



Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 39, No. 6

March 16, 1990

The text and the sermon

By C.J. de Ruijter¹

This is the third of a series of five articles dealing with the sermon and what we may expect from it. It pays attention to the question, *What is the sermon about?*

Usually the text is indicated on the psalm board in the church. If the sermon is to be actual ministration of the Word of God, then its contents must be determined by a portion of that Word. Fortunately, in Reformed churches it is self-evident that the sermon deals with the text indicated on the board. There are several aspects related to the sermon text which are of particular importance to the listener.

The whole Bible

The whole Bible forms the basis for the preaching. Since one sermon can in no way do justice to all of Scripture, we limit ourselves to a portion, the sermon text. This does mean that we should not lose sight of the whole Bible. It is indeed true that the congregation may expect that all of God's Word is ministered to her. Of course, no minister will be able to do this fully; not even a lifetime is sufficient for this. It does mean, that the selection of the sermon text is not a matter of the minister's private choice. Certainly, every week he selects texts for his sermons, but he must consider and do justice to all of Scripture. Therefore we may expect that the minister adopts a guideline which helps him to organize the material for his sermons in such a way that he takes into account the whole Bible.

This can be done in a variety of ways. Two such possible frameworks to organize sermons are rather obvious: the Christian calendar and the Heidelberg Catechism. Each in its own way suggests an organizing principle for the selection of material for the sermons.

The Christian calendar

With the term *the Christian calendar* we mean the cycle of Christian feast days which commemorate important events of the history of salvation. The Church Order regulates this in Article 53:

Each year the Churches shall, in the manner decided upon by the consistory, commemorate the birth, death, resurrection, and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as His outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

This instruction of the Church Order provides a natural way in which the material for the sermons may be organized from Christmas to Pentecost. The principle which is used here is the history of salvation. Obviously, many of these sermons will be based on the gospels. It is not without importance that we have received four gospels in the Bible which relate the facts of the history of salvation in detail. This is obviously a central point in the Bible. Therefore, we may expect to find this reflected in the preaching. We add, though, that it is not reasonable to expect a Christmas sermon on Luke 2 every year. Although this chap-

ter contains a central point in the history of Christ's birth, the Bible has more to say about it in other passages. We may expect to hear that as well.

The importance of the Christian calendar has been questioned in the Reformed churches. Opponents have often cited the exaggerated emphasis on the cycle of feast days. In other denominations, each Sunday between November and June is given a different character. That is too much of a good thing. A varied arrangement of sermon topics based on the Christian calendar will help to make the congregation familiar with the significance of Christ's birth and work on earth. This will help to foster in the hearts of the believers the longing for His return. That is precisely what we may expect from a sermon.

The Old Testament

Using the order of the Christian calendar will result in many sermons based on texts chosen from the New Testament, although appropriate passages from the Old Testament may be selected as well. This will be the case particularly in the period between Christmas and Easter.

However, this practice should not result in an overemphasis of the New Testament at the cost of the Old Testament. The New Testament is not available separately! It receives its meaning and significance from the Old Testament. Throughout the centuries, this insight has protected the church against many heresies. Therefore, it must bear fruit also in the preaching, otherwise the congregation does not learn to understand the significance of the interdependence of the Old and the New Testaments. It is important that this is emphasized today when the unity of the history of God's salvation is under attack from various sides. With the help of preaching based on the Old Testament, the congregation must learn to recognize clearly the unity of the Bible. This means that throughout the remainder of the year we may expect many sermons from the Old Testament. The second half of the year is a good time for that because of the absence of feast days.

Of course, we cannot and do not want to be prescriptive. (I value the personal privilege of choosing the text for the sermon.) However, the congregation may expect that in the longer term she receives systematic preaching from the Old Testament. The consistory may also speak to its minister about that. We believe that we have received the Bible because in it God describes at length the whole manner of worship which He requires of us.² Therefore, this confessional insight demands that the preaching deals with the whole Bible, the Old and New Testament.

If certain books of the Bible remain closed on the pulpit, the congregation will be all too readily inclined to accept a much thinner Bible than the one entrusted to us by the Lord.

Planning

From this discussion follows the obvious conclusion that a sermon text cannot be chosen haphazardly. Selecting such a text requires planning. This is already implied by the instructional character of the sermon.³ Every teacher who takes his work seriously uses a plan for his teaching because instruction requires structure and continuity. Since instruction from the Bible has the same characteristics, we may expect that a sermon also satisfies these demands. Therefore I do not believe in selecting sermon texts each week on the basis of certain events or needs in the congregation. This would show an overvaluing of the direct instructional character of the sermon. (I will come back to this point in the following article which will deal with the relevance of the sermon)

The Heidelberg Catechism

The Heidelberg Catechism provides us with an extraordinary method to arrange the content of the sermons systemat-

“To achieve this, it must become clear that the text of the sermon is a window on the whole Bible....”

ically. The material is organized on the basis of the confession of the church. At times, people dispute whether a section of the catechism, a Lord's Day, can be the text for a sermon. The argument is that a sermon should be ministering of God's Word, while the catechism is the word of men. This is a false dilemma. The church has been diligent to indicate where these doctrines have come from. The church was able to formulate its confession by listening carefully to the Scriptures. When a sermon is based on the catechism, then the Bible is opened at all those places which the church has read in connection with the element of doctrine as summarized in that particular Lord's Day.

At this point I do not need to elaborate on the fact that we may expect regular preaching based on the catechism. I note here that the division of the catechism into fifty-two Lord's Days does not mean that the minister must complete the full cycle of the catechism in each calendar year. That would mean that a large part of the congregation will regularly miss the sermons dealing with the sacraments (because of the holidays!).

Futher, the catechism does not provide an exhaustive treatment of the Christian doctrine. For example, much more could be said about God's election than may be done within the context of a catechism sermon. Since we confess that this doctrine must be taught to the congregation⁴, we can expect that the sermon regularly demands our attention for this doctrine.

The text as a window

So far we have only considered the choice of the text. That is only the beginning. How the text is worked out determines the whole sermon. Ultimately the sermon shall inform the congregation about her God, and shall minister His grace in such a way that it will become visible in the life of the congregation.

To achieve this, it must become clear that the text of the sermon is a window on the whole Bible, and in this way opens the way to God through His Word.

This means, very concretely, that the text must be explained carefully. Preaching is not a discourse on a variety of topics. It is the pointed speaking of God. To make this clear, the

HYMN 8

Song of Moses, Deuteronomy 32: 1-43 Imgo Gutzmer, 1933

1. Give ear, O heav - ens! Earth, hear my ad - dress!

Like gen - tle rain be all my teach - ing:

Like morn - ing dew up - on the grass.

Like spring-time show - ers be my preach - ing.

I will de - clare the LORD's great Name:

O praise our God and spread His fame.

He is the Rock of our sal - va - tion:

His ways are truth and eq - ui - ty.

Pro - claim His glo - ry with e - la - tion.

How right - eous and how just is He!

place and function of the text in the context of the whole sermon must be transparent, that is, clear and understandable. This is the first thing we may expect from the exposition of the text. If this is the case, then it will be obvious that the text was not selected because the minister wanted to get a particular message across, but because the Word of God must be ministered to the congregation. The preacher may, indeed, be tempted to do this. He might want to make a particular point and therefore select a suitable text. But then he ends up hiding his message in the sermon, while the question is ignored whether the text really says what the minister wants it to say. Thus the danger becomes real that the text is no longer a window on the message of God, but a vehicle for the ideas and opinions of the minister.

We may expect, therefore, that the sermon is faithful to the text. That means that the sermon shall put into words specific aspects of God's salvation about which the text speaks. Only in this way can the sermon be instrumental in bringing the congregation to Christ. And that is what we may expect from a sermon in the first place.

The question will undoubtedly arise at this point: What about the relevance of the sermon for today? That important question will be discussed in the next article.

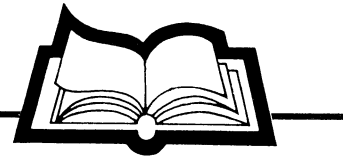
1 De Ruijter, C.J. *De tekst en de preek*. DE REFORMATIE 64/13, December 24, 1988. Translated with permission by T.M.P. VanderVen.

2 Belgic Confession, Article 7: *The Sufficiency of Holy Scripture*.

3 See the previous article, *Pastor and Teacher in the Pulpit*.

4 The Canons of Dort, I, 14: *How election is to be taught*.





By J. De Jong

"And He said to them, 'Go and tell that fox, behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I finish My course. Nevertheless I must go on My way today and tomorrow and the day following, for it cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem'."

Luke 13:32, 33

Outfoxing the Fox

In one of His more poignant expressions the Lord Jesus, after hearing from some Pharisees that Herod Antipas wanted to kill Him, refers to him as a fox, and then outlines to him the way of the coming of the Messianic kingdom. Herod was known as a crafty man, but the Lord Jesus focuses specifically on his crafty attempts to oppose the gospel. Did Herod really want to kill Him? It is generally believed that he was only trying to get the Lord Jesus out of his territory, because he no longer wanted his subjects to be stirred up in any way. Apparently he also wished to see a sign done by Him, and thus could not have been fully decided about Jesus' fate, Luke 23:8. So he arranged to have this rumour come to Jesus' ears.

On the other hand, his conscience was still tormented due to his murder of John the Baptist. One can assume that he also would not have objected to Jesus being put to death, and this alternative must have occupied his mind. However, he wanted it done by *stealth*, without anyone suspecting him of such a deed. He was an opportunist, and sought his enemy craftily. He did not mind engaging the Pharisees — renowned enemies of Jesus — to harass the Lord concerning His movements.

This is the picture the gospels give of Herod. He was by all accounts a tormented man, undecided in his approach to Jesus. John the Baptist had undoubtedly told him about the One who was to come, the Messiah whose shoes he was not worthy to untie. John had even inquired about the Messiah while he was in prison, and Jesus had sent messengers to Him with words similar to those here directed to Herod. He said, "Go and tell John what you see and hear: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. And blessed is he who takes no offense at Me." Matthew 11:4, 5. We can assume that John did not hide all this good news from Herod and we know that Herod listened to him gladly, Mark 6:20. All this only served to compound his problems, and to turn him into an inwardly restless, double-minded, and unpredictable man — a man so obsessed with guilt that he could do anything. He really was a fox, and a dangerous one at that.

Yet this response of the Lord Jesus is designed to torment him even more. For he hears that the Messianic reign has begun! He had long sought to see Jesus, Luke 9:9, and had never yet seen Him. He was also driven by many fears and superstitions, supposing that John the Baptist had risen from the dead. He sought for peace of mind, but all the works of the Messiah only heightened his anxiety.

The response of the Lord Jesus shows how Herod is caught in his own craftiness. For, much as he wanted to, he would not be able to get rid of the Lord Jesus by his schemes, or make Him a prisoner in his court. Jesus was on a *divine* timetable, and God had determined the way He had to go. And no one could dislodge Him from His fixed purpose to follow the timetable given to Him by the Father! The Pharisees said: Edom wishes to destroy Israel's great Son. But the Father had said: The *elder* shall serve the *younger*. This prophecy governs Jesus' message to Herod. For He would not be a victim of Herod's schemes, but would manifest His triumph over Herod in the execution of His mission. He even exposes the deceit of his would-be helpers, who later became His executioners. "It cannot be that a prophet should perish away from Jerusalem!"

Precisely the mention of Jerusalem shows how Jesus outsmarts His opponents. For Herod represented the hostility of the Idumean dynasty against the Messianic promise. But Jesus was not to die at the hand of a son of Esau. For He was not appointed to win a victory over the children of Esau alone. He was appointed to win the victory for the Gentiles who later would believe in Him. Therefore He was to die not in the jurisdiction of Herod, but in the jurisdiction of the representative of the world-ruler, Pontius Pilate. Pilate represents not Esau, but the rule of man estranged from God. Jesus was not only a son of *Israel*, He was also a son of *Adam*. Thus He had to triumph not over one race, but over the whole world! His death had to take place in the public forum, before all the world. And Herod's final torment and defeat is seen in his alliance with this representative of the world government, Luke 23:12.

And how does Christ triumph? Not by worldly standards, but by fulfilling the demands of God's justice. He dies in *Jerusalem*, and so fulfils the Scriptures. For it is Israel's and Jerusalem's rejection of the gospel which brings light to the nations. So He disarmed principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in the cross, Colossians 1:15. This is the timetable of God's counsel of redemption which Jesus fulfils. He triumphs not just over Edom, but over a world of sin! The stone which the builders rejected becomes the head of the corner!

Here we see what kind of a Saviour we have. He destroys the wisdom of the wise and thwarts the cleverness of the clever, 1 Cor. 1:19. The gospel of the kingdom still makes its sovereign way in the world! He has condemned and renounced underhanded ways, and His Word proceeds by an open statement of the truth, proclaiming amnesty and life to all who believe. And still to us He says: Blessed is he who takes no offense at Me!"

□

Archives

By *W.W.J. VanOene*

For quite a while one question that was put to me has been waiting for a reply. Recently another question was added, and this made me decide to answer both.

The second question is being dealt with first. It is the question what should be kept in the archives, and then particularly the archives of the local church.

In Article 43 of our Church Order we provide that "The consistories and the major assemblies shall ensure that proper care is taken of the archives." There is, therefore, no doubt about it that the archives shall be kept. The question is "What should be in there?"

Perhaps it does not hurt to do a little advertising. To several of our members it is known that I have prepared a Guide to the Use of the Church Order, which is being corrected as far as language is concerned and which in due time will be published by Premier Printing. In answer to the question posed I let here follow what I wrote in connection with this article.

The history of the church is "made" and "written" by the local churches. It is there that faithfulness or unfaithfulness determine the course. It is there where the description of the history of the church in general begins.

For this reason it is of great importance that all documents and records be preserved and filed in good order. This importance is not realized by a large part of the membership, nor was it sufficiently realized by many churches in the past.

We are wondering how many consistories could produce all the minute books which were filled from the day of the church's institution on. In not a few instances there is a big gap, with one or more of these books having disappeared through negligence and forgetfulness. We then do not even mention copies of letters that were exchanged, of Acts of classes or regional synods.

In some instances it is difficult to determine which documents should be preserved for the future. Consistories receive whole stacks of mail, addressed to the church, which are not even worth to be taken to the meeting and should be discarded right away.

Without making any claim that the items to be mentioned constitute the whole of what is worth to be kept and pre-

served in the archives, we suggest that the following be found among them.

The minute books definitely should take the first place. It is not only necessary in order that previous decisions in a certain matter can be consulted if necessary, but also in order to prevent that matters which were dealt with before are raised again without substantial and new grounds for this being adduced. We recall that at least for the broader assemblies a provision for this was made in Art.33. It would be very beneficial if consistories abided by this rule as well.

Not all communications received are worth to find a place in the archives. Requests for support from all sorts of organizations may be discarded, as well as invitations to attend functions of non-ecclesiastical or ecclesiastical groups which consider the church to be one organization among many. Further there are communications from sister churches which are of no historical value, such as invitations to attend ordination or installation of ministers, anniversary celebrations, etc.

On the other hand, any letter or report dealing with consultations among

churches regarding differences or matters of mutual interest should be preserved. If, later on, the matter comes up again, previous consultations and conclusions will be very helpful in either preventing new discussions or shortening them considerably.

As for attestations, it is not necessary to keep all of them. By far the larger part can be discarded after the particulars such as church from which the member(s) came, their proper names and the dates of birth, baptism, profession of faith, and marriage have been properly entered into the books of the receiving church. The attestations to which this applies are those in which no special remarks are made regarding either the doctrine or the way of life of the member(s).

It appears to be prudent to keep all attestations in which something special had to be written about the brother or sister, either to elaborate on the "virtues" or to inform the sister churches of the "vices" of the member(s). Especially when discipline is involved, an attestation should not be discarded so that, if



Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd.
Winnipeg, MB

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: *J. Geertsema*
Coeditors: *K. Deddens, J. De Jong,*
C. Van Dam and W.W.J. VanOene

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

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

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE

MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5
Phone: (204) 663-9000 Fax: (204) 663-9202

| SUBSCRIPTION RATES | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|
| FOR 1990 | | |
| | Regular | Air |
| | Mail | Mail |
| Canada | \$26.00 | \$47.00 |
| U.S.A. U.S. Funds | \$28.00 | \$43.50 |
| International | \$38.00 | \$66.00 |

Advertisements: \$6.00 per column inch
Second class mail registration number 1025
ISSN 0383-0438

IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|---|-----|
| Editorial — The text and the sermon — <i>C.J. de Ruijter</i> | 118 |
| From the Scriptures — Outfoxing the Fox — <i>J. De Jong</i> | 120 |
| Archives — <i>W.W.J. VanOene</i> | 121 |
| League Day, October 18, 1989 — <i>Mrs. L. Dykema</i> | 124 |
| International — <i>W.W.J. VanOene</i> | 125 |
| News Medley — <i>W.W.J. VanOene</i> | 126 |
| Church News | 128 |
| Ray of Sunshine — <i>Mrs. J. Mulder</i> | 129 |
| School Crossing — <i>T.M.P. VanderVen</i> | 130 |
| Our Little Magazine — <i>Aunt Betty</i> | 131 |

necessary, it can be used for future reference. No objection to removal of such an attestation from the archives appears to exist if the member has passed away. Simply moving to another church is no reason for such removal, for the "new" consistory may wish to have more information about the brother or sister's past.

A consistory would act wisely when making definite rules about attestations so that it is not left up to one or two brothers to decide whether or not an attestation should be kept or destroyed.

Classical documents, too, should be preserved. Also in this case, however, discretion is needed. Provisional agendas and convocations to a classis or synod are not necessarily of historical value. Acts and reports, on the other hand, are, and are therefore to be kept. This applies to Acts and reports of all major assemblies. Copies of reports to the general synod, which are sent to the churches by order of the previous synod, are also important.

Herewith, however, we have crossed over to the archives of broader assemblies.

Major Assemblies

Although, as remarked at the beginning of this section, the history of the church is "made" or "written" by the local churches, it is of great importance what is discussed, decided, and done at broader assemblies. At those assemblies all the churches of a particular region are directly involved and influenced. For this reason it is mandatory that not only the Acts and the correspondence received and sent are deposited into the archives of classis, regional and general synods respectively, but that also the various reports by advisory committees be found therein.

The Acts contain decisions only, mostly with their substantiation in the form of considerations and conclusions. Only the decisions are binding, and for this reason one could argue that various reports which were prepared and submitted either by committees appointed by the previous broader assembly or by advisory committees at the assembly itself might be readily eliminated from the archives, since they are not binding upon the churches anyway. It would, however, amount to a great loss if this was done. Much can be learned from such reports and the way in which the committees arrived at specific recommendations. In case such recommendations are taken over by the broader assembly, the historical value of the reports is even enhanced. We are thankful for the preservation of the various documents produced at the National Synod of

Dordrecht 1618-1619 which resulted in the formulation of the Canons of Dort.

If a broader assembly takes a wrong decision in accordance with the report and recommendations of an advisory committee, it will be easier to point out where the reasoning went wrong when the reports of the advisory committees can be consulted, so that a corrective decision can be prepared.

The reasons adduced above for the proper maintenance also of Art.43 C.O. may have shown sufficiently why proper care should be taken of the archives.

"Not all communications received are worth to find a place in the archives"

Local churches and broader assemblies all have the obligation to preserve for the next generations what may help these generations see and understand how the Lord kept His church in times past. What to many may seem a rather unimportant point is, in fact, one of the aspects of obedience to the command: "Tell it to the coming generations."

Since broader assemblies exist only for a short time, churches are appointed to take care of classical, regional and general synodical archives respectively. On behalf of the churches in the specific regions the archives are inspected regularly by a church appointed thereto by the latest regional or general synod and reports on their findings are sent to the next regional or general synod, whichever may apply. In the case of classes a report is given annually, mostly at the September classis.

It goes without saying that the cooperation of all clerks is mandatory as well as indispensable. Fortunately, in practically every church someone can be found who has great love for and interest in the history of the church, combining this with accuracy. It would be a shame if these gifts, which the Lord gave for a purpose, were left unused through negligence and disinterest on the part of the churches.

Thus far the comments on Art. 43 C.O.

What was not mentioned in the above are the bulletins, but I did not think that it was necessary to mention them separately. Personally I am very happy that I am in possession of all the bulletins

of what are now the churches in the Fraser Valley, beginning even with the very first bulletin which was issued by the (now) Church at Coaldale. That some are photocopies does not take anything away from the rich feeling of having them all, and neatly bound, from April 23, 1950 on!

It was with great sadness that I read the report to General Synod of brother T.VandenBrink from which it became apparent that very little cooperation was ever received from the churches and that all the bulletins which did find their way to Burlington East may end up or have ended up in a paper drive. It was with equal sadness that I read the almost unavoidable decision of Synod to "instruct the Church of Burlington East to dispose of the collected material of this Archive as they see fit." I don't like the word "instruct" in this connection and am convinced that "request" would have been more proper, but the decision as such could hardly have been different.

Let at least in the local archives all the bulletins be found of the local church and, if possible, have them bound so that it is easier to preserve them for the future generations.

Classical preaching arrangements

The second point which was drawing the attention is what was decided at Classis Ontario North of March 10, 1989 regarding remuneration of classical preaching engagements. At that time already I was planning to make some remarks about it, but now there is a request to do so.

In order to refresh our readers' memory the relevant decision may be repeated here.

The consistory of the church at Guelph proposes a more uniform practice of reimbursement by requesting classis to advise those churches who receive pulpit supply as arranged by classis to:

1. Reimburse the church granting them pulpit supply rather than the minister of that church.
2. Pay the church the amount they pay their "guest" ministers.
3. Pay the transportation cost to the appointed ministers.

What to think of this decision? That it is lording it over the churches and an impermissible interference in the affairs of the local church.

At another occasion we wrote about the right of a classis to grant the request for pulpit supply. Help to "needy" churches is extended not only when there are financial difficulties but also when there is a vacancy and some pulpit supply from time to time is to be guaranteed. This, too, belongs to the mutual assistance

which the churches give to one another. This is how far the involvement of a classis goes. It is none of the business of a classis how the financial arrangements are that are part of this help. This is a matter between the minister and the church whose minister he is. A classis does not even have the right to ask ("advise" = obligate) the vacant churches to remunerate the classical pulpit supply, let alone tell them to remit this amount to the church that lends its minister for a specific Sunday.

A vacant church should remunerate the classically organized help. It does not make any difference whether a vacant church invites a minister who is holidaying in the region or one who is retired or one whose turn it is by classical appointment. All these cases are on a level. Also a minister whose turn it is by classical appointment does not come because he was sent by a classis or even by his own consistory, but he comes upon the request of the vacant church. Then it is the vacant church's obligation to give the same remuneration in the last-mentioned case which it gives in the other two cases.

Once I had a discussion with a consistory that gave to ministers who came by classical appointment just the travelling expenses and nothing more. For a good understanding it be remarked that it did not concern myself in any way. I tried to convince the brothers that they acted incorrectly, and stated that, whereas the Lord says "The labourer is worthy of his hire," and that an ox treading the grain should not be muzzled, they in fact said: "We'll just pay him to get here and back, Lord, for he gets his fodder somewhere else already."

To put it bluntly : it is none of the vacant church's business whether a minister has just a Sunday "off" and is willing to conduct the services or is retired and is still willing and able to help out, or whether his consistory has given him permission to accept the invitation to conduct services in the vacant church as a result of classical arrangement. The vacant church has the same obligation in each and every case and is not allowed to discriminate by giving the one just some travelling expenses and nothing more.

By the same token, it is none of the business of either the vacant church or of a classis how the consistory that releases its minister for such a Sunday wants to arrange the financial aspects with its minister. This is totally, purely, and exclusively a local matter. Any classis that dares to "advise" regarding this lords it over the local churches and exceeds the boundaries of its jurisdiction.

If a vacant church acts incorrectly by not remunerating these services, and

wants to "live off" the sister churches or their ministers, there is no one that can do anything about it. The only possibility I see is that a church comes to the next classis with the proposal not to grant this church any more pulpit supply since it does not meet its obligations; but I would not know what else could be done. Such a church definitely cannot be forced by means of a classical "advice" to change its practice.

Much will depend on the financial situation of the church that "lends" its minister for certain Sundays to a vacant church. When, after the Liberation in 1944, the church which I served granted me one Sunday per month to go and help vacant churches, we made the arrangement that I would remunerate the one who came to "my own" church on those Sundays, if they could get one, which almost always was the case. I could do this

"... some pulpit supply from time to time is to be guaranteed. This, too, belongs to the mutual assistance which the churches give to one another. This is how far the involvement of a classis goes."

If a consistory that grants its minister the right to go and fulfil the classical appointment in a vacant church allows the minister to keep the remuneration for such services, this is completely up to this consistory. If, on the other hand, they want to make different arrangements and have the minister hand over to the treasurer what is left after proper deduction for travelling expenses, this is this consistory's full right and privilege. They could even say, "Sir, you receive a set amount as your car allowance, and therefore we want it all, unless the vacant church gave a special travelling allowance." However, none of our consistories will be that cheap.

since practically without exception I conducted four services per Sunday in other churches on those monthly "free" Sundays. It never cost the church one penny and most times I had a few guilders left for myself.

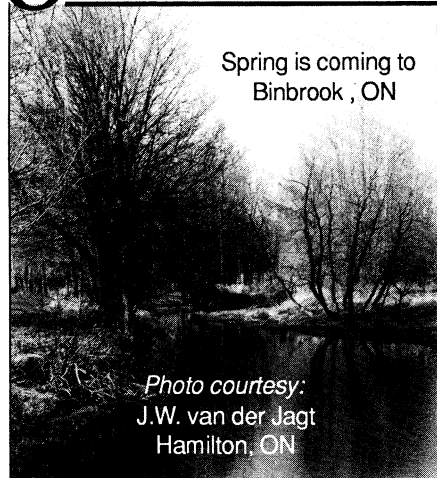
In the second church I served in the Netherlands we were with two ministers and, since we rented just one church building, we had every other Sunday "off." The arrangement was that the remuneration for two services on those Sundays was to be given to the treasurer. Whatever else we received, we could keep.

In Canada neither of the two consistories of which I was a member ever demanded that I should reimburse the church for extra costs incurred when I had to fulfil a classical appointment. The brothers granted their minister some "windfalls," although everyone who studies the financial statements of the various churches will come to the conclusion that the amount spent on "guest ministers" over and above the holidays of a church's own minister is not all that extravagant. Things can be exaggerated, too!

However, as stated above, it is totally and exclusively up to the individual consistories how they want to arrange things. Everyone else, including a classis, has to keep his nose out of it. Whoever sticks his nose into it deserves that it be cut off.

With all good intentions also broader assemblies sometimes stumble and do not realize the very nature of a decision. Such was the case here. **C**

OUR COVER



Spring is coming to
Binbrook , ON

Photo courtesy:
J.W. van der Jagt
Hamilton, ON

League Day, October 18, 1989

Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church, Chatham, Ontario.

Mrs. L. VanDelden opened the meeting in the proper Christian manner. She welcomed all present — the total present was 270 including one sister from Neerlandia and one from Edmonton — and commented on how privileged we are. She mentioned also that Mrs. VanMiddelkoop and Rev. VanRietschoten had topics of such a beautiful blend, the Holy Spirit and the Covenant.

Mrs. VanDelden welcomed Mrs. L. Schutten as the new Vice-All and announced that the collection of the day would be for the M.A.F.

Incoming mail was read. "Beginnings" thanked us for our donation of last year's collection. Letters of congratulation were received from Laurel, the Netherlands, and Australia.

After we had sung our League song, Mrs. Joanne VanMiddelkoop was given the floor to read her introduction. The road to heaven requires much wisdom and much grace. She mentioned how the Holy Spirit comforts, directs and guides our lives and has done so since Paradise. She took us through the Scriptures, showing us the work of the Holy Spirit in creation, the building of the tabernacle (by giving the ability and intelligence), and the anointing of David. The Holy Spirit gives life (Psalm 104), leads (Psalm 143), instructs (Neh. 9). In the New Testament, the Holy Spirit descended as a dove upon Christ at His baptism. The Holy Spirit is the Comforter (advocate) and the Helper of the apostles. Today as well the Holy Spirit causes the preaching to have an effect.

Matthew 12:31 speaks of sin against the Holy Spirit as the unpardonable sin, the choosing of darkness when light is readily seen (e.g., Matt. 23:22-24).

When things are done for the praise and recognition of man rather than only for the praise of God we are tempting the Spirit (e.g., Ananias and Sapphira).

The Lord Jesus is intercessor in heaven and the Holy Spirit on earth. The Holy Spirit helps us so that our imperfect prayers are in accordance with God's will.

Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in man.

Today we still receive as gifts of the Holy Spirit wisdom, love, joy, and we must pray for the continuation of these



With voices united our praises we offer ...



Rev. J. VanRietschoten

gifts and use them to serve God and each other.

Paul commands the believers to be filled with the Spirit, which means that we have to be completely taken in by the presence of the Holy Spirit. He has to rule us and lead us so that it becomes evident to everyone that the Spirit is at work in us.

We grieve the Holy Spirit when we tolerate sin and don't live according to God's will. When we resist His ways we become an enemy of the Holy Spirit, and we quench the Holy Spirit when we disregard the preaching of the true gospel.

In conclusion, the Spirit teaches us to pray unceasingly for the Bridegroom to be united with His bride. Do we resist the Holy Spirit with concern for material things? Do we really long for our Lord's coming? We are to live in obedience and in expectation of His coming: "Come Lord Jesus."

We sang Hymn 50:1,2,6,7 and Mrs. VanDelden invited questions and/or comments on this topic.

The discussion ended by taking special note of the words in Hymn 38 after



l-r: Mrs. L. VanDelden, president, Mrs. J. Van Middelkoop, speaker

which we sang this hymn. The collection was held. (We heard later that \$690.34 was collected.) Mrs. Willa Dale Smid led in closing prayer and also asked the Lord's blessing for the food which we were about to receive. We then had lunch which consisted of a cold buffet.


We resumed our meeting with the singing of "O, Canada." A skit was presented by some of the Chatham women. This skit had been done in the Fraser Valley two years ago and emphasized how difficult it can be at times to get an essay started and done.

We sang Psalm 89:1,2 and read 2 Corinthians 3:1-18. Rev. VanRietschoten was welcomed by Mrs. VanDelden and spoke about "The Covenant in the Old and New Testament." This speech will be sent to *Clarion* for publication.

After the speech we sang Psalm 105:1,4,15. Mrs. VanDelden thanked Rev. VanRietschoten for his lovely, although a bit lengthy, but certainly not boring speech. A brief discussion was held. Rev. VanRietschoten agreed to answer the remaining questions in *Horizon*.

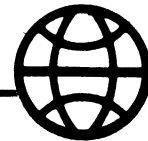
Mrs. VanDelden closed the discussion and recalled the first League Day in Chatham 28 years ago. She then bade farewell to Mrs. Reinink, thanking her for her devotion to the Board, I.L.P.B., *Horizon*, and camera work. She thanked the organist, the Chatham women's societies, and most of all our heavenly Father for bringing us together. Mrs. Reinink, on behalf of us all, then thanked Mrs. VanDelden for her efforts.

We sang psalm 150 and Rev. VanRietschoten ended with us in prayer.

MRS. L. DYKEMA,
Corresponding Secretary 

INTERNATIONAL

By *W.W.J. VanOene*



AMSTERDAM (ANP)

After last year's automatization it appears that the Central Public Library in Amsterdam is short 150,000 books. By far the largest part of these books was borrowed by members of the library but never returned. Most likely only a very small portion was stolen. During three days last fall, when books could be returned without penalty only 700 books were returned. (ND)

Deputies for Contact with Churches Abroad of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands received a request to establish official relations from the Eglise Réformée Confessante au Zaïre (The Confessing Reformed Church in Zaïre). Two ministers were sent to visit this country and this Church in order to gather relevant and sufficient information needed to come to a responsible decision on this request. They came to the conclusion that it is justified to enter into an official relation with this Church. Deputies also will come to the next General Synod with proposals regarding the manner in which help can be extend-

ed to this Church by means of sending some ministers and helping with the establishing of a training centre for ministers. (ND)

Canadian churches in the Christian Reformed Church in North America will be asking the Christian Reformed Church to create regional synods. An informal council of Christian Reformed Churches in Canada already exists, meeting every two years. The council has no ecclesiastical status, and the request will eventually come through some Canadian classes.


The Canadian churches in the Christian Reformed Church represent about one-quarter of the 300,000 strong membership.

Canadians will propose to the Christian Reformed 1990 synod that it form two regional synods, one for the United States and one for Canada. Each regional synod would be convened annually to discuss the church's mission and administration in their respective contexts. A general synod would be held every three years to deal with creedal, doctrinal, and liturgical matters. The gen-

eral synod would also judge overtures and protests in matters of ethics, confessions, or politics. (REC NE)

The new opposition-dominated government of Czechoslovakia said it would abolish the law requiring clergy to be licensed by the state. They also vowed that laws would be passed to prevent anyone from being prosecuted for political or religious beliefs. Deputy Premier Jozef Hromadka said the government would guarantee religious freedom in a new constitution. (NIRR- REC NE)

CANADIAN SCENE

Back in 1931, life expectancy for a Canadian baby girl was 62 years, for a baby boy 60 years. And 86 out of every 1,000 children born that year died in infancy. By 1985, the *Canada Year Book 1990* published by Statistics Canada tells us, a Canadian baby girl had a life expectancy of almost 80 years, a baby boy just under 73 years. And only eight out of every 1,000 children born that year died as infants. 



By W.W.J. VanOene

In this time of year travelling is more hazardous than in other seasons. Oftentimes the roads are covered with snow or freezing rain, and the danger that we get involved in an accident is greater. In various bulletins mention is made of families that were involved in such an encounter. In by far the most cases there were no or minor personal injuries. Sometimes, however, hospitalization was necessary.

Although usually we do not mention names of members who were involved in an accident, we do make an exception this time. The Rev. P. Aasman was involved in a head-on collision and one side of his face was badly damaged. He was transported to a hospital in Toronto and, as the Rev. J. Visscher wrote in the Church News, "Using a new surgical technique they (the doctors) managed to reconstruct the one side of his face that was severely damaged. Also from this distance we wish him the further help and blessing of the Lord." "He is home again but will need some time for recovery." We add our wishes to those expressed above.

This brings us automatically to Grand Valley. Their bulletin, the *Valley Herald*, sports a quite ambitious drawing of the front of a church building. If that is what they have in mind, we are the more impressed. The building committee reported that the Ministry of Transportation gave approval for the construction of a driveway, the Health Department "inspected and passed the test holes for septic system," and the building will start, the Lord willing, April 2nd. The completion of the parsonage is scheduled for June 30, 1990, and that of the church building for September 15, 1990. An ambitious program, indeed.

The rent for the building of the United Church has been increased to \$125.00 per Sunday. Although no church can own a building for this amount, yet all you have to show for this money is that you can conduct your worship services in a decent building. Nothing is coming towards you. Besides, this is only for the worship services. There is much more to church life than that, for from the services is to come forth the strength and desire for all sorts of other activities.

Grand Valley's consistory also discussed a motion to change from the "A" liturgy to the "B" liturgy. The newly instituted Church at Port Kells, on the other hand, decided to have the "A" liturgy. I must admit that I like the latter much better and then not because it is the "old" one, the one to which we were used for many decades. I am happy that Port Kells chose the "A" liturgy. After the sermon a song of response, prayer, another song, and then depart with the blessing of the Lord.

However, let us linger in Ontario for a while.

Starting in the North (if one considers Ottawa to be situated in the North, that is) we pass on that the total raised so far via the drive is \$ 20,650. Although this is a considerable amount, it still does not carry very far, seeing the prices of properties and homes.

From Ottawa we reach Toronto. In the consistory report we saw that the minister "made mention of the fact that during the service some young people, seated on the balcony, do not pay much attention to what is going on. The names have been noted and in case the talking, etc. is continued, they shall be dealt with."

Balconies are dangerous places, as we discover time and again. Certainly, when the interest is not there and when all sorts of other things demand the attention, it does not make all that much difference whether there is a balcony or not; it is the condition of the heart that is decisive. Balconies, however, are

a contributing factor and this is one of the reasons why I am convinced that they should not be built into our church buildings. I can well understand the trouble Toronto's minister has when seeing this every time. If I see people talking or doing other things during the sermon, my attention is drawn to it time and again and I cannot keep my thoughts with the sermon. I have to stop and say something about it. Hopefully it won't be necessary to do it, but I recall one minister telling a father to go to the balcony to reprimand his son, and to make sure he would behave!

Toronto's consistory also will consider "the suggestion that we increase the frequency of celebrating the Lord's Supper from four to six times per annum." It is no secret that I read this information with joy.

A last thing from Toronto: In the public prayer I, too, frequently remember those who serve in the police forces and in the armed forces, but Rev. Gleason also drew the attention to firemen who, together with the police officers, "observe events from which most of us are isolated because of our work." There will not be many congregations that count firemen among their members, not as many anyway as are having police officers in the congregation.

Burlington South comes first after this. Rev. J. DeJong may well be in the Netherlands when these lines reach our readers. In the bulletin he confirmed that the date for his promotion was fixed with a view to the fact that on March 23rd it will be thirty-eight years ago that Dr. K. Schilder died. Meanwhile we wish our colleague a pleasant stay in the Netherlands and much strength and wisdom with the defense of his thesis.

"The building committee is requested to contact the 'Ebenezer' congregation regarding possible sharing of facilities. This will involve an analysis of our meeting facilities' needs and exploratory discussion with 'East' to see if these needs can be accommodated in a shared facility. The committee is also requested to make a study of present borderlines between 'East,' 'South,' and 'West' and come with recommendations as to how these might be changed to the benefit of all congregations involved."

O those borderlines. I can well understand the desire of Burlington South to see an increase in membership, something which will not hurt the other two Burlington churches if it costs them members. But people are no chess pieces which we can move without hearing a protest. A change of boundaries does not yet mean that there will be a change in membership figures. Anyway, I wish the brothers much wisdom and much success.

In the meantime the brothers and sisters in "South" will have to wait a while before even the possibility is there that they can share facilities. The Burlington East consistory received letters regarding the building plans, containing suggestions and ideas. One such a letter came from "a brother and sister relative to the manner of celebrating the Lord's Supper. In connection with this a discussion ensues to consider rendering the church sanctuary adaptable for possible options." Including the "option" to have a table at which the congregation can celebrate the Lord's Supper? I certainly hope so.

One remark about the terminology used. As Reformed people we should not use the term "sanctuary" for the auditorium. We no longer have "sanctuaries." There are auditoria where the congregation comes together, but the church building is neither a sanctuary nor a "house of the Lord." We are to

bear this in mind and are to choose our terms accordingly.

In this connection I would like to draw the attention to another term which we oftentimes find in bulletins. It was even on the program of the College Evening. This is the term "Offertory." A very expensive term, much more impressive than the simple "Offering" or "Collection." The word "offertory" can indeed mean a gift or a collection, but we should avoid this term as it is used in the Romish liturgy of "the offering to God of bread and wine in the sacrament," as my dear friend Webster tells me. "In the R.C. Church the Offertory is a chant sung when the priest prepares the elements; in the Church of England, the sentences read at Communion during the collection of alms." That chant is Gregorian, no doubt. With a view to these meanings it is better to avoid the term altogether and to remain very simple by speaking of "offering" or "collection."

We are not yet through with Burlington East. "The council discussed in detail the five plans submitted by the building committee in the light of the response during the last-held meeting with the congregation. It was decided to request the building committee to zero in on two plans out of the plans submitted. After details are worked out, the new preliminary plans are to be submitted to council for discussion with the congregation, hopefully on Feb.2." This is past already by the time these lines are being written.

"The Organ Committee reported on its activities during the last several months. A proposal for the purchase of a pipe organ was made from three submissions received. The council approved this proposal in principle, however, a final decision will be made when the financial aspects are finalized with the insurance company."

In my innocence I thought that the church did already receive a settlement, and I was also happy that it could reap a nice pile of interest during the time between receiving the money and the start of building activities. When you have a thousand grand in the bank, this adds up, doesn't it!

Hastily we retreat to a congregation where they don't have those resources, the Church at Elora. Yet they do have their plans. "The Consistory has instructed the Committee of Administration to move ahead as quickly as possible with proposals to purchase property for a church building and to prepare building plans. The consistory would like to present plans in early spring of this year."

In Watford efforts are being made to revive the school, and we wish them every possible success with their striving. It would be great if they succeeded.

Many if not all communities can boast of a so-called Ministerial Association. Personally I never was a member of any nor did I ever attend a meeting of this society. I do not think that many of our ministers had much to do with this kind of organization. In the Chatham bulletin we read that the Rev. VanRietschoten did deliver a paper in a meeting of the Ministerial Association of Chatham. "I titled my presentation 'Preaching the Counsel of God in Jesus Christ from the Old Testament.' The message showing Christ in the Old Testament seemed well received. Although I am not a member of the Ministerial Association, I do my share in items where I freely can present the Gospel as in study sessions, write in the Chatham Daily News, speak for the radio. I could however not in good conscience be a member, for that would mean being co-responsible for ecumenical decisions with which I should not agree. The ministers are namely expected to represent their church in this association. Sincerely studying together to bring us closer to true unity is something I gladly participate in. To act as if that unity is already there is wrong. Therefore to speak as an Association with one voice, representing all the churches of Chatham, is something which should not be done and in which I cannot participate."

ORDERS OF WORSHIP

The following are the orders of worship in common use:

A

For the Morning Service

1. Votum: Psalm 124:8
2. Salutation: 1 Corinthians 1:3 or Revelation 1:4, 5a
3. Congregational Singing
4. The Ten Words of the Covenant, from Exodus 20:2-17 or Deuteronomy 5:6-21
5. Congregational Singing
6. Reading of Holy Scripture (one or more passages related to the sermon, often followed by singing)
- (7. Administration of Baptism)
8. Prayer (with confession of sins, prayer for forgiveness, renewal, and illumination, and intercessions)
9. Offertory
10. Congregational Singing
11. Reading of the Text
12. Ministry of the Word (often followed by responsive song)
13. Prayer of Thanksgiving
- (14. Celebration of the Lord's Supper)
15. Closing Song
16. Benediction: from Numbers 6:24-26 or 2 Corinthians 13:14

(Sometimes the Scripture reading follows the prayer.)

Book of Praise, page 581

Herewith we leave Ontario and go to Carman. Carman wrote that the cost of participating in the Superannuation Fund is \$1638 per active minister and \$8.08 per communicant member, this is the total per year. All churches that have a minister in active service contribute a set amount per active minister. As soon as a church is vacant, this amount is no longer paid. Further, a certain amount per communicant member is asked of all participating churches. This amount differs, therefore, from church to church, as the membership is the determining factor.

Sometimes it was suggested that the smaller churches should be supported by the larger churches, by which apparently was meant that the smaller churches should have a reduced rate. When we examine the structure carefully we see that the smaller churches are being supported, for they pay much less than the larger churches, yet receive the very same benefits. The contributions are determined by the number of communicant members, the benefits are the same for all. If this is not helping each other, I don't know what would be.

It was decided in Carman that members of the congregation will no longer be allowed to borrow tables and chairs and take them out of the church building. "A lot of money has been spent on getting good quality chairs and tables and we feel that in order to keep them in the best condition it is best not to have them transported around."

The Calgary consistory "encouraged the minister to schedule pulpit exchanges at least once every two months. If the need exists to do it more often, he is authorized to do so." This is a very noble gesture. Especially in rather isolated congregations such as Calgary, Coaldale and Ottawa a minister does not have that much of an opportunity to exchange pulpits with a colleague. It does not harm a minister when he has to prepare two sermons every week, although it is quite a task. Sometimes it seems that there are members who think that it

is easy to have two sermons per week ready for the Sunday worship services. That's what the man studied for, didn't he? It is frequently not realized how much work is involved in the preparation of sermons. For this reason it is the more to be applauded when consistories show that they are aware of the tension which this part of the work brings with it.

In his review of the past year the Rev. Schouten remarked that "The School Society could reach a stage of seriously being able to consider beginning an elementary school." This is encouraging news indeed. Another encouraging item is that the Calgary church received an anonymous donation of one thousand dollars for their building fund. "In fact, this was the third time in 1989 that we received such a donation," writes Rev. Schouten.

The Calgary consistory had a meeting with the consistory of the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church in that place. "Your consistory could present a discussion paper concerning the doctrine of the Church as confessed in Articles 27-29 of the Belgic Confession. After this paper was read, the OCRC consistory could ask questions for clarification and/or elaboration. At a future meeting, they will prepare a response.

"We chose this topic for two reasons. First of all, the OCRC consistory had expressed concerns about the positions taken by our Synods 1983 and 1986 concerning the doctrine of the Church. These decisions were apparently one of the reasons why they did not at once seek contact with our congregation. Secondly, by dealing with the doctrine of the church, your consistory was able to show its belief that two faithful Reformed churches ought to come together in worship and life, being gathered at the one table of the Lord."

There is interest in an office-bearers' conference in the Alberta/Manitoba region and the consistory of the Providence Church received favourable replies from several congregations in the "neighbourhood." It is still to be seen how successful their efforts will be to have a conference of all office-bearers in the classical region.

The bulletin of the Immanuel Church in Edmonton contained the happy news that "effective the first Sunday in January, the Church Collections will be no more." RIP.

As far as the voluntary contributions are concerned, there are different practices among the membership. Some don't contribute at all. We won't waste one word on them.

There are others who contribute at the end of the year for the whole year. If it had depended on them the minister would have starved to death in the meantime or been forced to look for a job; no light, no heat, no water, in the churchbuilding, for the gas and utilities companies would have shut it all off for non-payment. The Theological College would have had to shut down for the same reason, the mission work would have ceased, and so on. It is only through the faithfulness of others that things can go on and be continued. Every year, towards the end of the year consistories publish that the church's income is so many thousands of dollars short of what was budgeted; and practically every year the month of December brings in such a large amount that the goal is reached.

It should not be like that. When the LORD made His will known to Israel, He told them that they should not appear "empty" before Him. We are to bear this in mind and also when we appear before the LORD on Sundays we should have our hands filled instead of waiting till the end of the year.

"When young members begin to have some form of income, be it through part-time work or summer jobs, and they wish to show their thankfulness for being a child of the Lord, and help with the cost of running the church, also in that case the Committee of Administration will gladly supply a set of envelopes." Much encouraged!

The following I found a very strange thing. "Rather than

have a New Year's Eve service (which would mean three worship services on Sunday), a service has been scheduled for January 1, at 11:00 a.m. One of the problems with the New Year's Eve service is always that in many families the smaller children, plus mom or dad, are not able to make it, due to the late hour."

It is a riddle to me why three services would have been necessary. Do a few hours make all that much difference that a service at two or four in the afternoon would not do for a "new year's eve service"? Is it really necessary to have such a service at eight o'clock in the evening?

Besides, the arguments which are mentioned in our above quotation strongly favour not having a service on new year's eve at all, seeing that many members of the congregation are prevented from attending "due to the late hour." Is it then justified — if there is to be a service at all, that is — to call the congregation together at such an hour at which it is rendered impossible for a large part of the congregation to attend? The whole New Year's Eve service idea was introduced in the previous century by an apostate general synod or, more properly, an apostate synodical board. Unfortunately, the Reformed Churches have not succeeded in getting rid of it.

Taking leave of Alberta, we move on to British Columbia. Vernon is reached first. The rent for the facilities where the worship services are held was raised to \$ 45.00 per Sunday, a very reasonable amount in our opinion. Yet the search for better meeting facilities goes on, as well as the planning of a church building of their own. At the consistory meeting, the building committee presented "a new building plan, accommodating many of the suggested changes. The consistory wholeheartedly supports this plan. It will be presented to the congregation."

The ministers in the Fraser Valley have an exchange on the first Sunday of the month. They alternate between the various churches. "Today," Rev. J. Visscher wrote, "we may welcome the Rev. A. VanDelden to Langley. Although we hope not, this may be the last time that we have him on our pulpit before he moves to the land of kangaroos and the koala bears." There is only one problem with this: koalas are no bears.

Another quote from Rev. J. Visscher: "The highlight of the past week was no doubt the fact that the Intermediate Care facility at Manoah Manor could be opened. For many years this has been a matter that was dreamed about, discussed and worked on, and finally has become a reality."

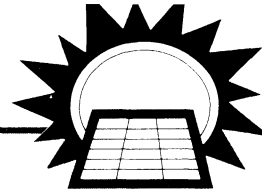
Any guests who are planning on attending worship services in the Port Kells Community Centre have to be aware of an interruption which may scare them at first. The services start at 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. and the afternoon service can go on unhindered. During the morning service, however, at precisely ten o'clock the siren of the next door Fire Hall goes for about fifteen seconds. It is time signal and test at the same time. Don't get excited: the whining dies down quite quickly and the service can continue as if nothing happened, except perhaps that some members check their watches and bring them "up to date."

Much to our regret, this is to be the end of this medley. See you next time, the Lord willing.

CHURCH NEWS



VERNON, BC: NEW MEETING PLACE
3204 Alexis Park Drive
Vernon, BC



By Mrs. J. Mulder

*"God, I thank Thee that I am not like other men . . .
"God, be merciful to me a sinner!"*

Luke 18:11,13

Dear brothers and sisters,

The Lord Jesus told us in a parable about a Pharisee and tax collector who were both praying in the temple. The Pharisee, while addressing God, compares himself and his religious activities with those of the tax collector and others. On a man-to-man basis this comparison was in his favour. Had he not indeed faithfully fulfilled all the requirements of the law? The Pharisee does not hesitate to thank the Lord for all the obedience he has shown in his life.

The tax collector, however, realizing his sins, hardly dares to approach the Lord. Hiding in a corner, with downcast eyes, he calls out, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

Comparing the lives and activities of these two men, we must admit that in a way the Pharisee was a "nicer" person than the tax collector. But the purpose of this parable is not to compare the good deeds of the one person with those of someone else but to show us how God looks at us and thinks about us.

The Pharisee might consider himself a "pillar" in the church but he had never learned what living by the grace of God actually means and that we never can earn our own righteousness before God by our good works. His prayer centers around his own religious activities. He is telling God that as a Pharisee he has built up a good record.

The tax collector, on the other hand, has become aware of his unworthiness before God. He has a very poor record in heaven and he acknowledges that. His prayer is therefore a plea for mercy. The LORD heard that prayer and granted him forgiveness of sins. He went home justified, his record was clean and God wiped out his guilt.

The Pharisee, however, with all his outward obedience continued to have a bad record. He stood condemned by the Judge of all the earth.

When we compare ourselves with other people, also in the church, we mostly don't do too badly. Perhaps we are not totally self-righteous, but still compared to 'so and so' our record is better. We will never say that openly, but deep down we think that we have more reason to be justified by God than others. However, there is only One who sets the standards. Only One who justifies and declares someone free of sin and an heir to eternal life.

That one is not man, that is not us, but only the LORD!

Standing before Him, we are all guilty! The record of the one may indeed be poorer than the one of someone else. Not every true Christian has lived in sin, committed adultery or cheated his brother out of a lot of money.

But we are all still inclined to all evil. Even our

best works are imperfect before God.

The LORD does reward our obedience to Him; our compassion and self-control, our dedication to Him and His service. But when He does that, He crowns His own gifts. That is His wonderful grace!

Loving our God, we will love our neighbour and not cheat on him or envy him.

Believing that Christ has redeemed us from the power of sin, we will fight against all adultery in our own heart and life and be true to each other and forgiving.

But that does not make us righteous before God! Righteous before God we are only through Christ Jesus, through grace, by faith.

Everyone who exalts himself — in his prayers, in church at the Lords' table or at home reading the Bible — will be humbled, but he who humbles himself, relying on God's grace alone, will be exalted.

From the mailbox

Mr. and Mrs. B. Wierenga would like to thank all who took the time to send Robert a card or letter for his birthday. Robert looked forward to the mail for several weeks. It is much appreciated by him and his parents. Mrs. Wierenga writes, "I wonder if people realize how much joy it can bring!" Keep it up, brothers and sisters!

Our birthday calendar for April

DEREK KOK

160 Park Street
Strathroy, ON N7G 3V8

Derek hopes to celebrate his 20th birthday on April 2.

MARINUS FOEKENS

"Epic North" Communication Unit, S.W.
Regional Centre, Box 1000
Blenheim, ON NOP 1A0

Marinus will be 33 years old on April 19.

ARLENE DEWIT

Barnston Island
Surrey, BC V3T 4W2

Arlene's 29th birthday is on April 23.

Congratulations to all three of you!

God, hear my plea, be merciful to me;
Treat me according to Thy lovingkindness.
Blot out my misdeeds, done in sinful blindness,
So that again Thy mercy I may see.

Ps. 51:1A

Greetings from,

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



By T.M.P. VanderVen

A. The goals of Reformed education

In most schools, staff have the good custom to meet in late August, the week before school commences another school year, to plan and discuss the work for the year. These are the moments when the general aims of education receive prominence in the discussions. This is important work. Statements concerning the unique character and goals of Reformed education should not languish in books or in teacher files. They should be alive in the minds of those who educate; after all, educational goals determine the practice of education. However, neither should such state-

ments be considered definitive and unalterable. I quote,

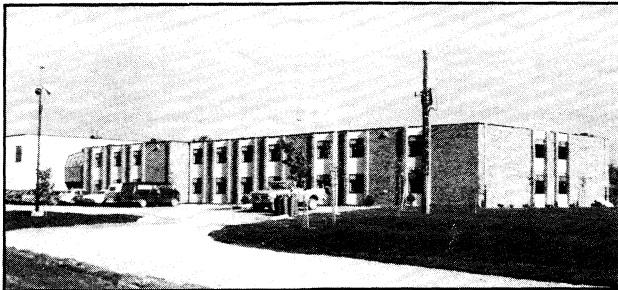
"Today's view of Christian education must not be thought of as a final one, for that would limit God. Directed by Him, with the gift of the Holy Spirit, we must continue as concerned community working together to deepen and refine our insights and activities. . . ." (Jenny Brooks, in *NO ICING ON THE CAKE*, p. iii).

Considering these things is not a somewhat theoretical activity at the end of a long summer holiday to prepare staff for the new year. Perhaps the middle of the school year is another opportune time

to sit back and reflect on the goals of the activities in our schools to provide all of us with a revitalized perspective. I clip the following from a recent "Guido Magazine."

"These aims are a revision of a list prepared a few years ago. After extensive staff discussion and consultation with the Education Committee and Board, these aims will provide the basis for our work in the school. This final list is not as important as the process that went into making the list and the ongoing process of applying the aims to practical school and subject goals."

Guido de Brès High School



General aims of education

General aims

It is the task of the school to assist parents in educating their children from a Biblical perspective and, in so doing, to:

1. Teach the students that their calling in this world is to know God, their Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, and to honour and serve Him.
2. Help the students grow into mature human beings, prepared to employ their talents in the service of God and for the benefit of their neighbours, at home and abroad, and in all areas of life.
3. Assist the students in recognizing their value and privileges as God's covenant children, and remind them that they are enabled by grace to respond in obedience to the call to serve.
4. Help the students discern the pervasiveness and corrupting influence of secular values and philosophies, so that under the Lordship of Christ they may with due humility begin to think in a fundamentally Christian way about all aspects of life.
5. Remind the students that this world has not been abandoned by God, that Christ has redeemed it, and that therefore their work as His followers and co-workers is of value for the restoration of God's Kingdom on this earth.
6. Show the students that true knowledge and wisdom is only attainable in God, in knowing and fearing Him. Wisdom, knowledge, teaching and learning are bound up with one's relationship to God.

Preamble:

Canadian Reformed parents have established Guido de Brès High School so that the schooling provided will assist them in the fulfillment of the covenantal promises made at the baptismal font. Reformed education aims to realize this assistance by equipping the student to employ his talents in the service of God and His Kingdom. To ensure that this most basic aim is realized, the following constitute the basis of the instruction given at Guido de Brès High School:

1. The entire curriculum will be taught in obedience to the Holy Scriptures, the infallible Word of God as confessed in the Three Forms of Unity of the Canadian Reformed Churches.
2. Each subject in the curriculum, taken in its own right, will have as its point of departure the cultural mandate, the command to subdue the earth as enunciated in the book of Genesis and elaborated upon in the entire Scriptures.
3. All teaching will take into account that this cultural mandate is to be exercised in a world which is lost in the misery and guilt incurred by man's fall into sin but overcome by the work of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

B. The Canadian Reformed Education Foundation

The 1989 end-of-year issue of *Clarion* contained an article, "Fraser Valley Scholarship Foundation."

The Foundation's purpose is to make available scholarships and bursaries to all high school and post-secondary students who pursue or continue post-secondary education and who meet the

qualifications prescribed by the Foundation's board of directors.

The Fraser Valley community is to be applauded for this initiative, which provides young people with a strong stimulus to continue their studies.

In Ontario, a somewhat different initiative saw the establishment of the

Canadian Reformed Education Foundation. Although designed to benefit schools, suggestions have been made that bursaries and scholarships for students might be included in this initiative as well. I take the following statement from a recent "Guido Magazine."

Introducing "The Canadian Reformed Education Foundation"

The purpose of the CREF is to act as a general non-profit depository of bequests and endowments for the benefit of the Canadian Reformed School Societies, while offering tax advantages to the donors.

This foundation was established by trustees appointed by the Canadian Reformed School Society of Burlington, Inc., the Guido de Brès Canadian Reformed High School Society and the John Calvin Society of Smithville.

The CREF proposes to address capital expenditure requirements, leaving operating requirements within the budgets of the societies. In general, the capital expenditures involve "outside money" which must be repaid, with interest, at the going rate.

The CREF proposes to address this portion of the financial needs of the school societies by providing the societies with low interest, or interest free funds.

In order to accomplish this, the CREF requires a pool of funds to draw on and to administer. This resource is proposed to be established by encouraging members of the Canadian Reformed School Societies to invest with, or bequeath to the Foundation, money which would otherwise be eroded by taxes and inflation. At the same time, such an investment may mean substantial tax savings to the donor.

The return from investing in the CREF would probably be less than available elsewhere; the investment is, however, deductible from income for the year it is earned, and most importantly, it provides capital funds for our societies at very reasonable rates.

The Foundation of course, also encourages outright donations and bequests. One's will, for example, could provide for a certain sum or a percentage of one's estate to either go to a specific school society or to the Foundation for distributing according to where there is financial need. Gifts to the CREF qualify as donations and are fully deductible. The trust agreement for CREF has been completed and sent to the government for Revenue Canada's consent and charitable number. If no problems arise we hope to receive approval within two months.

The appointed trustees for the Foundation are: Abe Hartman, Hank Buist, Martin Kampen, Aafke Spithoff, Warren Hoeksema, Lloyd Kingma and Herman Faber.

For more information contact one of the above named persons, or write to:

C.R.E.F.
P.O. Box 944
Burlington, Ont. L7R 3Y3



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

Busy Beaver *Anna Devries* has one last winter story for us.

"To end school for our Christmas holidays, we went ice skating with our school. As you can imagine lots of parents, all three bus drivers and the teachers came as well. My Dad came with my little brother and sister! My cousin in Grade One couldn't skate at all without a bar, and he didn't want to learn to skate slowly first. He wanted to skate really fast! His main problem was balance. His feet always shot out from under him! Finally, he told his Mom in tears that skating was impossible!"



FOR YOU TO DO

Have you had some snow days at your school?
Maybe you had to stay home because of icy roads?
Were you surprised by the snow and ice?
Was the weather man right?
Watching a blizzard, looking at a tree hanging heavy with silvery ice, we feel small and know that God is the Creator.
Can you find FIVE places in the Bible that talk about the weather God sends this world of ours?
You may say it in your own words or quote the text.
I still have some stickers for a REWARD for your list.
Send them to:

Aunt Betty
c/o Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 3X5



From the Mailbox

Thank you for the puzzles, *Jeremy Koopmans*. Have you got used to your new home, Jeremy? How do you amuse yourself on the bus ride? Write again soon. Bye for now.

Hello, *Netty Sikkema*. It's good to hear from you again! Thank you for the puzzle. I see you really mean to keep those Busy Beavers busy!

You've been really busy too, *Garrett Penninga*. And I like your neat typing! Keep up the good work. Do you have plans for the Spring break, Garrett?

How did you enjoy your school ski day, *Karen Vander-gaag*? Thank you for the puzzle, Karen, and of course your letter! Let me hear how you amuse yourself during the Spring break, will you? Bye for now.

Skater

By Busy Beaver
Alice Vanwoudenberg



Riddles

For you and me

1. What's better than a dog that can count?
2. What is the largest ant?
3. Why did the elephant wear green sneakers?
4. Why do elephants have trunks?
5. Why do elephants have so many wrinkles?
6. What is full of holes but can hold water?
7. What can you put in a barrel to make it lighter?

(Answers below)

Quiz Time!

Double Bible Search!

By Busy Beaver *Netty Sikkema*

To find what names are hidden here look up the Bible texts. Write down the name that STARTS with the LAST letter of the name that went before.

The first ones are done for your example.

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

- | | |
|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| Genesis 3:21 ADAM | Matthew 2:1 _____ |
| Genesis 5:27 METHUSALAH | Genesis 30:16 _____ |
| Genesis 16:1 HAGAR | 2 Samuel 7:2 _____ |
| Genesis 22:23 _____ | Nahum 1:1 _____ |
| Romans 9:25 _____ | Luke 10:38 _____ |
| Acts 18:24 _____ | Genesis 4:2 _____ |
| Genesis 20:2 _____ | Colossians 4:14 _____ |
| 1 Samuel 1:2 _____ | Esther 2:7 _____ |
| Habakkuk 1:1 _____ | Matthew 1:5 _____ |
| Numbers 16:1 _____ | 2 Kings 16:20 _____ |
| Deuteronomy 3:8 _____ | Genesis 13:18 _____ |
| 2 Kings 5:1 _____ | Deuteronomy 34:1 _____ |
| Genesis 5:29 _____ | Ruth 1:14 _____ |
| Mark 11:9 _____ | Esther 3:15 _____ |
| 1 Kings 16:28 _____ | John 1:45 _____ |
| Ruth 4:13 _____ | Genesis 6:8 _____ |
| Psalms 2:6 _____ | Genesis 14:15 _____ |
| John 3:1 _____ | Jeremiah 15:1 _____ |
| Genesis 11:29 _____ | Acts 14:21 _____ |
| Genesis 21:3 _____ | Exodus 4:14 _____ |
| Numbers 13:30 _____ | Genesis 30:8 _____ |
| Judges 6:31 _____ | Genesis 32:28 _____ |
| Genesis 29:34 _____ | Acts 15:11 _____ |
| Matthew 3:3 _____ | Psalms 106:21 _____ |