate

them. Under the old regime church and state were hand in glove, and the clergy enjoyed a privileged position. This was not a new development. For centuries already, the French church had been closely allied with the secular powers: the crown, the privileged feudal nobility, and kindred ancient institutions. Together they formed the "establishment" in pre-revolutionary France.

The social and financial advantages of that arrangement were considerable. Like the nobles, and in spite of its enormous landed wealth, the church itself was exempt from taxation, but it had the power to tax the rest of the population: it imposed the general church tax and it was able to exact feudal dues from the peasants living on its lands. It is not surprising that the church was seen as both part and pillar of an oppressive social system, and neither is it surprising that it shared in the fate of that system when the Revolution broke out. The French church was destroyed, together with the monarchy and the feudal aristocracy.

### Revenge and disestablishment

The anticlerical and anti-Christian reaction, although in its more militant phase it lasted for only a few years, was nevertheless persistent. During the first years of the Revolution monasteries were closed and church lands confiscated. At the time of the Terror a more radical process of de-Christianization started. Churches were destroyed or requisitioned, many members of the clergy and of religious orders were killed, for a time an alternative religion (that of the goddess of Reason) was instituted, and various other measures were taken to eradicate all traces of Christianity. They included the replacement of the Christian calendar with a revolutionary one, the introduction of a ten-day week, and the renaming of holidays and streets that had originally been named after Christian saints and martyrs.

After the Terror a reaction set in, and under Napoleon attempts were made to normalize the relations with the church and the papacy. The Roman Catholic church was restored, but it lost many powers to the secular government. Eventually, church and state would be separated. Under Napoleon freedom of religion to non-Roman Catholics, which had been granted earlier by a number of moderate governments, was again guaranteed. This universal freedom of religion and the disestablishment of the church are among the positive developments coming in the wake of the revolutionary upheavals. That was true not only in France, but also in other West-European countries. The measures did not, however, reverse or halt the process of

**PSALM 2**

Strasbourg, 1539/Lyons, 1548

1. Why do the rest-less hea-then mad-ly rage?  
 What haugh-ty schemes are they in vain con-triv-ing?  
 The kings and rul-ers of the earth en-gage  
 In rash at-tempts to plot their emp-ty striv-ing.  
 They stand pre-pared, they all con-spire to-geth-er  
 A-gainst the LORD and His a-noint-ed King.  
 "Let us," they say, "tear loose and break their fet-ters,  
 Cast off their chains, their shack-les from us fling."

secularization. It continued, and its effects, too, were felt in the rest of the western world.

### The new society

When considering the fruits of this process of secularization, we can distinguish two kinds. On the one hand there was the development of the modern social and political ideologies, which were to fill the emptiness left by the rejection of Christianity. They included such pseudo-religions as revolutionary utopianism, socialism, nationalism, and whatever other -ism may have arisen in this post-Christian age, promising mankind redemption and a restoration of paradise.

These are not, however, the only fruits. The new spirit also manifests itself in ways that appear less utopian (and are therefore perhaps less noticeable), but that are equally destructive of Christianity. Among these is what might be called the horizontalization of existence. A society built on secular foundations nourishes the belief that man has no destiny beyond the present life, and that it is therefore incumbent upon him to find fulfilment in this earthly existence. An interesting development is noticeable here. At a time when some of the pseudo-religions (such as revolutionary utopianism, and in some areas perhaps even nationalism) are declining, the striving for

earthly well-being and self-fulfilment appears to be intensifying — witness the increasing demand in our days for legalized abortion and euthanasia, the new sexual morality, an increasingly hedonistic materialism, and similar social evils.

This development shows how widely the revolutionary spirit has spread: the evils mentioned in the preceding paragraph abound also in those countries that traditionally rejected the more radical revolutionary ideologies. And it underlines once again the destructiveness of this spirit. The number of abortions alone in any one of these western nations far surpasses that of all the victims of the Terror.

What conclusion is to be drawn? The background of the French Revolution (and similarly that of the later communist and fascist ones in Russia, Germany and elsewhere) teaches Christians that the church may not ally itself with the powers that be. And the nature of these revolutions shows them that in withstanding the revolutionary spirit it will not do to concentrate on its manifestations only. That is no doubt necessary, but it is not enough. The origins, the roots, also must be exposed. More than a hundred years ago Groen van Prinsterer coined the maxim, *Against the Revolution, the Gospel*. That message is as relevant today, in what is being called the post-revolutionary age, as it was a century or even two centuries ago.

## Ebenezer — a meditation

Last night our beloved church building burned up and down and out, together with the annex of a quarter of a million dollars that just had come under its roof.

A steadily growing part of the congregation stood in the night around the blazing inferno with pain in their hearts. They experienced — and that experience is still growing — that a building, a church building anyway, is more than just a building.

One could, when the day started and ran its course, hear voices talking about the many weddings that had taken place in "Ebenezer," hundreds of them. "All our children were baptized there." "My parents' funeral service was held there."

Called to mind were the first years that were, for a fast-growing congregation, years of wanderings; growing out of rented halls, or even sent out, because we had started to collect money for our own school . . . .

How glad we were when finally we could buy property from Tommy Smith; when we started services in our own basement, even a Saturday school!

When we had nothing yet, we had something of the first love. People had a mind to build. Every brick and block and

two-by-four represented that love and took a bite out of the low income of the new immigrants.

The name 'Ebenezer' was put on the cornerstone, laid by my dear wife Joan who laid that cornerstone while the choir sang, and since has walked the half-hour route to the Dynes Road every Lord's Day.

The first use we made of the completed building, in our eyes a front hall of the heavenly sanctuary, was for the funeral of a dear sister, wife and mother of young children, who had so eagerly looked forward to "our own church."

From there on I stood in that pulpit for many years. There came others, yes, but it was "my pulpit" since the first Sunday, and on that last one, a day before the fire.

The morning sermon on 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 and 27 ended with, "You are a member, remember!" The last word of an urgent appeal to use all our God-given gifts "for the common good."

The afternoon sermon on Lord's Day 23 concluded with the glorious gospel of the "great cover-up," "Your ugly sinful life is covered, covered by the blood of Jesus Christ!"



*The back of the church . . .*

Now I stood there, in that black hole. At my feet some leftovers of molten organ pipes. In the front: nothing left of the pulpit. Sister Lena, living next door, had seen the hungry flames eating up the pews, row after row; a sight she will never forget.

The interior, pulpit and pews, has all gone up in stinking smoke.

What else can one do but pray that the preaching and hearing of God's Word may not have gone up in smoke too?

Thus we are, in a way, back at the beginning. We still have our 'centre' in heaven, but on earth right now we have no centre any more for our congregational life and all its activities.

Every time there are members staring at the empty hull, their thoughts multiply. They wonder what the LORD wanted to say to us through this calamity.

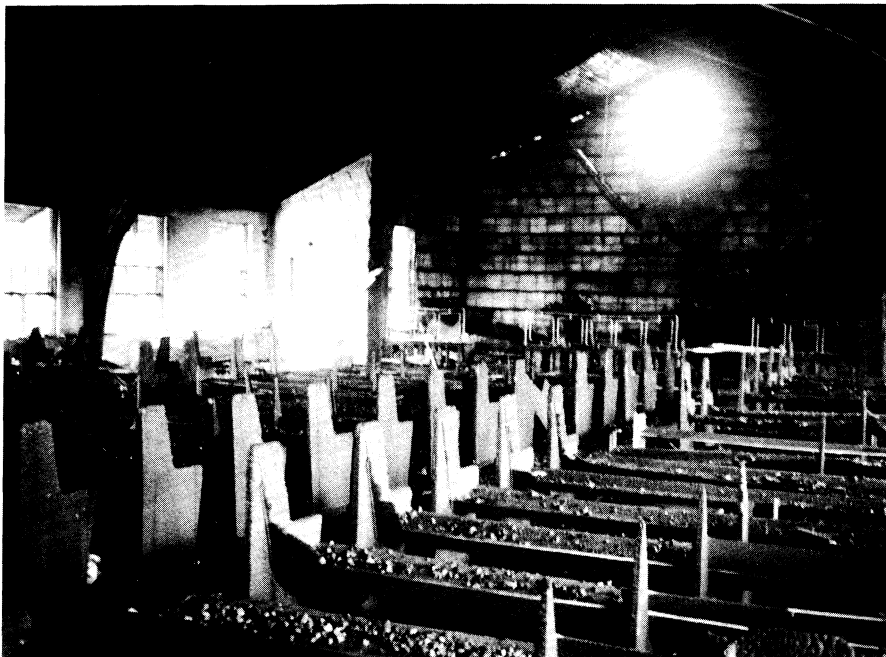
Some ask, "did the LORD punish us for our sins, for our lack of love, our dissensions?"

It is gladdening the heart, when every one says that from now on we should all pull together, and show again some of that first love. But a punishment?

Yes, for us all it has been written, "Thou wast a forgiving God to them, but an avenger of their wrong doings," Psalm 99:8. But the last word that sounded forth from that 'late' pulpit was, "All your sins are covered!" Jesus Christ warned against reading God's will off the facts. The fire marshall concluded that it was an accident. "Those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell and killed them, do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others who dwelt in Jerusalem?" Luke 13:4.

On that 'last Sunday' it was suggested that our vacancy may be a golden opportunity for the unity of the body in the variety of members and gifts.

— continued on page 473



*The interior — after the fire*

# Welcome to Neerlandia — Rev. Wieske family

On September 1, 1989 the Neerlandia congregation welcomed the Rev. Wieske family with an evening of entertainment and fellowship.

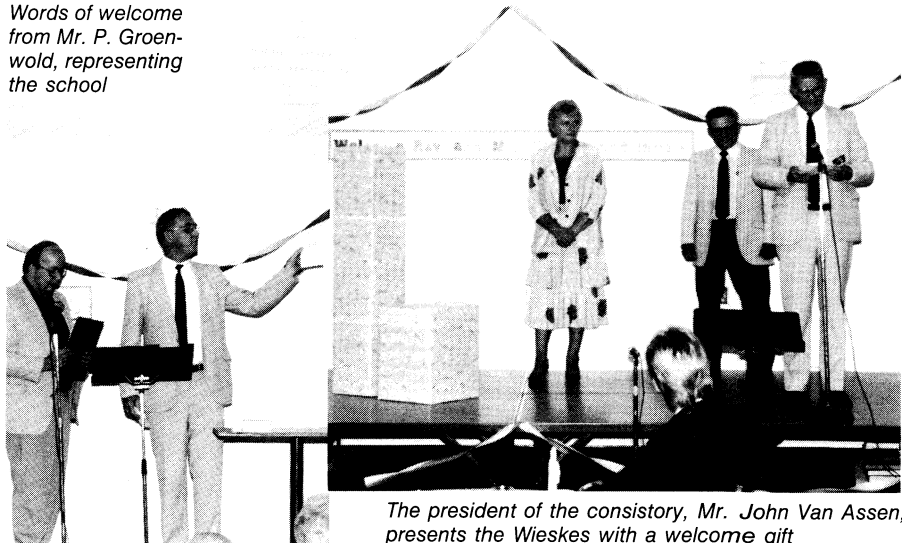
The master of ceremonies, Mr. D. Barendregt, opened the evening by reading Ephesians 1:3-12 followed by prayer and the singing of Ps. 103:1,3,8. In his welcoming remarks the MC mentioned that Lincoln had forgotten something in their farewell evening and called Rev. Wieske forward. He was presented with five white golf balls that can be seen in mud to offset the coloured ones presented by Lincoln that show up in snow.

Br. J. Van Assen came forward on behalf of the consistory and expressed thankfulness that the Lord has again granted us a minister of the Word and thus shows to us His faithfulness. Also that Rev. Wieske might proclaim that Word to this congregation with boldness and that the Lord might grant to him courage, strength and wisdom for his work.

The Terpsma family sang a song directed to both minister and congregation that there might be a bond of love between us because of our love for the Lord and His church.

Next the Women's Society "Search The Scriptures" presented a comparison of some church members to book titles.

*Words of welcome from Mr. P. Groenwold, representing the school*



*The president of the consistory, Mr. John Van Assen, presents the Wieskes with a welcome gift*

On behalf of the school staff, Mr. P. Groenwold gave the Wieske family a number of tips on life in Neerlandia.

Two Young People's groups entertained us with their comical presentations. "A diamond in the rough" gave the Wieske family some insight into the lives of church members.

The church choir squeezed in some extra practices and ably presented three songs for the evening.

A welcome gift of a floor lamp was presented to Rev. and Mrs. Wieske by the consistory on behalf of the congregation.

In closing, Rev. Wieske thanked everyone for the gift and the enjoyable evening and expressed the wish that the Lord might grant us strength as minister and as congregation that His work might go on unhindered. We then sang Hymn 65:1,2,3 and Rev. Wieske closed in prayer. C

## Ebenezer — continued from page 472

The roaring flames in the night may also turn out a blessing. Now we will have the opportunity to show that the 'old spirit' is still there. The Holy Spirit is faithful.

If firstfruits become again 'first-fruits' instead of 'Last Leftovers,' there will be no financial problems, not for the church, not for the schools.

Having lost our centre, we need other facilities. But that will not be a problem.

Before the day, after that night, was over, a number of other downtown churches had already offered their hospitality. They obviously are good neighbours.

This calamity has set us a big step back. Right now everyone hopes and many pray that, in the end, it may prove to be a step forward in faith and hope and love; these three abide, but the greatest of these is love.

Pray for us that this love may be a tangible reality in the Ebenezer congregation, and while you are at it, do not forget to pray the same for your own congregation.

Burlington, Oct. 3rd, 1989.

G. VanDooren

### P.S.

A day later the daily paper came with a large colour picture of the 'black hole.' In front it shows a half-burned open Bible lying in a pew. It looks like our own pew.

The Bible lies open at Psalm 77 and 78. Is that a "message?"

"I will call to mind the deeds of the LORD."

"... tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD ... that they arise and tell them to their children."

The Bible is still open!

V.D.



# Installation of Rev. M. Van Luik

By Linda Bredenhof

It was on Sunday, August 27, 1989 that Rev. M. VanderWel conducted the worship service in which Rev. M. Van Luik was installed as minister of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Church of Chilliwack.

Rev. VanderWel used as text 2 Cor. 4:1-6. The theme of the sermon was: Paul's testimony about being a minister of the Word in the glorious dispensation of the Spirit. We hear him speak about:

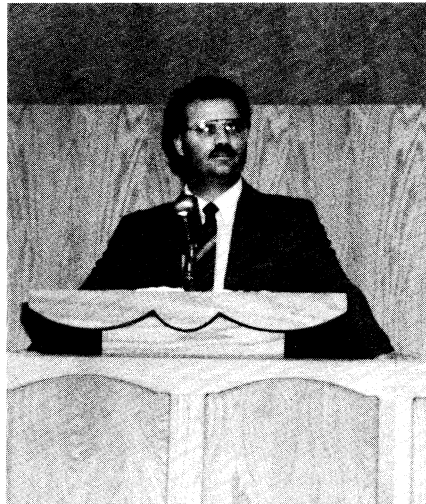
1. The privilege of this ministry
2. The self-recommendation of this ministry
3. The splendor of this ministry.

In the afternoon service Rev. M. Van Luik had his inaugural sermon. As text he chose 2 Cor. 2:14-17. The theme of the sermon was: The ministry of the Gospel by men is the aroma of Christ to God. We see:

1. This ministry is a triumphant ministry
2. This ministry is the aroma of Christ to life or death
3. This ministry must be a ministry done in sincerity.

The Welcome Evening for Rev. and Mrs. Van Luik and their daughter Lorraine was held on Wednesday evening, August 30, 1989. The Master of Ceremonies for the evening, br. P. VanWoudenberg, suggested we begin the evening with the singing of Psalm 73:1 and 8 after which he read Psalm 111. In the prayer which followed he thanked the Lord that He had answered our prayers and filled a vacancy of two years. Br. P. VanWoudenberg then officially welcomed the Van Luik's and also extended a special welcome to Rev. Van Luik's parents. He then shared a secret with us: Rev. Van Luik was a man of determination, for already in Grade 1 he had expressed the desire to become a minister! Br. G. Breukelman, on behalf of the consistory of Chilliwack, welcomed Rev. Van Luik and expressed the desire that with our new pastor and shepherd God's name would be glorified and our church grow into maturity.

Br. Breukelman then read several letters of congratulations. The first letter was from Rev. C. Van Spronsen who, on behalf of the church at Vernon, extended sincere congratulations on the happy occasion. A letter from our former minister, Rev. C. Bouwman and family was read



Rev. M. Van Luik in the pulpit

wherein he extended congratulations for the gracious gift God had given to us. A letter was read from Rev. and Mrs. Van Oene who with regrets that they could not attend the welcome evening, expressed congratulations from the heart that we had received a minister of the Word again to serve the upbuilding of the Lord's church in Chilliwack. Best wishes were

also relayed from a phone call from another former minister of Chilliwack, Rev. Tiggelaar and his wife.

Br. Breukelman then thanked all the ministers and "retired" ministers in the Fraser Valley for their willingness to preach the Word here, and especially Rev. VanderWel, Rev. VanOene and Rev. Van Delden for their help in providing catechism instruction.

Five delegates were then given an opportunity to speak a few words. Rev. J. Visscher, on behalf of the Classis Pacific and the church at Langley said that Chilliwack had finally "seen the light" and called a minister with the last name beginning with a "V." All the present ministers and retired ministers in the valley (and Lynden), except one, begin with a "V" and they either stay here for a long time or come back to the valley. (For one evening we'll call Rev. Moesker, Rev. "Van" Moesker!) He also expressed his hope and prayer that Rev. Van Luik would be a long time in Chilliwack and would receive much support from the congregation. Rev. VanderWel extended congratulations and thankfulness that the Lord had once again given provision. Rev. G.H. Visscher then expressed the wish that Rev. Van Luik's time here would



Welcomed by the Chilliwack choir



From l-r: Rev. and Mrs. Van Luik, Mrs. and Mr. H. Van Luik

be a fruitful one with good harmony between the pastor and congregation. Rev. (Van?) Moesker then passed on the helpful advice to be prepared for the "different" traffic patterns in the valley (many dead end streets) and the very "unusual" weather we have here. He also stressed that even though traffic and weather was "different" here, people were basically the same and had the same need for an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ. Rev. VanderBoom expressed the hope and prayer that the Lord would grant His blessing on Rev. Van Luik's time here in Chilliwack.

Sr. R. Hoeksema on behalf of the Women's Society, "The Lord is our Refuge" welcomed the Van Luik's after

which the members sang a song about various characteristics of the Chilliwack church and surroundings. The choir, under the direction of sr. H. Tams, raised their voices and sang three songs, "Let All Things now Living," "We Plow the Fields," and "The Lord is King." The chairman of the school board br. J. Dykstra then explained to our new pastor and his wife the "who," "what" and "why" of the John Calvin School and explaining the future of it with the "15 year plan," he then expressed congratulations and a sincere welcome to the Fraser Valley. The congregation then learned much "news" by watching the Young People's Society enact a news report from the CBC (Chilliwack Broadcasting

Corporation!) which included a personal interview with the Reverend and his wife!

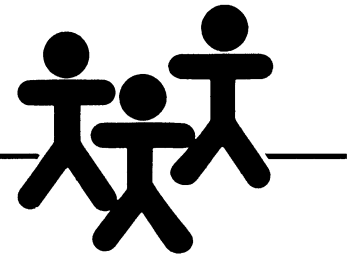
As it was time to stretch our legs, the congregation was asked to rise and sing the National Anthem. The Boys and Girls Club, with the help of their leaders, br. J. Breukelman and his wife, then had their turn describing the various occupations of each family in the congregation and marking where they lived on a large map of the area, a map which Rev. Van Luik was encouraged to use. The president of the Men's Society "Thy Will be Done," br. B. Vandeburgt then welcomed the Van Luik's to Chilliwack and expressed the desire that we all might grow in love and faith. The congregation was then asked to guess the names of each family in the congregation from a picture riddle.

Finally Rev. Van Luik came forward and expressed his appreciation for the enjoyable evening and said he looked forward to a fruitful relation with the church at Chilliwack. The congregation then sang Hymn 60:1 and 5 after which Rev. Van Luik closed in prayer asking the Lord that the congregation might be built up and stimulated to worship and serve Him, that he as ambassador might proclaim the message of reconciliation and that there might be a harmonious relationship between ministers and churches so that the Lord alone be glorified.

All were then invited to go downstairs and enjoy some refreshments and welcome the Van Luik's personally if they had not already done so. ❏

## SCHOOL CROSSING

By A. Witten



# Reformed Education — Necessary

During the school year, parents, students and teachers alike on occasion reflect on the purpose of Reformed education. The following excerpt "Reformed Education — Necessary" by Rev. P. Kingma appeared in "Pro Ecclesia," the bulletin of the American Reformed Church at Grand Rapids and is shared in this column because it highlights the relationship between Scripture and Science and is helpful in describing our purpose.

We learned that the book of Dr. Howard Van Till, *The Fourth Day*, has

been written for the purpose: to help teachers present the creation narrative in a scientifically responsible way. God's revelation of creation in Genesis is no more to be taken literally. It is no longer regarded as responsible and valid. The author of the book mentioned, argues for a six billion years old universe having started with a "Big Bang."

Adam and Eve were probably the offspring of "primitive" parents who supposedly evolved out of primordial slime of the earth along with all other

forms of life. This is how God "created" everything, namely, by evolution.

Evolution is the very slow process which took millions of years of upward movement from a primitive cell to the complex being man is today. But Psalm 33:6-12 reads as follows: "By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: He layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the

world stand in awe of Him. For *He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.* The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: He maketh the devices of the people of none effect. The counsel of the LORD standeth forever, the thoughts of His heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance."

While *Deism* taught that God made the world and *denied God's present power* whereby He upholds and governs all creatures so that nothing comes by chance but from His Fatherly hand, the new ideas of Van Till take into consideration that God "created" everything by evolution. God and evolution are combined. This is a form of *theistic evolution* which *denies God's creating power* by speaking His Word, and it is there, without a process of upward movement from a primitive cell over millions of years with regard to His creation of man.

Teachers and others agreeing with Van Till propagate his views and introduce them into "Christian" schools. These revolutionary ideas are rapidly gaining influence and acceptance. Children attending such schools will be exposed to these heresies. It will have an impact on how children view God the Creator, creation itself, their covenantal relationship to Him, the way of salvation by the last Adam, Jesus Christ, their service to the Lord, and their task in society.

Schools established as Christian schools are no longer Christian, when school boards and parents allow teachers to interpret Scripture scientifically instead of teaching science Scripturally. A whole new way of interpreting Scripture is developed. The so-called scientific approach to the Genesis account of the creation is only one application of the new hermeneutic. It makes a generation ready for the realm of the Antichrist, 2 Thess. 2, whose coming is after the working of satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in those who perish; because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

But we are bound to give thanks always to God for you brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: whereunto

He called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle. Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and *establish you in every good word and work*, 2 Thess. 2:9-17.


Reformed education means historically a return to an education of church people according to all Scripture given by inspiration of God, profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness that the man of God — parents, school boards and children of the church included — may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, 2 Tim. 3:16, 17. The church which binds its members to all the canonical books of the Bible as the only Word of God, for the foundation, regulation and confirmation of their faith shows its faithfulness in making parents promise to have the covenant children educated in and according to the true doctrine.

The Holy Spirit has written the *true and complete* doctrine for the foundation, regulation and confirmation of our faith, in the Holy Scriptures. The Holy Spirit has not only written the true and complete doctrine, but has also been promised to lead in *all* the truth of Scripture, by having people acknowledge that God's Word is the

truth and making them desirous to be educated in it, opening their minds for it and granting them understanding of it, Luke 24:44ff.; Eph. 1:15-19; Col. 1:9. The purpose of it is that the life of God's people, in its entirety, proves to be ruled by the true and complete doctrine of Holy Scripture, Col. 1:10 "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

Historically the word "Reformed" has been the confessional expression of being returned to the true and complete doctrine of the Holy Scriptures and of being regathered as church on that foundation by a restored preaching and teaching of it.

These regathered church people received insight in the necessity of Reformed education of the children of the Reformed churches, confederate in the unity of the true faith, and required this education to be given by parents and teachers in full harmony with the learned and adopted true and complete doctrine of Old and New Testament, confessed and safeguarded in Standards summarizing and defining the Truth to be believed and maintained for all of life. Teachings and views not in full agreement with these Standards used to be opposed and disciplined in church and school and homes. Faithful teachers whose Reformed doctrine was adorned by a godly living used to be hired to educate children of parents who, together with the teachers, were united in the true faith by confessional membership of the church professed to be true and faithful to the Word of God by parents and teachers.

Christians schools, erected by parents of churches differing in doctrine and historical evaluation of Christ's church-gathering work, were no longer teaching the complete truth of Scripture by purposely avoiding, by mutual agreement, differences in doctrine and silencing separation of churches. That avoidance and silence takes its toll in making covenant children confused towards their parents' church membership and exposes them to all winds of doctrine. The name "Reformed" has been removed or is usually not carried by a school established in the above-mentioned sense. The advice once given not to link a Christian school with the confessions of one instituted church has been followed by many parents who are members of a church that carries the name Reformed and have now their children taking in unscriptural teaching in church and school. 

## CHURCH NEWS



**CALLED TO:**  
Fergus, ON: Rev. P.G. Feenstra  
of Guelph, ON

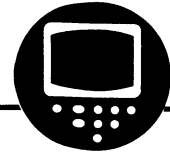
Edmonton (Providence), AB and  
Lincoln, ON: Rev. G.H. Visscher  
of Surrey, BC

**DECLINED TO:**  
London, ON: Rev. G. Nederveen  
of Brampton, ON

Fergus, ON and  
Winnipeg, MB: Rev. P.G. Feenstra  
of Guelph, ON

As of September 1989 the address of the Secretary of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches is: Rev. M. VanderWel, 33947 King Rd., RR 2, Abbotsford, B.C. V2S 4N2. Telephone (604) 853-0348





## of the meeting of the Board of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches held in Hamilton, Ontario, September 7, 1989.

Opening: The chairman, Rev. J. Mulder, opened the meeting with the reading of Romans 10:10-17. He led in prayer and welcomed the brothers.

Signing of the Declaration: The Declaration of Governors of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches was signed by the new members of the Board, appointed in agreement with the direction of Synod 1989. Rev. B.J. Berends was unable to be present. The new members who signed the Declaration are: Rev. J. Van Rietschoten, Rev. C. Van Spronson, br. A. Van Egmond, br. K. Veldkamp.

Agenda: The agenda was adopted.

Officers: The officers elected and appointed are: Rev. Cl. Stam: chairman; Rev. P. Kingma: vice-chairman; Rev. M. VanderWel: secretary; br. C. Heeringa: treasurer.

Rev. Mulder expressed his great appreciation for the work of the brothers who completed their office term. He spoke a word of farewell to the Board, and thanked the brothers for their support and cooperation of him during the years of his chairmanship of the Board. Rev. Mulder also thanked Dr. J. Faber for his work as Principal. The newly appointed chairman, Rev. Stam, addressed Rev. Mulder and thanked him for the special way of his chairmanship which was very beneficial for the members of the Board of Governors and for the College.

Minutes: The minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Board of September 8, 1988 were adopted after some corrections were made.

Executive Committee: The previous secretary, Rev. Stam, submitted his report on the correspondence. It had the attention of the Board. Rev. Cl. Stam was appointed as a member of the Convocation Committee.

Interview Reports: The following reports were favourably received re: interviews of the new students: 1. Alphonso D'Amoré; 2. Clarence John Vander Velde; 3. James Slaa; 4. John Van Woudenberg; 5. Archibald M. Allison; 6. John L. Van Popta. The Board recommends that the Senate admit these students to the College.

Academic Committee: This committee reported its various considerations and activities presented to the Board in the minutes of its meeting of September 6, 1989.

Appointments: The Board made the following appointments: Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam — Principal and Librarian from January 1, 1990 to August 31, 1993. Prof. J. Geertsema — Vice-Principal from July 1, 1990 to August 31, 1993.

The Board took note of the appointments of: Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam as academic dean; Prof. J. Geertsema as registrar and corresponding clerk; Prof. Dr. N.H. Gootjes as recording clerk and dean of students from August 1, 1990 to August 31, 1993.

The Board reappointed Prof. L. Selles as a member of the Senate for a period of three years.

The Board appointed Prof. Dr. J. Faber as a member of the Senate for a period of three years commencing January 1, 1990 to August 31, 1993.

Finance and Property Committee: The Seventh Annual Report (for the period June 1988 to May 1989) of the Finance and Property Committee was received. Financial statements were submitted, and the budget for 1989 was approved. The churches are assessed on a \$8.00 per communicant member increase according to the churches calendar year.

The Board took note of the auditor's report and appointed new auditors.

Tuition fees were set for the academic year 1989-1990.

Convocation Committee: This committee reports that arrangements have been made for the 1989 convocation, and also for the 1990 one.



Visitors' Reports: The following visitors, appointed to attend the lectures at the College, presented their reports: Rev. Cl. Stam and Rev. P. Kingma who visited the lectures on Tuesday and Wednesday, November 15, and 16, 1988; Rev. M. VanderWel and Rev. J. Visscher. They made their classroom visits from February 1-3, 1989. These reports were received with gratitude for the Reformed instructions given at the College.

The Senate's Report: Each professor reported on his work, the subjects taught, and the assignments given. The progress of the students was noted. The lecture schedule for 1989-1990 was adopted.

The Principal's Report: The Principal, Prof. Dr. J. Faber, submitted a report on his activities. It was received and noted.

The Board approved with gratitude the establishing of The FABER-HOLWERDA BURSARY. The purpose of this bursary is to make available additional help for needy students at our Theological College.

The Librarian's Report: The Board took note of this report.

The Registrar's Report: This report was gratefully received. This report mentioned the several students who had requested admittance.

Visitors' Schedule: The schedule for the academic year 1989-1990 was made. The following governors will visit the College: Rev. J. Van Rietschoten and Rev. P. Kingma in the fall of 1989; Rev. B.J. Berends and Rev. C. Van Spronson in the spring of 1990.

Press Release: The press release was read, and with necessary corrections, adopted.

Closing: The chairman, Rev. Cl. Stam, addressed Prof. Dr. J. Faber with a view to the termination of his office as Principal and in consideration of his retirement as Professor. Rev. Stam thanked Prof. Faber for all his work at the College of the churches in the service of the Lord Jesus Christ. In response, Prof. Dr. J. Faber expressed his tremendous joy he always had in his lecturing of the students during the years gone by.

Rev. Stam led the meeting in prayer of thanksgiving to God Who received the praise for His blessings and gifts of grace bestowed upon the school of and for the churches.

For the Board,  
P. KINGMA

# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



## Dear Busy Beavers,

"What would you like for breakfast?"

Is that what your Mom asks you?

How about this:

"Can we order pizza?"

"Aw, Mom! I'd rather have my carrots RAW."

Do you hear things like that at your house too?

We can pick what we like to eat. We have it so good we can choose. Sometimes we say "No, thank you" to something very nice!

Are we happy with all the good things around us?

Are we thankful?

What do you think?

"Oh give thanks unto the Lord," the Bible tells us.

Paul says to the Christians at Colossae "And be thankful."

Just like that . . . "be thankful."

The Lord is so good to us He deserves our thanks and praise.

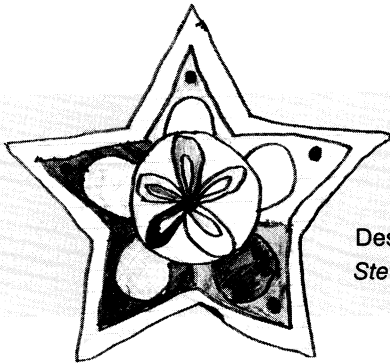
Want to know a secret? When we say from our heart "Thank you, Lord!" then we are HAPPY.

\* \* \*

Maybe as a reminder you would like to make a Thanksgiving poster for your diningroom, or for your kitchen bulletin board.

How about this text?

"O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever." Psalm 136:1



Design by Busy Beaver  
Steven Van de Velde

One of the Busy Beavers from Neerlandia wrote to tell about a car accident that happened there. Here is a part of what she wrote:

"... Donald Van Leeuwen ... was taken to Edmonton. His leg was broken from the hip down so his leg will be in traction for six weeks . . ."

Do you know what I think, Aunt Betty? I think that since Donald is a member of the Busy Beaver Club, other Busy Beavers should make cards or pictures for him. I think he would really like that and it would really cheer him up. His address is: Box 24, Neerlandia, Alberta T0G 1R0."

Yes, I think this Busy Beaver has a great idea!

I hope many of you will send Busy Beaver Donald Van Leeuwen a card or a picture (or a puzzle!) very SOON. The address is written in the letter above.



## FROM THE MAILBOX

Sounds to me as if you had a really good holiday, Kerri Spoelstra. Congratulations on all those prizes you won! Too bad you didn't tell me what your sandcastle was like. Bye for now, Kerri.

Write again soon. Thank you for the word search.

How is school going, Michelle Peters? And how did you like the welcome evening for your new minister? I think you had a good birthday, Michelle! How did your Opa's fishing go?

Hello, Leanne Beukema. Thank you for the picture and the puzzles. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy them. Did your Opa and Oma have a good visit, Leanne?

Did you enjoy your outing to Peaceful Bay, Jocelyn t'Hart? And have you read your "Laura books" yet? You will love them! It sure seems strange you'll have "summer" holidays in December, Jocelyn! Enjoy them! Thank you for the riddles.

Hello, Francine Van Woudenberg. It was good to hear from you again. I see you are a good puzzler. Keep up the good work! And tell me when you get a pen pal, please, Francine.

Busy Beavers, who would like to exchange letters with Busy Beaver Francine Van Woudenberg? She would like a pen pal. You can write to her at this address:

Francine Van Woudenberg (age 8½)  
RR 4  
Osgoode, Ontario K0A 2W0



## COMPUTER RIDDLES

### For Computer Fans

By Busy Beaver Michelle Peters

1. Do computers like human beings?
2. What's a computer's favourite sport?
3. What did the computer's belated birthday card say?
4. What did the computer say to the bank teller?
5. What does a computerized frog say?
6. What do you get if you cross a computer with a stereo speaker?
7. What do you get when you cross a computer with a rabbit?

(Answers below)