

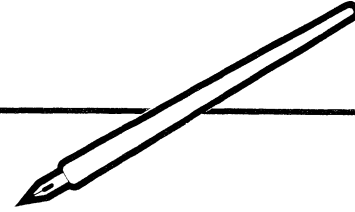


Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 39, No. 7

March 30, 1990



Kisses and covenant blessings

"So [Jacob] came near and kissed him." Genesis 27:27a
"And [Judas] kissed Him." Matthew 26:49b
"Greet one another with a holy kiss." 2 Corinthians 13:12

A holy kiss?

The apostle Paul concludes four of his letters (Rom., 1 and 2 Cor., and 1 Thess.) with the injunction to "greet one another with a holy kiss." As well, the apostle Peter commands the exiles of the Dispersion to "greet one another with the kiss of love."

What was this holy kiss with which the Christians were to greet one another? In the course of this article we will return to the holy kiss of the early Christian church. Let it suffice for now to say that this holy kiss was a sign of the fellowship which the church had.

The church is the covenant community of God formed by the agony of Good Friday. The Lord Jesus, who was betrayed with a kiss, obtained for His people the covenant blessings. He obtained the blessings which Jacob had seized when he betrayed his father Isaac with a kiss. And now, because the great Son of Israel has obtained rightfully what the father of Israel had seized through deception, the children of the new Israel can joyfully greet one another with a holy kiss.

The kiss in antiquity

In the Ancient Near East, friends and relatives would often greet each other with a kiss. The sentiment which we today express by means of a firm handshake, the people of the Ancient Near East would convey with a kiss on the cheek. Even today, in many eastern cultures, a kiss of greeting is still the custom.

Since the Holy Spirit inspired the Scriptures in the context of the Ancient Near East, we should not be surprised to find evidence of this custom in the Bible. There are a number of references to parents and children kissing one another. Siblings greet each other in this way as do close friends and in-laws. As well, there are reports of men kissing their king as a sign of loyalty and homage. With very few exceptions (Song of Solomon 1:2; 7:9; 8:1, and Prov. 7:13) the kiss in the Bible is devoid of any erotic or romantic content.

Several times kisses are used to deceive (2 Sam. 15:5ff, 20:3ff). The best known and, perhaps, the most glaring example of a deceiver's kiss is the kiss of Jacob with which he beguiled his father Isaac and obtained the covenant blessing.

The kiss of Jacob

The narrative of Jacob's deception is one of the very well-known accounts of the Old Testament. Jacob and his twin brother Esau were born to Isaac and Rebekah. Before they were born, they jostled each other within their mother. This was so bothersome for Rebekah that she went to inquire of the LORD about it. When she did, the LORD God told her that there were two nations in the womb, that there would be a division between these two peoples, and that the older child would serve the younger.

Right now we are concerned about the last point. The LORD God decreed that the law of the firstborn would, in this case, be reversed. According to the law of primogeniture (cf. Deut. 21:15-17), the firstborn son was to receive a double share of his father's estate upon the death of his father. The law also said that the younger son was to be subservient to the older. However, in the case of Jacob and Esau, the LORD God, in His sovereign electing choice, declared that Jacob was to be considered as if he were the older son. Just as God chose Isaac instead of Ishmael, so He chose Jacob above Esau. Just as Abraham was to convey the blessing he received from the LORD to Isaac, so Isaac was to transmit the blessing of Abraham to Jacob.

Isaac was the steward of the blessing of Abraham (Gen. 28:4). It was his task to pass it on to the child of God's choice. However, Isaac, afflicted with the poison of parental favouritism (Gen. 25:28), wanted to thwart the plan of God and pass the blessing on to Esau, the son whom he loved.

Isaac, old and going blind, believing that he would soon die, summoned Esau to his tent. He told his son to go to the open country, to shoot some wild game, and prepare a delicious meal for him. After that he would bless Esau.

Rebekah, who favoured Jacob as much as Isaac favoured Esau, overheard the conversation. She wanted Jacob to receive the blessing. And so she convinced the scared Jacob to dress himself in some of Esau's hunting clothes. Rebekah prepared some savory lamb for Isaac. She used the skins to cover the smooth skin of Jacob's neck and hands so that it would feel rough like Esau's.

Disguised as Esau, Jacob brought the meal to his father. And the charade begins. Isaac expresses surprise that "Esau" should be back already. Jacob replies, "The LORD your God granted me success." Blind Isaac, not convinced that the man in his tent is his oldest son, asks him to come near. When he feels his hands he surmises that it must be Esau.

And so Isaac requests "Esau" to serve him the meal of game. After eating, he will give the blessing. After he has finished the meal, Isaac is still suspicious. So he says, "Come near and kiss me, my son." As Jacob kisses his father, Isaac catches the smell of Esau's clothes. He smells the country and the open fields. This finally convinces him that the man who kissed him was his favourite son Esau. And so he blesses him.

Isaac promises him that all the treasures of the land will be his. Nations will serve him. His brothers will bow before him. God will curse those who curse him and bless those who bless him. In other words, Isaac blessed Jacob with the blessing of Abraham although thinking he has passed it on to Esau.

Jacob, true to the meaning of his name, deceived his father with a kiss. Through betrayal and intrigue sealed with a kiss, he seizes the covenant blessing for himself and his descendants.

There is no doubt whatsoever that the conspiracy of Rebekah and Jacob was subservient to the sovereignty of God. God has chosen Jacob. It was according to God's foreordination that Jacob should receive the blessing of Abraham.

And yet there is no getting around the fact that Jacob seized those blessings illegitimately. We see here another example of God using the sinful actions of men and women to bring about His eternal plan. Although God meant it for good, the fact is that Jacob, the father of Israel, wrested the blessings of the covenant out of the hands of God.

Who would make things well? Who would remedy the situation so that the children of Israel would have the blessings of the covenant legitimately?

The Lord Jesus, the great Son of Israel!

The kiss of Judas

If the kiss of Jacob is the most notorious kiss of the Old Testament, the kiss of Judas undoubtedly ranks as the most reprehensible recorded in the whole Bible.

Judas, one of the twelve, agreed to betray his Master to the chief priests for the standard price of a slave — thirty pieces of silver (cf. Ex. 21:32).

Afraid that they might not recognize the One whom they hate in the darkness of the garden, and that He might escape in the commotion of the attempted arrest, Judas and the priests agree upon a sign. Judas would kiss Him. It was not unusual for a student to greet his rabbi with a kiss. It was a sign of love and reverence. How despicable that Judas should use this sign of love in order to betray his Master!

The Lord Jesus, having prayed to His Father in the garden and come to the full realization that the cup of suffering could not pass unless He drank of it, told His disciples that His betrayer was at hand. There came Judas, one of the twelve, with an enormous crowd armed with swords and clubs to capture the Lamb of God. Judas, without a moment's hesitation, walked up to the Lord Jesus. He greeted his Rabbi with, "Hail, Master!" And he kissed Him.

Those armed with the swords and clubs then moved forward and arrested their enemy. Jesus, identified and betrayed by Judas' kiss, is led away like a lamb to the slaughter. The One who was betrayed by a kiss is tried, abused, mocked, tortured, and, finally, left to die hanging in the air on a Roman cross, rejected by earth and forsaken by heaven.

How contemptible that it was a kiss which sent Jesus to the cross. How painful to be subjected to such deceit, such trickery.

However, we, to whom the secret counsel and will of God concerning our redemption has been fully revealed, know that the Lord Jesus Christ was not kissed by Judas in vain. And we know that the Lord Jesus was not the victim of a tragic set of circumstances. Nor was He nothing more than simply the prey of some jealous priests and the scapegoat of a disenchanting disciple. He was the Lamb of God. He was the One who came in order to redeem for His Father a people. He was kissed by Judas so that He might restore to us the covenant blessings of God.

This does not absolve Judas. "The Son of man goes as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed" (Matt. 26:24). Judas bears the responsibility for his evil intentions and the consequences of his kiss. But the gospel is that God, in His sovereignty, took up also this terrible action of a man in order to bring about His plan to restore to His people the blessing of Abraham.

Jacob, the Father of Israel, seized the covenant blessing when he deceived Isaac with a kiss. Jesus, the great Son of Israel, betrayed by a deceiver's kiss, rightfully obtained the covenant blessings. And He now shares them with the Israel of God — with all those who are grafted into Him by faith.

One could even say that Jesus was punished for the deceiving kiss of Jacob through the betrayal kiss of Judas. Jesus was punished for the fact that Israel had stolen the blessing by means of a kiss. The Israel of God, consolidated in its Suffering Servant, was punished for its deception and trickery. And now,

in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham has come upon the Israel of God — also upon the Gentiles who receive the promise of the Spirit through faith (Gal. 3:14). "For if you are Christ's then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (Ga. 3:29).

And so we, in Christ, as fellow heirs of the promise, may greet one another with a holy kiss.

The holy kiss

We may greet one another with a holy kiss because we share in the covenant blessings. The apostle concludes his second letter to the church at Corinth with an admonition to agree with one another and to live in peace. And then he says, "Greet one another with a holy kiss." They are to show their solidarity in Christ in this way. The holy kiss symbolizes the love of Christ mutually shared.

As indicated earlier, the kiss was a common form of greeting much like our handshake. When people met, they would give each other a kiss on the cheek. Paul says that the kiss is to be a *holy* kiss because for the church it is a sign of fellowship in Christ. They are the communion of *saints* — the communion of those made *holy* by the blood of Christ.

By the time of Justin Martyr (c. 110-165), the "kiss" had become part of the liturgy. Justin writes in his *First Apology*, ch. 65, "Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss."¹ Immediately after the kiss, writes Justin, they would celebrate the Lord's Supper. Before they partook of the covenant meal, they would show their unity in Christ by means of a kiss. Bard Thompson says that ". . . it sealed peace and reconciliation among men . . . [it signified] one of the central meanings of the sacrament, namely, the love and unity among those who are members of the Body of Christ."²

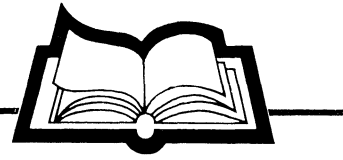
From Acts 2:42 we know that the early Christian church devoted itself ". . . to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers." Could the "fellowship" mentioned here have included greeting one another with a holy kiss before they broke the bread of the Lord's Supper? Could it be that after the church had read Paul's letter (the Word of God), and after having greeted one another with a holy kiss as he commanded them to do, that they then partook of the Lord's Supper? It seems likely considering that this was customary by the time of Justin.

How fitting that the meal by which the church commemorates the Good Friday sacrifice of its Lord should be preceded by a kiss signifying the solidarity which believers have through the reconciling work of their Lord. How proper that believers should greet each other in such a way before sharing in the supper at which they remember the passion of Him who was betrayed by a kiss. How apt it is that the children of the Israel of God should show in a tangible way the unity they have in Him who obtained for them the blessings which were once stolen with a kiss.

We should not think that we are disobeying the Word if we do not greet each other with a kiss. Methods of greeting vary from age to age and culture to culture. It is not customary for us to kiss one another when we meet. Furthermore, one wonders whether we should disturb the dignity of the Reformed worship service with some variant of the holy kiss (a holy handshake?) before we proceed to the Lord's table, although there would be something beautifully symbolic about such mutual greetings.

How we greet one another is not the point. And whether or not such a greeting is part of the liturgy is not the important thing. What is important is that we greet one another as fellow partakers in the salvation of Jesus Christ. We have been saved by the One who was betrayed by a kiss on Good Friday. All the promises of the covenant God established with Abraham are ours in Christ.

— continued on page 145



A Word for All Time

The last word of the Lord Jesus in His discourse about the end of the ages is a very definite command. It is the shortest command the Lord Jesus ever gave; at the same time, it is the most general of His commands. It is a word that spans the ages and applies to the church today, too. This is reflected in the form of this word, for it points to an ongoing action. The *shortest* command is the most *enduring*; for here the Lord Jesus stands before the cross, and gives His parting words to the disciples. From the disciples, Jesus addresses *all*; these are words which remain in effect until He returns.

Who is included in His "all"? Some limit His words to the community around the disciples, others to the Jews who did not yet believe. But these are words addressed to the *church* of all ages. In the language of the Lord Jesus the times are pressed together, and it almost seems as if the time between His departure and return is less than a generation. But He employs a form of prophecy in which not the duration but the *character* of the times predominates. So Peter speaks of the age of Christ as the last days (2 Peter 3:3) and John calls the new dispensation the last hour, 1 John 2:18. These are times in which the drama of fulfillment draws near and the hour of heightened intensity in the battle between the offspring of the woman and the offspring of the serpent approaches.

The warning to be vigilant must be seen in the context of the prophecies of Daniel, which have such a dominant place in this parting discourse of the Lord Jesus, cf. vs. 14, Matthew 24:15. In Daniel 7, the prophet sees the vision of the Son of Man who is presented in majesty before the Ancient of Days, 7:13. This refers to the inauguration of the kingdom of Christ. In Daniel 9:24ff. we learn that this kingdom will not be inaugurated without great stress. The anointed one will be cut off — a clear reference to the death of the Lord Jesus. Then desolations will come, and "upon the wings of abomination shall come one who makes desolate ..." Daniel 9:27. Other references to the "abomination that makes desolate" are given in Daniel 11:31 and 12:11.

The Lord Jesus has these passages in mind when He warns against the "desolating sacrilege" or the "profanation that leads to destruction." Even before the Lord Jesus came into the world, the anti-messianic principle manifested itself in the institution of sacrilegious worship in the "holy place" — the temple sanctuary and the altar, Daniel 9:26, cf. Matthew 24:15. But this happened with renewed frequency after the death of the Lord Jesus. In fact, the Lord Jesus prophesies the *definitive* end of the temple service, and the

complete destruction of the temple. This is the thrust of His answer to the disciples: Not one stone will be left upon another that will not be thrown down!

Therefore Jesus intimates that the inauguration of His kingdom represents the end of the worship that is bound to one place, or the end of the earthly temple. After this word Jesus never returns to the temple again! Precisely where God formerly dwelt, the most accursed idolatry will prevail. This idolatry cannot but bring God's judgment in its wake, and it has always done so throughout the history of the world. This is the idolatry that fills the cup of God's wrath to the brim. It is the exact opposite of the cross. Just as the cross represents the outpouring of God's wrath upon the Son for the sake of His church, so the idolatry that makes desolate inaugurates the outpouring of God's wrath upon those who reject the message and work of Jesus. This is the idolatry spurned by a rejection of the gospel of the cross.

For the church of the New Testament the desolating sacrilege is all false worship which focuses on man and the earthly city with deliberate rejection of the Lord Jesus in heaven. The call to "watch" demands recognition and discernment of this *false* worship and *false* church and enjoins us to maintain the *true* worship of the true church. And how are these discerned? One is focused *below*, and brings forth false Christs. The other is focused *above*, in heaven, where the Son of Man has taken His royal seat on God's throne. So Paul says, "The Jerusalem above is free, and she is our mother," Gal. 4:26.

From heaven we expect our Saviour to come to us. We must always keep our eyes fixed heavenward, Phil. 3:20,21. True worship is an earthly reality and must be organized in a visible and concrete way; but the visible reality does not exhaust true worship. Indeed, our attention is focused on the Son in heaven, and on His perfect sacrifice as our only avenue to God!

One should never assume that the appalling abomination mentioned by the Lord Jesus is only a sign of the last days, and not something which appears regularly in the life of the church. Indeed, it appears today, and we are called to discernment and watchfulness. In a rapidly changing world, we can discern the alliance between the godless powers and the false church, just as Scripture describes this alliance, Rev. 17:9, 18:3.

Still today we do not know the day or the hour. But Christ calls to *constant* vigilance. We may not be fooled by glowing prospects of a new world peace. Idolatry always brings desolation in its wake! Let us keep our eyes heavenward, and in all things heed the command: Watch!

C

A contemporary sermon

By C.J. de Ruijter¹

This is the fourth of a series of five articles dealing with the sermon and what we may expect from it. This time: We may expect a relevant and current sermon.

Churchgoers will readily agree: in church, we expect a sermon to be relevant and current. However, the agreement quickly ends when we try to determine the precise characteristics of a current sermon. Does the word *current* here mean the same as the current events with which the media presents us? Is a sermon current, when it deals extensively with political and social issues? Or should we remain closer to home and discover in the sermon all sorts of examples from everyday life? Or, perhaps, should the actual situation of the congregation be addressed in the sermon?

When thinking about the sermon as relevant and contemporary, we find ourselves wondering about questions such as these. On the one hand, these questions should not surprise us. After all, the sermon is not a timeless discourse. Yet, on the other hand, in such discussions

we risk that our own feelings and views of the world become the guiding criteria for evaluating the sermon. It will take little persuasion to recognize that this could result in the rejection of much that, according to God's measuring rod, should be considered current and relevant.

The Bible and the sermon

To test our expectations, let us apply them to the Bible. No, the Bible and sermon are not interchangeable, but they may be considered from the same perspective.

When reading the Bible, we do not expect a message which gets its meaning from the actual situation we find ourselves in. On the contrary, we realize that we are reading words which were written more than twenty centuries ago. Yet we do not draw the conclusion that the Bible, therefore, is concerned with a message which is of no importance to us.

Nevertheless, people often complain that the Bible means nothing to them when they read it. It means so little, they say, because its message seems to

come from a radically different world. Since our experience is unrelated to what we read in the Bible, we find it almost impossible to relate the two. For this reason, many people find it difficult to acknowledge that God indeed speaks to us today in His Word.

It is an easy and obvious step to desire, on the basis of such feelings, a sermon which translates the ancient message of the Bible into a message for today. A current sermon is thus one which redresses the old message in a contemporary form. In this sense the sermon in fact rewrites the Bible to make its message relevant to the situations today.

Is or become

We have reached an important question, namely, *Is* the gospel relevant, or does it *become* relevant today as it is passed on in the preaching? Without discussing in depth the theological background, it will be clear that the answer to this question is critically important for our understanding of the sermon as relevant and current.

Editorial — continued from page 143

Let us this Easter, united in Him who was betrayed by a kiss, greet one another joyfully knowing that we are fellow heirs of the blessings of God's covenant. We have been redeemed from all deceit, trickery, self-seeking, and guile. Let us now go forward united in Christ, in fellowship, in the labour of the gospel, to the glory of God.



1. In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, ed. A. Roberts and J. Donaldson (Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953), Vol. 1, p.185. The editors note that "the kiss" was continued in the Western church until the thirteenth century and that it is still continued in the worship of the Coptic Church.
2. Bard Thompson, *Liturgies of the Western Church* (New York: New American Library, 1961), p.5.

Bibliography

- Bromiley, G.W., ed. *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, rev. ed., 4 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979-1988.
- Kittel G., and G. Friedrich, ed. *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., Trans. G.W. Bromiley. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964-76
- Roberts, A. and J. Donaldson, ed. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol.1 Reprint, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1953
- Thompson Bard. *Liturgies of the Western Church*. New York: New American Library, 1961.



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
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 — Kisses and the covenant blessings
— G.Ph. van Popta142
- From the Scriptures — A Word for All Time — J. De Jong144
- A contemporary sermon
— C.J. de Ruijter145
- International — W.W.J. VanOene ...147
- Book Review — G.H. Visscher148
- Book Review — C. Van Dam150
- Press Release151
- Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty ...152

There is no difference of opinion among us concerning the answer to this question. The Bible is relevant for today because in it God speaks to us. He thought of the generations to come, including our own generation, when He caused the apostles and the prophets to write down His Word.²

The Bible is not a book whose message remained hidden in the time of its creation. Indeed, the gospel breaks through all time barriers. We only need to remember that the life of the whole New Testament congregation falls fully within the expectation of the imminent return of Christ. The relevance of the Bible for today has, therefore, always been emphasized.

It will be good to underscore this once again. I have found that many people find it difficult to read the Bible as relevant to their own situation and experience. They wonder in confusion what many Bible passages might mean to them.

Of course, we do live in a time in which people continually demand to know the relevance of what you say. When we try to answer that question from our twentieth century understanding and with our western minds, then we will produce an incredibly meagre answer. Every one will recognize this, when we think of "tomorrow" which will follow "today." Tomorrow many changes will take place; other things will determine the face of the world and occupy the thoughts of the people. What was current and relevant yesterday, seems so much less important today. Considering this, our thoughts and relevance and importance are tempered considerably, and we will begin to speak much more carefully.

The Bible teaches us to acknowledge the riches of its message which encompasses all ages. When we try to speak of relevance and importance within the context of this rich and enduring message of the Bible, we must consider much more than what we see today with our limited human vision. This is not only so because God's Word has sufficed for God's children throughout all the ages, also in times other than our own. The Bible's message is so rich and enduring because in this Word God makes *Himself* known to His people. His grace is relevant and important in our lives. This relevance cannot be measured in terms of our limited, time-bound understanding; it is determined by God's eternal purpose.

It will not harm us to think about this when reading the Bible or listening to a sermon! It will protect us against the danger of limiting, perhaps even belittling what God wants to give us.

Those who want to hear only a contemporary message, will lose sight of that which is for all ages.

The address

It will be clear that the eternal Word and the actual congregation are not two equals between which the sermon must unfold. The source of the sermon is the Word of God, not the congregation. The relevance of the sermon is, therefore, not determined by the situation within the congregation, but by that Word. For this

"... expect the sermon to provide insights which help the believers to discern what is of importance in their lives before God in today's world."

reason I do not believe in selecting the sermon text on a weekly basis, in response to certain happenings and perceived needs in the congregation.³ The minister who selects his text in this way will find his sermon "in the congregation." In this case his understanding of the situation of the congregation determines the relevance of the sermon. The risk is great that minister and congregation become quite shortsighted when they are busy with the gospel in this way.

The question arises: What is the address of the sermon? The sermon is directed to a particular congregation at a specific moment in time. The previous discussion does not imply that the congregation, as the address, is of no importance to the sermon. The Bible shows us how apostles and prophets carefully directed and focused the message which they were called to bring to God's people. However, the relevance of the message is not found in that focusing, but in the Word itself. Only in this way will we find a starting point for a relevant, topical, contemporary sermon.

Here we have found the framework for the sermon, but within this framework the message needs to be directed and further focused. Since a sermon is the ministering of the Gospel, we may expect such focus and direction.

Contemporary

The question about the direction and focus of the sermon is related to the whole worship service. We believe that the worship service is an important meeting with God within His covenant relationship with His people. Therefore it is most important that this meeting is not a strange, unusual event in the life of the congregation. Further, the God who comes to the congregation with His eternal Word is and wants to be her God

today. In this way the worship service becomes a real meeting of the Head of the church and His people.

What happens in the church has everything to do with what happens in the world, because the Head of the church is the King of this world. This means that the worship service cannot and may not be a place of isolation where the congregation withdraws herself from this world. The congregation needs to learn this fact in the church. She must clearly understand that the worship service has everything to do with the everyday life of the congregation. We may expect that within the framework of the relevance of the gospel, the message of the sermon is clearly focused on our own time and situation.

In church, we may expect a contemporary sermon.

What is contemporary?

This concept demands further explanation. Many things and ideas present themselves as contemporary. However, within the framework of our discussion I may identify at least two aspects: the sermon will have a date and it will have an address.

First, the date of the sermon is important. Of course, not in the sense that a week earlier or later matters. What matters is that the sermon is clearly related to the times in which the congregation lives. The congregation must learn to understand what it means to live as congregation of Christ in the 1990s. She must learn to discern what moves today's world, and in particular what motivates the people of today. Every day the congregation finds herself eye to eye with the world. It becomes vitally important that she will be able to discern clearly what is and what is not from God. She must be enabled to deal with today's questions in word and deed. Therefore we may expect the sermon to provide insights which help the believers to discern what is of importance in their lives before God in today's world. This understanding results in sermons with a date, and that is certainly no disadvantage! It shows clearly the difference between the Bible and a sermon. The Canon of the Bible is complete. However, since every new period places new demands on the congregation to live in the world of that day, our ministers continue to make new sermons.

Not only is the date of the sermon important, also its address needs our attention. The sermon does not direct itself "to whom it may concern," but to a particular congregation. In the sermon, instruction and pastoral care go hand in hand. It is remarkable that the message of the

apostolic epistles and the letters to the seven congregations is so clearly addressed to particular congregations. Thus, the message of the gospel is not determined by the congregation, but it is applied concretely to the situation of that particular congregation.

Application

We came across a word which is often used in connection with the sermon: the application. I realize that this is a topic about which much more could be said. I leave much undiscussed, since it is not my intention to be complete, but rather to provide some assistance when we speak about the sermon. Therefore I can only make a few remarks in the context of these articles.

Many consider the application the most important factor in judging a sermon. In this way the sermon's application becomes somewhat of a hallmark of a relevant, worthwhile sermon. Such reasoning is based on the misconception that the message becomes relevant only if it is applied to our time and our situation. Perhaps certain practices have encouraged such thinking. For quite a long time sermons were often based on the principles of explanation and application.

Such sermons would first explain in detail the text itself. Then they would continue with the application in which the message-for-today was spelled out. In times past these two segments of the sermon were often separated by congregational singing of an appropriate psalm or hymn.

It should not surprise us when such practices lead to a lack of understanding and appreciation of the worship service as a meeting with the Lord. These practices suggest that before the congregation really can hear in the preached Word how the Lord gives Himself, the Word needs to be actualized, applied to the present situation.

The application of the sermons should never be a separate section of the sermon, as if only this segment is important for today. If this is done, the impression is given that sermons are current only in as much as they deal with political, social, or ecclesiastical "current events." Neither should the sermon attempt to "address" the congregation with a wide range of practical examples taken from the life of the congregation.

Such practices do not guarantee the relevance and value of the sermon for today. For a sermon to have a date, it does not need to deal extensively with

the issues of the moment. What is necessary is that a sermon builds up a Christian perspective on such current questions and issues.

In order for the sermon to have a clear address, it is not necessary that it deals in depth with the problems of the particular congregation. A sermon with a clear address provides the congregation with concrete help and support in dealing with matters of concern.

Therefore, the sermon's application cannot be a loose-leaf addition to the discussion of the text. We may expect that, throughout the exposition of the text, a contemporary sermon shows how the eternal Word of God must be applied in our situation and in our time.

¹ De Ruijter, C.J. *Een aktuele preek*. DE REFORMATIE 64/14, December 31, 1989. Translated with permission by T.M.P. VanderVen.

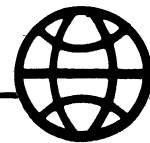
² See Romans 15:4: For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope.

³ See the previous article, The text and the sermon.



INTERNATIONAL

By W.W.J. VanOene



EDMONTON, AB

The Bible is an authoritative witness to Jesus, inspired by God, and not a literal, word-for-word revelation, says a new study documented by the United Church.

The document, "The Authority and Interpretation of Scripture," was produced in part as a response to the deep division in the 850,000-member church over the ordination of homosexuals.

The long-awaited study document says "the issue is not whether the Scripture has authority over us. It has. The issue is that we differ in how we understand the Bible to have authority over us and how we interpret the Bible. Given the church, society and culture in which we live, there is uncertainty as to how Scripture can be a sure and certain guide on a variety of matters."

The document accepts modern "historical-critical" principles for studying the Bible. This approach treats the biblical manuscript not as a unique, faultless book which Christians can only accept as the Word of God but as an ancient text whose dates, authorship, cultural context and literary forms are well relevant to its interpretation.

The New Testament was shaped over a period of centuries, beginning at least a generation after the death of Jesus. The early church had no single set of scriptures but in some cases excluded books now regarded as scriptural today and included other books no longer regarded as Scripture.

The writings in the Bible, particularly in the New Testament, were slanted to reflect the main concerns of the writers and the audience for which they were intended.

OUR COVER



Signs of Spring
in Smithville, ON

Richard Bös
of Smithville, ON

The Rev. Gordon Ross, executive director of the Community of Concern, said the document misrepresents the position of the Reformers and "doesn't engage appropriately with the person and work of Jesus Christ as the primary theme of Scripture . . . It's badly out of focus." (RNS-CN)

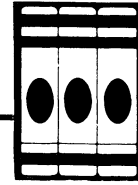
OTTAWA

The Roman Catholic Church in Canada faces its most severe future shortage of priests in Western dioceses, says a statistical study prepared by Canada's Catholic bishops.

Already nearly one in five Western parishes does not have resident priests. To compensate, Catholic parishes in Western Canada are increasingly relying on lay members of the church, says the study.

While the number of priests in Ontario has actually risen slightly, it has dropped in the rest of Canada. The number of priests is declining most rapidly in Quebec, but that province began with a much larger supply. Today Quebec has one priest for every 870 Catholics, compared with one priest for every 1,170 Catholics in Western Canada. (CN)





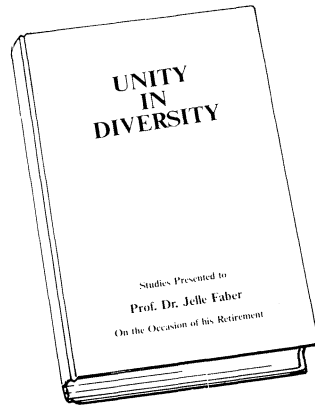
UNITY IN DIVERSITY

R. Faber, ed., *Unity in Diversity: Studies Presented to Prof. Dr. Jelle Faber on the Occasion of his Retirement* (Hamilton: 1989), 138 pages. Available for \$17.95 from Premier Printing, One Beghin Ave., Winnipeg, Man. R2J 3X5.

It is a longstanding tradition within academic circles that when a noted scholar celebrates a milestone, others combine forces to present him with a festschrift in his honour. For the first time in the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches, this has been done in honour of a man who has surely shown himself to be the most significant scholar to work within her midst so far, Professor Doctor Jelle Faber. No doubt, there are several aspects here that have already served to warm his heart; first, the fact that he receives here not only a tribute from colleagues who have worked close at his side but also the contributions of some who through his own efforts became ministers of the Word or even professors of theology; second, the fact that his own son, Riemer Faber, with his unique qualifications as a Ph.D. student in the Greek and Latin languages so cherished by Dr. Faber himself, has worked hard behind the scenes to assemble and edit the various studies; and third, the fact that the project has been underwritten by the Senate of the Theological College itself, an institution dear to Dr. Faber, being to a large extent the result of his labour of love the last twenty years.

What we have here then is a professionally published collection of essays of the high academic quality in keeping with the standards of a festschrift and of the professor himself. Most of the contributors have added a paragraph or two to salute the professor and encourage him as he enters into the next phase of his life. Also this former student, having been asked to review this work, most gladly does so. I for one recall how Professor Faber would often speak highly of men like S.G. de Graaf, M.B. van 't Veer, K. Schilder and others, acknowledging the profound influence they had on his life; God's way with the generations is such that now there is a new generation who are grateful to Dr. J. Faber and those other men of the first hour who so faithfully taught that with which they had been entrusted (2 Tim. 2:2). Taking

his cue from the personal remark of the professor, "Indeed, my deepest desire is to share in the *fruitio Dei*; to enjoy God as He is, for ever and ever," Rev. G. Van Dooren takes the lead in the preface as he builds a message on the *visio Dei per essentiam*, the matter of seeing the essence of God in the life hereafter.



Known among us particularly as a pastoral theologian, he displays here his expertise as a dogmatic theologian as he weaves his way through some of the knots of this particular subject, especially the apparent discrepancy between the fact that while God is confessed to be invisible, yet we are told that we will see Him "as He is" (1 John 3:2; 1 Cor.13:12).

Prof. H. M. Ohmann picks up on where VanDooren leaves off and gives us an article entitled "Some Remarks on the Use of the Term 'Theophany' in the Study of the Old Testament." After reviewing the significance that several Old Testament theologians have given this term, Prof. Ohmann prefers to see the concept of "theophany" not as a reference to seeing God "as He is," but to acts wherein God makes His presence known, usually by way of accompanying phenomena, and always with the emphasis on the words that are uttered. The aim of every theophany however is not to satisfy our curiosity but to give the people of God further insight into who God is and what He wants of them in a given situation. While more lucidity would have been desirable, this is nevertheless a helpful contribution to the larger problem that also VanDooren has addressed.

In an article entitled, "The Meaning of *biš'gāgā*," Prof. Dr. C. Van Dam then deals with the idea of intentionality and unintentionality in connection with sin and guilt offerings, showing conclusively that translations incorrectly render this word in Leviticus 4 and 5 and Numbers 15 as "unintentionally" or "unwittingly," and that it is preferable to understand it here as a reference to human frailty and weakness. The Scriptures treat all sin very seriously, never whitewashing even sins done "unintentionally"; rather than a contrast between intentional/unintentional sins, Van Dam posits a "basic contrast between sins done in human weakness and frailty . . . and those done with the up-raised hand in persistent rebellion for which there is no atonement"(21).

Next, Professor J. Geertsema writes "Some Remarks about Historical Development in Matthew 11-13, with 11:25 and 13:11 as Focal Points." Herein he gives us a fine exegesis of Matthew 11 showing us how verse 6 is the key that unlocks the passage so that it can be seen how the words of verse 7ff are indeed an answer to the question of John the Baptist in verse 3. Following this interpretation, also the enigmatic sayings of Jesus in 4-6 and 19c do fit in well with the rest of the chapter, something not always seen. Prof. Geertsema has done us a real service in coming to grips with this important but difficult chapter of Holy Scripture. In the second part, he focuses especially on Matthew 11:25 and 13:11. While the attempt to show here that God in His judgment condemns and hardens those who display their unbelief is to be appreciated, I do have difficulty with phrases like God "was actively at work in the reactions of unbelief and of rejection. . . ." (36; cf. 34,43). Do we then not come very close here to making God the author of their unbelief, something the Canons wish to avoid at all costs? Is the difficulty perhaps caused by a failure to work sufficiently with the two aspects of reprobation, namely, preterition and condemnation? Some further discussion on this point would be helpful.

Professor L. Selles tackles another difficult subject in his work "The Prophetic Vision of Satan's Binding in Biblical Perspective." Noting that the binding of Satan in Revelation 20:1-3 is put in very absolute terms, (that Satan is "bound and tied up, powerless in a subterranean

jail”(50)), Selles points out that also the amillennial position generally held in Reformed circles does not do justice to the total binding described here. Thus, some Dutch scholars (A. Ringnalda, C. Vonk, C. VanderWaal, and G. Hagens) have come to other solutions, which Selles also finds unacceptable. In the end, he comes to the position that the binding gradually becomes total, “Satan’s binding. . . runs a course through salvation history”. Unfortunately, the article stops before one is entirely convinced, and one finds oneself wishing for more.

In “Some Problems in the Doctrine of Election,” Dr. R.H. Bremmer delves into the question to what extent election has been seen as election in Christ. Obviously at home in this difficult material, he shows us how in this century both Karl Barth and J.G. Woelderink in their own ways have been instrumental in rekindling this insight, how it was lacking in some earlier theologians (Brakel, Bavinck, and Honig), but that it was very much a part of Calvin’s thought.

Next Dr. C. Trimp writes about “The Promise of the Covenant: Some Observations.” Beginning with some personal remarks, Dr. Trimp lets us in on how he and Dr. Faber first met in the 40s, drawn to Kampen by the figure of Dr. K. Schilder, and how their similar interests led to a lifelong friendship (strengthened no doubt by the fact that personal similarities also led both of them to marry daughters from the same family!). He tells us how in those days the struggles of the church caused their discussions to center on “the exegetical and dogmatic aspects of the doctrine of the covenant,” and now after so many years wishes to continue that discussion by way of this short study. He notes herein how the word “promise” should not be understood as referring to a future act, as even K. Schilder suggested, but that the Reformers understood it as God speaking in the present. He points out how this should sharpen our understanding of many of the phrases of the catechism, and that in this way promise and faith are indeed seen as “correlative,” for now that which corresponds to “promise” is not in the first place “fulfillment” but instead “acceptance in faith.”

In “Who is Catholic? Some Representative Examples,” Rev. J. De Jong points to the significance that Dr. J. Faber gave to the doctrine of the catholicity of the church by noting that Dr. J. Faber’s tenure as a professor began with an inaugural address entitled “The Catholic Character of the Belgic Confession” and ended with one called “The Catholic Character of the Church” (it was also an important aspect of his dissertation,

Vestigium Ecclesiae: De Doop als ‘spoor der kerk’). He then proceeds to contrast some of this work of “Hamilton” with Tübingen, the famous center of modern ecumenicity. “Should one not consider to abandon Hamilton in favour of Tübingen?” After critiquing the deviant theologies of the Protestant Tübingen theologian E. Jüngel and the Roman Catholic Tübingen figure Hans Küng, he ends up back at Hamilton with Dr. J. Faber who has noted, in the line of Cyril of Jerusalem, that doctrinal completeness is an important element in the term “catholic”: “The catholicity of the church . . . characterizes the church in her total adherence to the truth, revealed in Holy Scripture, and in her universal gathering throughout all times, from all places, and out of all nations”(87).

Next, Prof. Dr. R.C. Gamble, of the H.H. Meeter Center for Calvin Studies of Grand Rapids, writes under the title “Presbyterianism, Politics and Westminster Theology,” about the views and activities of J. Gresham Machen. While Machen is generally considered to have been an outstanding churchman and New Testament scholar, ever so instrumental with respect to the founding of the OPC, Gamble shows us a side of Machen that is much less known. He quotes Machen as saying, “civil and religious liberty seems to me to be more valuable than any other thing . . .,” shows how Machen the citizen also attempted to exert his influence in this regard, but that he all the while maintained very strongly that it was not the task of the church as a body to make “official pronouncements upon the political or social questions of the day” (91). Here there is indeed unity within the diversity of the Dutch and British branches of the Reformed family, for Machen is struggling to maintain the words of his own confession that “synods and councils are to handle or conclude nothing, but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs . . .”(Westminster Confession, XXXI,iv). Machen differed here from John Murray who understood the task of the church to be somewhat broader. Most certainly, this is relevant material, not only in terms of the role of the church (here the question whether a subject like Apartheid belongs on the agenda of the International Conference of Reformed Churches comes to mind!), but also in stimulating us to see that most certainly as individual Christian citizens “action taken in the field of public justice and righteousness, in the name of Christ, is an important part of the Christian walk”(96).

In the third section, Dr. J. Visscher makes a contribution entitled “Redemp-

tive-Historical Preaching Revisited.” Herein, he reviews for us that which has taken place since the 1930s with respect to the discussion about redemptive historical versus exemplary preaching; he summarizes much of the debate, deals with the critique of the former that S. Greidanus delivers in both his earlier and later work with the contributions of C. Trimp and of H. Krabbendam. This article will surely be beneficial for our own membership in terms of informing them more exactly as to how it is that the preaching that is heard in our own churches is different (and richer!) than that which is heard elsewhere. Hopefully, this article and the works reviewed in it will also rekindle the debate. The undersigned wonders, for instance, whether H. Krabbendam and C. Trimp have not touched upon matters that deserve further discussion, namely, the work of the Holy Spirit and sanctification? Surely, as officebearers struggle with the difficulties experienced in congregations and discouragement sets in, the question that Krabbendam posits will come to mind. He rightly suggests that “the failure and downfall of the church always goes hand in hand with a deficiency in the understanding of . . . Scripture and a corresponding deficiency in preaching its message (223).” Is it so then, as he suggests, that the redemptive-historical method tends to make the doctrine of justification the centerpiece of the gospel, whereas “if there is a hierarchical order at all, the nod should probably go to sanctification as the crowning piece”(226)? Is it so that the emphasis in our preaching is too “cerebral” and insufficiently “spiritual”? Also when we take note of the stalemated discussions between ourselves and those in Free Reformed circles and the like, it seems that this may be a very worthwhile area for further discussion.

Lastly, Prof. Dr. K. Deddens makes a contribution entitled “The Liturgy: A Study of the History and Principles of this Office,” which after some exegetical study of the Scriptures becomes to a large extent a summary of the history of worship services in general from its origins in the early church, to its decline in the middle ages, and its rise again at and after the Reformation. The office of Liturgy, Deddens concludes, belongs not to the minister but to Christ alone; at the same time, it is possible to speak about many liturges, for the whole congregation is involved in the liturgy: the minister preaches, the deacons take the offering, there may be room for a “reader,” and the people of God sing to the praise of God.

All in all, as the first such book in our circles, those who have been involved in its production are to be applauded. The

book is well-bound, finely printed, with very few mistakes. Let it be said though that one might have wished for a more appropriate title. If the title "Unity in Diversity" refers to the unity among the diverse authors, it could stand as a title for every festschrift; the only place these terms are used is in Gamble's article with reference to the two branches of Reformed theology (the Dutch and English/Scottish), but it is doubtful that this is the rationale for the title. It seems to me that something like "Towards Catholicity" might have been more appropriate given the fact that, as J. De Jong points out via Faber himself, adherence to truth is a mark of catholicity and catholicity is a doctrine ever so dear to the heart of him whom this book is intend-

ed to honour. Think also of the fine words of Dr. Trimp along these lines, as he characterizes the life of his friend and colleague: "In the vast space of the church of all ages it is a great privilege to be allowed to spend a number of years pondering, teaching, and preaching the salvation of Christ, the salvation which reaches the world through the promise of God"(77).

From time to time one hears the complaint that the principal of our Theological College did little to publish the fruits of his research and teaching. That sentiment is however refuted very well by way of the appendix entitled "Select List of Publications by J. Faber" which extends for some eight pages. Many works have indeed flowed out of his pen! We under-

stand as well that plans are underway to publish several of his earlier Dutch works in a separate volume. Nevertheless, when one's knowledge of Reformed theology is as vast as that of the esteemed professor, the greatest service this volume can perhaps perform is to encourage him to spend some of whatever time the Lord yet gives him in writing and publishing. We do wish him many more happy years together with his "gracious lady", as Rev. G. VanDooren so aptly calls her. But at the same time, it is the fervent wish of many that also those years may be productive for the cause of that other Lady (2 John 1), the catholic church of Christ.

G.H. VISSCHER

THE GREAT DIVIDE: CHRISTIANITY OR EVOLUTION?

Gerald Berghoeff and Lester DeKoster, *The Great Divide: Christianity or Evolution?* The Banner of Truth Trust 1989 (180 pages; price \$6.50 U.S.)

The central thesis of this most readable book is that "the uniqueness of Christianity is compromised by every effort to unite it to some form of evolution. Theistic evolution, also called 'creato-economic science,' perverts Christianity into just another man-tailored religion" (p. 13). In support of this thesis, the Scriptures are first listened to, and then contrasted with what evolution has to say. This small book shows that "there is much in Genesis awaiting the eye of faith; there is much in evolutionary theories awaiting exposure to the Light" (p. 14).

The book is divided into four parts. The first three have as main title "The Plan of Redemption" and sub-titled respectively, "Creation," "The Fall," and "Incarnation." A final chapter sums up the main thoughts and is entitled " 'SCIENCE' In Capital Letters." This work shows very clearly that modern Christians cannot have it both ways. One either must accept God's revelation in Genesis and His plan of salvation or embrace the deception of evolution, whether in its secular or theistic dress.

There are many good insights here that will deepen and broaden one's understanding of Scripture, in particular Genesis. What is said of God's breathing into man the breath of life so that man became a living soul, reminds one of the totally different ways the Bible and evolution speak of human life (pp. 55-59). The Biblical and sensitive way in which the "problem of evil" and death is addressed

is not only humbling but encouraging (pp. 96-109). The authors clearly show in these and other chapters that an evolutionist whether a secular or a theistic one,



ultimately ends up with a worldview that is without God and hope. Only a complete submission to the Word of God allows one to have a true picture of reality.

In a day and age when much doubt and scepticism is being sown, this book reminds us "By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of the things which do not appear" (Heb. 11:3). But what about science and the discoveries of science? Should we not give science a hearing too? In the final chapter several points are made. I will mention two. In the first place, science strictly defined, cannot really say a wise word about origins. When "science" makes statements on how the world began, it is only speculation. In the second place, the book of nature must be in-

terpreted in the light of the book of special revelation, the Bible (cf. Article 2 of the Belgic Confession).

This book is easy to read and is designed for a wide audience. I hope it gets the hearing it deserves.

STANDING YOUR GROUND. MESSAGES FROM DANIEL

Bryan Chapell. *Standing Your Ground. Messages From Daniel*, Baker Book House 1989 (166 pages; price \$8.95 U.S.).

Bryan Chapell, vice president of Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis, Missouri, here offers expository messages using the first six chapters of Daniel as a springboard. His account is heavily larded with stories to illustrate his point and many readers will undoubtedly be edified by this "call to courage in an age of compromise" as the subtitle of the book reads. Sometimes his stories are very effective to get a certain point across and Chapell is clearly of Reformed persuasion. His remarks on faith in chapter 3 are very worthwhile. It is, however, unfortunate that, given the title of his book, Chapell does not offer a systematic explanation of the passages of Daniel under consideration. This lack is, in my opinion, the key weakness of his approach. It is very much exemplary and as a result often superficial as a treatment of Daniel. The stress is on the present scene and how Christians should respond to the trials of our time. In that respect he succeeds. He is very practical and brings all sorts of problems close to home. However, all this often has very little to do with Daniel 1-6 and thus can hardly be called "messages from Daniel."

C. VAN DAM 

C · O · V · E · N · A · N · T

CANADIAN REFORMED TEACHERS' COLLEGE

A Few Remarks

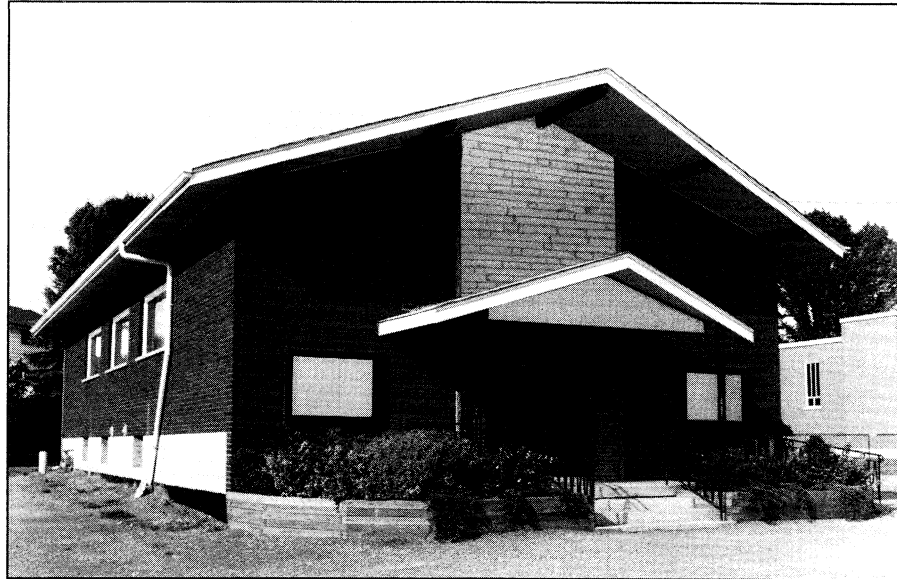
Arie J. Hordyk, President

First of all, permit me to acknowledge the assistance of the Publishers of *Clarion* who made this Newsletter possible. This will amount to quite a saving over an individual effort on our part.

This publication intends to bring you up to date about our Teachers' College. We had another beautiful graduation day on May 26th, 1989. We enjoyed the festivities and the graduation address of Dr. Faber. We had our annual Board meeting on January 26th and 27th, 1990 and the members came from east and west to address the various issues needing attention to continue the operation of our College. It was one of the best meetings I ever attended.

In this issue Br. Jan Gelderman, our treasurer, also gives you an accounting of our financial affairs. We are grateful that our Church community has given us the support needed to keep going. In the first place the various School Societies in their collective membership and then all those individual supporters in the remaining congregations in Canada.

We saw, under the blessings of the



Lord, not only that our daily needs were met, but also that we could take possession of our "own" building in Hamilton. And for this, the Board wishes to thank everyone who contributed to the building fund. It was great!

And please stay with us in the future. In order to provide our Schools with new

teachers, and to keep them operating to instruct the children of the Covenant, we need to meet our (minimal) annual budget. Any amount is welcome. Please do not forget your Teachers' College.

A New Name

T.M.P. VanderVen

Yes, the Teachers' College has a new name: COVENANT Canadian Reformed Teachers' College. Early in 1989, the Board requested submissions for a name for the Teachers' College. Mrs. Claire Hutten from Arthur, Ontario, suggested this name with reference to Psalms 105 and 106. Indeed, COVENANT is an apt name for a teacher training institution, after all, *Reformed education is covenantal education*. In 1984 Rev. Stam put it this way:

The distinctive character of Reformed education is thus that it deals with covenant children and instructs them in the covenant way of life with the one covenant revelation. (Reformed Perspective Vol.3, No.9).

Work is also being done to create a new logo for the college which matches the new name and reflects the task of the college in preparing and training teachers for our Reformed schools. Mrs. Hutten suggested a logo based on Eph.

6:10-17, which speaks of the armour of God which the Christians are to put on in order to withstand the wiles of the devil. This is a most appropriate suggestion, since a major task of the College is to prepare its graduates for that spiritual warfare.

We pray that the Lord will continue to provide mercy, faithfulness, and strength so that the COVENANT Canadian Reformed Teachers' College may live up to its wonderful name.

Eighth Anniversary and Sixth Graduation

May 26, 1989

W.F. Horsman

Last year May, graduation exercises were held for the sixth consecutive year as three students received diplomas from the Teachers' College.

Before the actual graduation exercises, the graduands and their guests were treated to a dinner prepared and served by the Ladies' Auxiliary. As usual the first and second year students had decorated the room and organized some excellent entertainment. The number "three" was prominent in several presentations. The graduands were compared to the *Three Blind Mice*, the *Three Little Pigs*, and the *Three Bears*. The faculty turned out to be the *Three*

Bad Wolves. Several students also demonstrated their musical talents.

The official ceremonies began at 8.15 pm, when the graduands entered the auditorium of the Cornerstone Church. The chairman, Mr. A.J. Hordyk, officially opened the festivities, and welcomed the audience. He then introduced Dr. J. Faber, who addressed the graduating class on *Becoming a Good, Reformed Teacher of History* (See *Clarion*, June 23, 1989). Before the conferring of the diplomas, the principal, Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen addressed the graduands and the gathering. He expressed thanks for the support received for the

College from across the world. Indeed, there were many blessings to count. Br. VanderVen concluded that it is good to remind each other of these things time and again,

also during the graduation exercises of the Class of 89. Because we might readily turn pessimistic: This is the smallest class ever to graduate from the Teachers' College, three female graduates only while our schools are desperate for teachers. This past year saw the smallest body of students in the college (except of course for the first two years when we were adding additional courses of study each year), twelve in total....



Canadian Reformed Teachers' College, 1988-1989

FRONT ROW: Lisa Harsevoort, Gilda Stefani, Erica Blom, Anne-Marie Jonker, Mrs. P. Boeringa (librarian), Petra Blom, Helen Vander Ven, Edith Hoisink.

BACK ROW: Joyce Veenendaal, Sharon Vandersluis, Mr. T. Vander Ven, Mr. W. Horsman, Rev. R. Aasman, Mr. A. Witten, Debbie de Boer, Elaine Vandenbos, Carolin Boeringa.

ABSENT: Mrs. vanHuisstede (secretary), Dr. F. Oosterhoff, Dr. W. Helder.

PHOTO BY JOHN VERMEER

Yet, we are reminded of and admonished by the words of Psalm 37, composed by the poet David who knew of pessimism firsthand, but who also knew where to go to counter that pessimism:

Trust in the LORD, and do good....

Commit your way to the LORD....

Trust in Him, and He will act.

In that trust and confidence we may conclude the 1988-1989 school year; in this manner we may present to you that small Class of '89.

Receiving the Diploma of Education (1-year programme) was Gilda Stefani, originally from Lower Sackville, NS. Gilda is now employed at the Mara-

natha Christian School in Fergus. The Diploma of Teaching (3-year programme) was conferred upon Sharon VanderSluis and Joyce Veenendaal, both from Carman, MB. Sharon is also employed at the Maranatha School in Fergus, while Joyce returned to Carman and teaches at the Dufferin Area Chr. School.

A much appreciated musical interlude featured Margriet Deddens and some of the young folk of Hamilton and Burlington.

The valedictory was delivered by Joyce Veenendaal. She reminded us of the trials and tribulations faced by the students who come to the College not

really knowing what to expect. She thanked the community for making the students feel welcome. She thanked the faculty for always being there when needed which made up for some individual idiosyncrasies. She thanked all those who provided encouragement in one way or another. Joyce concluded that thankfulness can only be meaningful when it is expressed in serving the Lord in our daily task.

Br. F. Stefani from Lower Sackville closed the evening with a prayer of thanksgiving, after which those present had the opportunity to congratulate the graduates, and to exchange news and views.



Canadian Reformed Teachers' College, 1989-1990

FRONT ROW: Petra Blom, Anne-Marie Jonker, Esther Buist, Erica Blom, Charlene Sluys, Edith Hofsink, Marianne Vanderboom, Miriam den Hollander.

BACK ROW: Debbie de Boer, Jeanette Ravensbergen, Robin VanDriel, Mr. A. Witten, Mr. W. Horsman, Mr. T. Vander Ven, Mrs. P. Boeringa (librarian), Elaine VandenBos, Carolin Boeringa.

ABSENT: Dr. W. Helder, Mrs. W. vanHuisstede (secretary), Miss T. Hutten.

PHOTO BY JOHN VERMEER, HAMILTON, ON

Press Release

C.J. Nobels

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College Association, held in Hamilton, Ontario on January 26th and 27th, 1990.

The meetings are begun in a Christian manner. A warm welcome is expressed to everyone, especially the Governors from Western Canada. In total 17 Governors are present.

After dealing with usual business matters such as agenda, minutes etc., the secretary, Br. J. Tenhage, presents his annual report. He highlights the many blessings that the College has received especially the fact that instruction could continue during the past year, guiding young persons to become entrusted with the education of covenant children.

Several of the Governors have audited the instruction at the College. The reports received speak very favourably about the high quality of instruction given.

Since this is the only time in the year that all Governors can be together, it is natural that financial matters take much of the time, including setting next year's Budget. In connection with this, the building committee proposes certain repairs and improvements to the building. These various, necessary, projects will require approximately \$8,000. Included in the recommendations is an alarm system. A break-in and associated vandalism would seriously disrupt the teaching programs. The Executive will deal with this further, since more

information is advisable before proceeding. The Board also approves the acquisition of various educational equipment, including a piano which is sorely needed.

It goes without saying that also salaries for the staff are discussed. The Board is committed that the teaching staff must receive remuneration in as fair a manner as possible. In this connection it is therefore also recognized that the Principal's allowance is increased. The total Budget for 1990/91 is approved. An amount of \$269,500.00 will be required to operate the College. This represents an increase of approximately 5% over the previous year. Based on this requirement and the number of members we have, the membership fee can remain at \$250.00 per year.

The Teacher's College now has a name. The Board unanimously chose the name "Covenant Canadian Reformed Teacher's College". This name was submitted by Mrs. Claire Hutten, member of the Church at Elora, Ontario. The suggestion was accompanied by a Logo. As such, she has won the prize consisting of a \$25.00 Book Certificate. All those that sent in suggestions for name and/or logo will be told of our appreciation for their effort.

Recognition and accreditation again has the attention of the Board. A report of the Recognition Committee was discussed. A lot of good work has been done, but it appears that much work to gain acceptance is yet necessary. Certainly, the work is not without frustration.

The Committee received much valuable input and direction to continue their work.

Women's Savings Action: Even though this action has not yet (but soon will be) implemented across the country, already close to \$1,000.00 has been raised. The Funds raised will be used for library expansion, special equipment etc. Watch for an announcement in your local church bulletin.

The Principal presents his extensive yearly report. It deals with many subjects such as student body, academic progress, programs, library/resource centre, relationship with the schools, faculty professional activities and preparation for the 1990/91 academic year. etc.

Graduation 1990 is set for May 25th, 1990 in the Hamilton Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church. Mr. P. Blom from Abbotsford, B.C. will be invited to deliver the graduation address.

The Board expressed concerns that some University graduates have applied and obtained teaching positions in our Schools without attending the appropriate courses at the Teachers' College.

The Chairman, Br. Hordyk, expresses gratitude to the staff for the work done and for dedication displayed to the College. He also thanks all those that contributed to the meeting. These days of meetings have been hard but rewarding work, enjoyable fellowship. In thankfulness to our covenant God for the past, we may look forward to the future with confidence.

Financial Affairs CRTCA

Treasurer J. Gelderman

* *Expenses: budgeted and actual 1988-89*

This was the year in which we bought our own building and had the drive. At times your treasurer had problems to meet all commitments, but in the end we managed. The total amount received, including funds from our now depleted savings account, was only slightly less than total expenses.

* *Revenues: actual 1988-1989*

Some may ask, as our accountant did, why do we have a minus amount in REVENUES, item Miscellaneous. An amount shown between brackets means MINUS. It so happens that we

have a separate account for books which the students buy from our library. This amount is not an income but is subtracted from actual library cost. However, since most of the time students give me one cheque for student fees and for books, I must enter this in our income and then transfer to the separate account for student books.

* *Budgets for 1989-1990 (our present term) and 1990-1991, as accepted on our annual meeting, January 1990.*

For the present year we do have 26.75% increase. This is caused by payment Principal and Interest and, of course, the maintaining of the building.

When our present budget was established in January 1988, we did not know the exact payments on Principal and Interest, and estimated this at \$30,000.00. In the meantime, it turned out to be almost \$20,000.00.

With the budget for 1990 - 1991, only minor adjustments had to be made which was reflected in an increase of 5.27% only. For both years, 2 items were added: an item for Curriculum Assistance Committee, and an item for Professional Development. We must insist that our staff keeps itself up to date on everything and therefore also assist them in these activities.

I EXPENSES	BUDGET 1988/89	ACTUAL 1988/89	BUDGET 1989/90	BUDGET 1990/91
a. ORGANIZATIONAL EXPENSES				
Travel Board	1,000	510.00	1,000	1,000
Travel Annual Meeting	2,000	1,432.01	2,000	2,000
Administration Board	1,000	2,569.12	2,000	3,000
Public Relations800	0.00	3,000	3,000
Total Organizational Expenses	4,800	4,511.13	8,000	9,000
b. OPERATIONAL EXPENSES				
Salaries and Benefits	166,615	157,171.70	183,122	196,624
Rent, Maintenance, Equip.	7,000	12,062.50	deleted	deleted
Furniture & Equipment	-	-	2,000	5,400
Caretaker and Supplies	-	-	5,000	5,000
Maintenance Building	-	-	3,000	8,000
Practicum Teaching	4,500	4,200.00	4,500	4,500
Library	8,500	9,204.83	10,000	10,000
Supplies & Stationery	2,000	1,759.67	2,000	2,000
Administration at College	2,000	4,104.07	2,000	3,000
Travel Staff	3,500	1,922.60	1,500	2,500
Curriculum Assistance Comm.	-	-	2,000	1,000
Graduation850	774.35	850	850
Professional Development	-	-	1,500	1,000
Principal and Interest	-	6,425.28	30,000	20,000
Copying	1,500	996.90	deleted	deleted
Renovations	-	32,633.94	deleted	deleted
Miscellaneous	-	-	528	626
TOTAL Operational Expenses	197,165	231,255.84	248,000	260,500
ADD Organizational Expenses	4,800	4,511.13	8,000	9,000
TOTAL ESTIMATED and BUDGETED	201,965	235,766.97	256,000	269,500
Increase over year before			26.75%	5.27%
II REVENUES				
Student Fees	32,000	24,000.00	24,000	28,000
Membership Fees	140,000	133,534.70	193,750	196,250
Donations	29,965	15,227.86	35,250	38,250
Building Fund	-	11,523.20	-	-
Miscellaneous	-	(4,680.87)	3,000	7,000
Total Revenues	201,965	179,604.89	256,000	269,500
Plus Savings account and reimbursement of renovations from Building Fund		54,743.84		
		234,348.73		
Deficit		(1,418.24) -		

* Fees and donations received 1988-1989

Following is a listing of Fees & Donations received from the various school associations and/or congregations. The book year is from September 1, 1988 until August 31, 1989.

In certain instances the listing of revenue by congregation may be somewhat confusing. For example, this year Hamilton and Ancaster are still listed as one, next year we will have Hamilton and Ancaster separately. Since members in Barrhead do support the school in Neerlandia, the support from Barrhead is higher than shown. The same applies to all congregations in the Fraser Valley which support via the schools in Cloverdale, Langley and Yarrow.

Brampton	\$ 2,485.00	Watford	385.00
Burlington	36.62	Carman	12,536.00
Burlington East	5,070.00	Neerlandia	9,112.00
Burlington West	5,920.00	Winnipeg	7,000.00
Burlington South	5,333.60	Edmonton	1,200.00
Fergus	2,820.00	Barrhead	100.00
Guelph	790.00	John Calvin School	8,200.00
Orangeville	5,000.00	includes: Abbotsford, Chilliwack	
Ottawa	500.00	William of Orange	22,000.00
Toronto	100.00	includes: Cloverdale, Langley	
Chatham	7,438.2	Surrey	
Church Collections	828.11	Houston	104.50
Hamilton/Ancaster	10,685.00	Smithers	9,000.00
London	2,530.00	Albany	2,729.31
Smithville	5,860.00	Armadale	8,547.17
Attercliffe	6,057.00	TOTAL FEES and	
Lincoln	6,395.00	DONATIONS	\$148,762.56

College Notes

Faculty

Tuition

In its recent annual meeting the Board has decided not to increase tuition. Students will be grateful for this. Although they may be able to obtain Canada student loans, no government grants are available to them, with the exception of those from British Columbia. The Board also considered that the cost of studying in Hamilton was considerable for those who come from afar. Tuition has been set as follows:

1990-1991 - \$ 2,250
1991-1992 - \$ 2,250
1992-1993 - \$ 2,250

Admission Requirements Diploma of Teaching: Ontario OACs

Over the years the Board has followed the policy that students will be admitted to the course of study leading to the Diploma of Teaching on the basis of equivalence to university entrance standing. The reason for this requirement is that the Board considers this to be a *minimal level* of general education for those who wish to enter the teaching profession. (The Ministries of Education in all provinces in general require a four or five year University degree for all teachers.)

The requirements for university en-

trance standing vary somewhat from province to province, and therefore prospective students are advised to check with their school and with the Teachers' College. Ontario students are required to have completed six (6) Ontario Advanced Credits (OACs). These should include English, and preferably at least a course in mathematics, a course in science, a course in social studies, and an advanced level French.

General Admission Requirements: French Preferred

Although French is not a prerequisite for entering the Teachers' College, all students are strongly advised to take French courses at least to the Grade 11 or 12 level. Ontario students are advised to take a French OAC.

Almost all our elementary schools have now included French in the programmes at the junior and even at the primary level. Therefore, in order for the French course at the Teachers' College to be an effective preparation for the teaching of French at these levels, we must be able to assume a good level of proficiency as a starting point. The Teachers' College course includes further work on oral and written proficiency, as well as the study of teaching French as a second language.

Transfer from other institutions

Over the years, a number of people have asked about the possibility of transfer from another post-secondary institution to the Teachers' College without loss of credit. Such a situation would allow individuals to complete one year of studies at a local institution, before moving to Hamilton to complete the Diploma of Teaching.

Often these requests are made by those who live away from Hamilton, or by those who wish to change the direction of their studies. However, the Board found it difficult to formulate a general policy statement which would adequately deal with all possibilities. Post-secondary institutions vary considerably in their programmes and their quality. Therefore the Board will favourably consider requests to be admitted to the second year of the 3-year Diploma of Teaching programme from those who have completed at least one year of university or college studies. A decision will be made on the basis of a recommendation by the local governor(s) and the faculty. It remains the responsibility of the individual student to make such a request by approaching the local governor and the faculty at the Teachers' College.

Teaching Competence

W.F. Horsman

In the seventeenth century "schoolmasters" in the Netherlands were expected to be blameless in lifestyle, pure in doctrine, and faithful to the confession. Accordingly they signed a form of subscription much like the one signed by office-bearers in our churches today. In this way our fathers made sure of the spiritual qualifications of those who desired to be teachers. But this did not mean that no other qualification was necessary because besides instruction in the articles of faith teachers were also expected to provide general education in order to "*thoroughly* equip students for *every* good work." All those who wished to be teachers had to be examined to see if they:

1. could readily read all printed books as well as handwritten materials;

2. were able to write in a legible hand;
3. could competently sing the Psalms of David;
4. could do basic arithmetic;
5. had a good method for teaching children efficiently.

If an applicant satisfied these requirements he was given permission to teach. Because of the current teacher shortage we might wish that it was still that simple today although it may be argued that the above criteria are not as simple as they appear. Still the impression is left that teaching was considered a matter of intuition. You either had a "good" method for teaching or you didn't.

The idea that good teachers are born and not made also lives among us. While the idea might have some validity

it is at best a half truth. To be an effective teacher today requires competence in at least four areas:

1. Teachers must know their subjects.
2. Teachers must have theoretical knowledge about the teaching/learning process.
3. Teachers must have a repertoire of teaching skills.
4. Teachers must have attitudes that foster learning.

Much could be said about each of these. One thing should be clear. Competence in one of these areas is not enough. Teachers need training in all four. To know their subjects involves at least two concerns. Not only should prospective teachers be familiar with the content of the disciplines but more importantly with the knowledge derived

from the discipline that is actually taught to the pupils. Taking university-level courses in mathematics and history for example, may be useful and even a necessary prerequisite for teaching those subjects in high school but those who end up teaching elementary mathematics and social studies will find that university courses do virtually nothing to prepare them for teaching at that level. A much better preparation might be to have student-teachers involved in developing curriculum units that take into account the content to be taught and how that content can be related to the interests, experience and abilities of the children.

Familiarity with theoretical knowledge relevant to teaching is also important. Principles gleaned from courses in foundations of education, educational psychology and sociology will help

teachers interpret situations, solve problems, and make decisions. Classroom teaching involves constant decision making and problem solving. If decisions are made without reference to the principles of the foundational disciplines teachers may find themselves engaged in crisis management. A teacher needs more than common-sense understanding of human behaviour.

Teaching also involves specific skills. A partial list might include:

- the ability to ask different kinds of questions;
- the ability to vary the learning situation to keep students involved;
- the ability to diagnose student needs and learning difficulties;
- the ability to recognize when students are paying attention;
- the ability to relate learning to the students' experience.

Obviously this list is incomplete but again it is clear that student teachers need the opportunity to practice these skills before they become full-time classroom teachers.

Arguably the most important characteristic of the effective teacher is a positive attitude. Important because attitudes reflect our basic beliefs and values. The values that teachers bring to the task will determine their attitude towards learning, towards their students, towards their peers and parents, and towards the subject matter. In an age of relativism and situation ethics we must continue to base our value system on Scriptural norms. Only in the Scriptures can we find the truth that matters. By educating our students in the truth we train them for a life of service.

FUNDRAISING FOR THE TEACHERS' COLLEGE ALBANY, WESTERN AUSTRALIA



TO: COVENANT
Canadian Reformed Teachers' College,
C/o J. Gelderman, Treasurer,
491 Karen Drive,
BURLINGTON, Ontario.
L7R 3J2

Enclosed is my contribution/donation for the year 1990 in the amount of

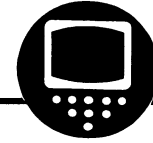
\$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

The membership fee is \$250 per year. Any donation is most welcome. A tax receipt will be issued.



Press Release of Classis Ontario North held at Burlington West on March 9, 1990, beginning at 9:00 a.m.

1. Opening

Rev. J. Mulder calls the meeting to order and requests the brothers to sing Hymn 15:1,3. He reads Matthew 26:36-56, and leads in prayer. He welcomes the brothers, especially the delegates of Regional Synod who are present in connection with the release of Rev. J. De Jong.

2. Credentials

The church of Burlington South examines the credentials. All churches are duly represented. There are a number of instructions and requests.

3. Constitution of Classis

Classis is constituted. The following officers are appointed: Rev. R.N. Gleason, chairman, Rev. J. De Jong vice-chairman, and Rev. P.G. Feenstra, clerk.

4. Memorabilia

The chairman congratulates the church of Fergus with the acceptance of the call it extended to Rev. J. Huygen of Harkstede, Holland. He expresses the wish that the church of Burlington South may soon receive another pastor and teacher in place of Rev. J. De Jong, who is to be released from active ministerial duty at this classis. He also expresses gratitude that Rev. P. Aasman may be present at classis, having recovered quickly from a serious car accident.

5. Agenda/Release Rev. J. De Jong

The agenda is adopted with a number of amendments. Classis proceeds to the release of Rev. J. De Jong. The relevant documents are present and in good order. Rev. J. De Jong is released from active ministerial duty in Classis Ontario North as of May 1, 1990, at which time he assumes his work at the Theological College. The chairman speaks a few congratulatory words to Rev. De Jong, and expresses the wish that his work at the College may serve the upbuilding of the churches. He requests all present to sing

Hymn 4:1,3, after which a short break is taken.

6. Reports

a. Classis treasurer: a report concerning the fiscal period is tabled and received with thanksgiving.

b. the church of Burlington South reports on the classical archives. These are found to be in good order. Documents pertaining to Classis Contracta of July 7, 1989 will be sent to the archive-keeping church.

c. The following reports on church visitations are read: Burlington South, Toronto, Burlington East, Burlington West, Orangeville — in that order. These reports are thankfully received.

d. The church of Fergus presents an audit of the Books of the Fund for Needy Students. These books have been found to be in good order. This is noted with gratitude.

7. Advice re Art. 44 C.O.

The churches of Burlington South, Elora, Grand Valley, Toronto, Guelph and Ottawa ask and receive advice in matters of discipline. This point of the agenda is concluded with prayer.

8. Proposals and Instructions

a. The church of Lower Sackville asks advice re financial assistance for the calling of a minister. A proposal to reaffirm a previous classis' decision concerning this matter is defeated. Classis advises Lower Sackville to come with a concrete proposal to a future classis. Classis also grants Lower Sackville an extra assistance of \$2400 for 1990 in order to meet its budget requirements.

b. i. Classis approves the following schedule for pulpit supply to Lower Sackville:

April	— G. van Popta
June	— W. den Hollander
August	— J. Mulder
October	— P.G. Feenstra
December	— G. Nederveen
February	— P. Aasman
April	— R.N. Gleason

ii. The church of Lower Sackville asks advice re attestations submitted by members living far away from the church, and how to deal with them. Advice is given.

c. The church of Orangeville requests assistance ad Art. 13 C.O. This request is granted. The support amounts to \$4.67 per communicant member for 1990.

d. The following schedule for pulpit supply for the church at Elora is adopted:

Aug. 19:	G. Nederveen
Sept. 16:	G. van Popta
Oct. 21:	P. Aasman
Nov. 18:	R.N. Gleason
Dec. 16:	W. den Hollander

e. The church of Burlington South requests classis to appoint Rev. J. De Jong as counsellor as of May 1, 1990. This request is granted.

9. Correspondence

A letter is read from a sister in Ottawa re women's voting rights. This letter is declared inadmissible ad Art. 30, C.O.

10. Appointments

The date of the next classis is: June 8, 1990, in Burlington West, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Proposed *moderamen*:

Rev. J. Mulder: chairman
Rev. R.N. Gleason: clerk
Rev. P.G. Feenstra: vice-chairman

11. Question period

There are no questions. Rev. J. De Jong speaks a few words of gratitude to the brothers for the cooperation received during his period in the classis, and wishes the churches the guidance and blessing of the Lord.

12. Censure

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

13. Acts/Press Release

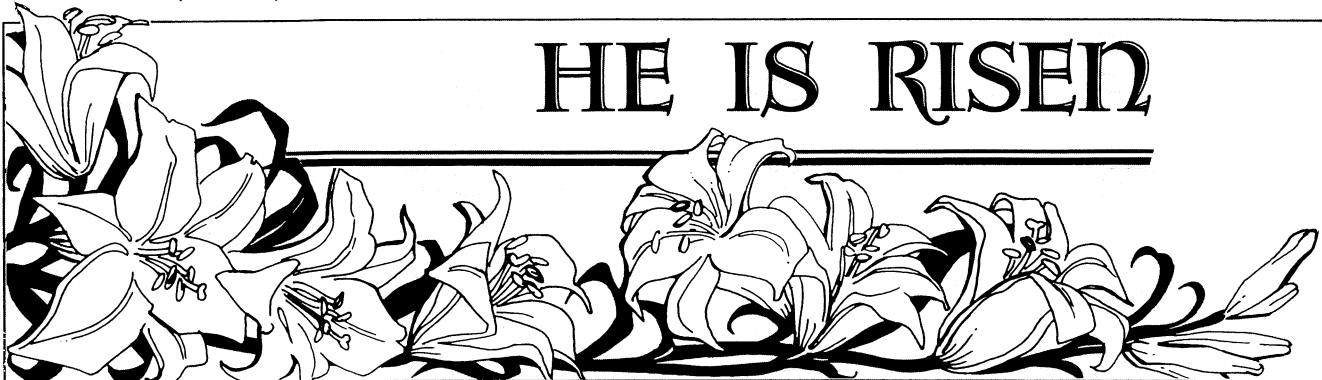
The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved.

14. Closing

The chairman thanks the ladies for their excellent service at classis. He closes the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of Classis,
J. De Jong, vice-chairman e.t.

HE IS RISEN



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

EASTER MORNING

The Lord Jesus said,
"I am the Good Shepherd."

But that first Easter morning the sheep were scattered in all directions. Already early in the morning, the women were on the road to the grave. The disciples were huddled together in fear behind closed doors.

And Thomas was off on his own.

The Good Shepherd was busy that first Easter gathering His flock.

He needed only one word to make Mary Magdalene realize He was alive and glorified. He sent the women to tell the disciples the joyful news.

And so Peter came out of hiding to meet his Saviour for a very special interview.

What joy when the Lord appeared to the group of disciples that evening! What joy and reverence when Thomas finally meets the risen Lord!

Yes, the Good Shepherd gathers His flock and feeds them with His Word.

That Word gives the sheep joy and hope, for this life but also for the life to come.

We were not there that first Easter morning.

It was so long ago.

But the Lord Jesus is also our Good Shepherd.

Every Sunday He calls us to His house to lead us into the green pastures of His Word.

He gave us His Word to read in our homes.

He gave us His Spirit to live in our hearts to guide us "in the way of peace."

The Good Shepherd gave His life for His sheep!

And on that first Easter morning He rose to give joy and peace to all who give Him their heart.

Time for Birthday Wishes!

We all join in wishing all the Busy Beavers who celebrate an April birthday a very happy birthday and the Lord's blessing in the year ahead. Here's hope you have a great day with your family and friends! "Count your blessings, Count them one by one."

APRIL

Janine Vanderhoeven	1	Jeremy Vandenbos	17
Clifford Vandersluis	2	Angela Kippers	18
Jennifer Van Pykeren	4	Jessica Beintema	19
Jessica Vandergugten	6	Carrie-Lynn Poort	21
Evelyn Vanderpol	6	Diana Flokstra	22
Shannon Hoogstra	9	Bonnie Van Laar	22
Melanie Peters	10	Jim Spoelstra	23
Alisha Stroop	10	Alida Knol	24
Emily Vegter	11	Sara Harsevoort	27
Wendell Huttema	14	Barbara Kobes	30
Henry Sikkema	14	Kerry Roodzant	30
Tony VanOene	14		
Margaret Admiraal	17		



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Carin Meliefste*. We are happy to have you join us. How long could you skate on your backyard rink, Carin? Would you like to find a math puzzle to share with us sometime? Bye for now.

Welcome to the Club, *John Witten*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending us a riddle and a puzzle. Keep up the good work! Write again soon, John.

You have some great ideas in your letter, *Jennifer Van Pykeren*. And thank you for the puzzles. How did your little brother enjoy his birthday and your present, Jennifer?

Thank you for your letter *Francine Van Woudenberg*. I have a brother who always collected horse pictures and read horse stories. Will you write and tell us about your favourite Black Stallion story, Francine?

Hello, *Brenda Grim*. Thank you for your letter and the word-search puzzle. It was good to hear from you. I hope you will really enjoy living in your new home, Brenda.

Well, we're not exactly alike, *Margaret De Witt*. You can write poems, and I can't! But I'm happy you share yours with the other Busy Beavers. We'll save the snow poem, along with a snow picture I got, for next winter. All right, Margaret? Time speeds right along!

Hello, *Ivan Sikkema*. It was good to hear from you. I see you really enjoyed your new toys, Ivan. Your new baby cousin has a very pretty name. Bye for now.

Thank you for the puzzle, *Netty Sikkema*, and for your kind wishes. And now it's time for Spring Break, Netty. Do you have some plans?

I see you have been very busy, *Margaret Nijenhuis*. Thank you for sharing. What will you enjoy most about spring, Margaret?

Hello, *Florence Nijenhuis*. It's a cute puzzle you sent and one the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing — next winter, don't you think? Let's hear from you again soon, Florence.

Does it keep you busy answering all those letters, *Mary-Anne Moes*? But I see you are a good letter writer. Thank you for the puzzle, Mary-Anne. Bye for now.

Yes, I can see you remember your 1989 birthday, *Jessica Peters*! Did you get a picture of the squirrel? Good idea you and your Mom had, Jessica. I really enjoyed your picture, but we'll have to save it for next winter, all right?

I can see you enjoyed your holiday, *Lydia Viersen*. Did you have some catching up to do when you got back to school? How do you plan to spend the Spring break Lydia?

Thank you for your letter and the puzzles, *Nellie Beukema*. I see you've been very busy. Keep up the good work! Be sure to write and tell us about your new baby when she/he arrives, Nellie. Bye for now. Write again soon.

CODE

by Busy Beaver *Deborah Verhoeff*

C-1	O-8
E-2	R-9
D-3	S-10
H-4	T-11
I-5	U-12
L-6	G-13
M-7	N-14

```

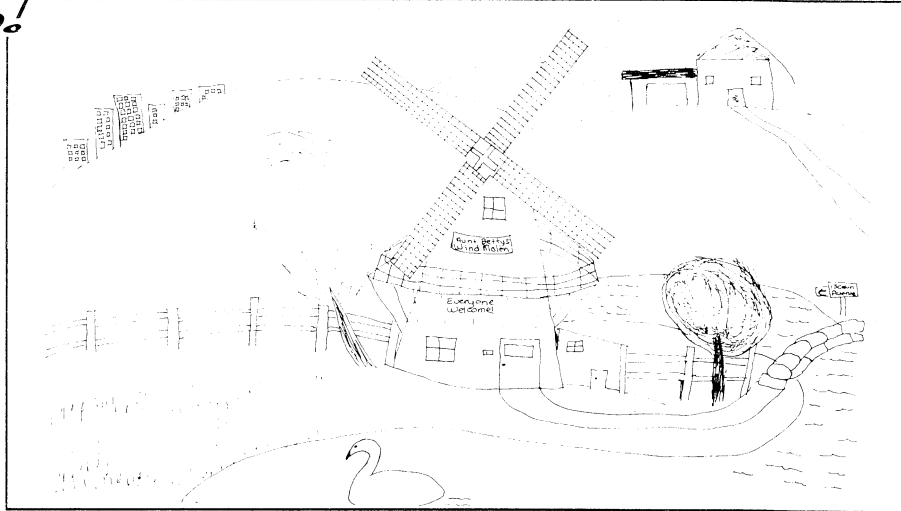
8  1 8 7 2  6 2 11
-----
1210  10 5 14 13  11 8
-----
11 4 2  6 8 9 3
    
```

Spring!

Time for a Spring poem, don't you think, Busy Beavers?

Here's one from Busy Beaver *Tonya Beintema*.

Spring is so nice,
Near and afar.
The flowers start blooming,
The spiders start looming,
Their beautiful webs,
Of silk and of thread.



Spring Picture by Busy Beaver *Michelle Peters*

Quiz Time!

EASTER QUIZ

The Shepherd and the Lamb

- For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their _____, and He will guide them to springs of _____ water; and God will wipe away every _____ from their eyes. Rev. 7:17
- Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great _____ of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal _____, equip you with everything good that you may do His _____ . . . Heb. 13:20,21a
- Worthy is the _____ who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honour and _____ and _____! Rev. 5:12
- Behold the _____ of God, who takes away the _____ of the _____! John 1:29
- . . . the congregation of _____ shall kill their lambs in the evening. Then they shall take some of the _____, and put it on the two _____ and the _____ of the houses in which they eat them. They shall eat the _____ that night, roasted; with _____ bread and _____ herbs they shall eat it. Ex. 12:6b-8
- I am the _____ Shepherd; I know My _____ and My _____ know Me . . . John 10:14
- The _____ is my shepherd, I shall not _____, He makes me lie down in green _____, He leads me beside still _____ . . . Ps. 23:1,2
- He will feed His flock like a shepherd, He will _____ the _____ in His _____, He will carry them in His _____ . . . Isaiah 40:11
- Simon, son of John, do you _____ Me more than these? He said the Him "Yes, Lord; you know that I _____ you." He said to him, "_____ My _____." John 21:15
- All we like _____ have gone _____; we have turned everyone to his _____ way; and the Lord has laid on _____ the _____ of us all. Isaiah 53:6

- Know that the Lord is _____! It is He that made us, and we are _____; we are His people, and the _____ of His _____. Psalm 100:3
- And the angel said to me "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the _____ of the _____." And he said to me, "These are the _____ words of _____." Rev. 19:9

This is a very important Easter quiz, Busy Beavers. Send in your answers to me for a sticker reward!

WORDSEARCH

from Busy Beaver *Ivan Sikkema*

Title: _____
_____!

M	A	B	N	R	Y	S	L	E	I	G	H	airplane	motorcycle
W	A	U	Y	E	S	T	H	O	G	E	T	bicycle	ship
F	R	G	E	L	C	Y	C	I	R	T	E	boat	sleigh
R	H	G	L	I	O	M	E	H	P	A	L	buggy	tanker
E	O	Y	C	A	V	A	N	T	E	N	C	bus	tractor
P	R	T	Y	R	T	R	A	I	N	K	Y	camel	trailer
M	S	T	C	T	R	O	L	B	C	E	C	car	train
A	E	R	I	A	B	J	P	U	A	R	R	cart	tricycle
C	E	A	B	T	R	E	R	S	R	O	O	camper	truck
L	O	C	O	M	O	T	I	V	E	T	T	horse	unicycle
H	N	O	G	A	W	C	A	M	E	L	O	jet	van
U	N	I	C	Y	C	L	E	E	R	E	M	locomotive	wagon

With the letters left over, use all of them to find out what the title to this word search is!! (There are 27 letters left when all the words have been found.)

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.
Keep busy!

With love to you all,
Aunt Betty