



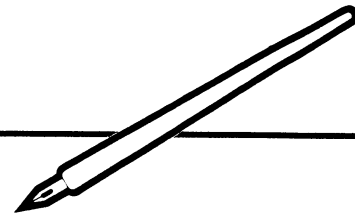
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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By J. Geertsema



“We all go to the same heaven” — is this the point?

A report

Sometimes, when reading about things that happened or were said or done, one can be struck by what is written. In *Nederlands Dagblad* of April 24, 1990, the second page gave a report of a panel discussion at an Easter congress of university students, members of our sister churches in the Netherlands. The topic was “Faith experience” (Geloofsbeleving).

In Holland, this subject is in the center of attention at the moment, also in our sister churches. Dr. C. Trimp, professor in Diaconology, teaching about the work of the office-bearers, about preaching, about shepherding the flock, and so on, recently published a book about the experience of God in one’s life. The question of many is: how can we who live in a god-less world have experience of God. I shall not deal here with this question or with this book. I only mention these things in order to place the report of the panel discussion in its context.

Moreover, it is good to be aware of a wider context as well. In my opinion, this wider context is a worldwide intensifying attention for (religious) spiritual experience. Throughout history there has been a desire for mystical experience, mystical contact with “the other world.” This desire has been pushed away and denied by our modern western world when, during the last two centuries, it went through a period dominated by purely humanistic, materialistic philosophy, which is still strong in modern socialism and communism.

This materialism claims that there is only matter. Spirit or mind are basically forms or activities of matter. The human mind is basically only electric energy in brain cells. Thus, this materialism tells us that there is only this world, this universe, and not a spiritual world: no God, no spirits, no angels. In reaction to this spiritual emptiness, modern man appears less and less satisfied with this philosophy. He realizes that there is more than meets the eye. But instead of turning to the true God, and to Christ Jesus as Saviour, modern man turns to the pagan Eastern religiosity and spirituality. With this Eastern religiosity and spirituality he can go on to declare himself god and maintain himself in his rebellion against the true God. Nevertheless, this “New Age” spirituality satisfies a hunger for “the spiritual,” for spiritual experience, for experiencing ‘god,’ whatever this (it) may be. The present crumbling down of communism and socialism as a materialistic system of thinking goes together with an upsurge of attention for “the spiritual.”

As I see it, it is within the context of the powerful, growing, global general attention for the experience of “the spiritual” that in the churches the question becomes more intense: how can we have faith experience of the true God in our life? This wider context does not mean that the question for experience is illegitimate, but it must make us very careful that we do not let ourselves be led in a wrong direction in which experience replaces faith or the Word of God with its promises. But let us return to the panel discussion mentioned above.

This discussion was held under the leadership of Dr. W.G. de Vries, minister in one of our sister churches and presently

chairman of the Dutch Synod. The other members of the panel were a minister of a Reformed Congregation (=Gereformeerde Gemeente, related to the Netherlands Reformed Church on this continent), a minister of a Christian Reformed Church (=Christelijk Gereformerd, Free Reformed here in North America), a minister of a Reformed Alliance congregation in the Dutch Reformed Church (=Gereformerde Bond in the Hervormde Kerk), and a leader in a Pentecostal church.

The reporting article begins with a statement of one of the speakers: “Every church has its own tradition which often colours the faith experience. This is legitimate if it remains within the same confession” (in Dutch the word ‘belijden’, confessing, is used). The last paragraphs deal with the matter of unity: “Church unity was discussed as well.” The Pentecostal leader said to the Reformed partners in the discussion: “I am deeply impressed by our God, who can manage to bring you all together in heaven. . . . I think you will all be there, the evangelicals included.” With respect to the present situation [of division, J.G.] he said “that the evangelicals have less difficulty to accept Reformational [reformatoische] brothers than vice versa.”

Some questions and remarks

Here a few remarks and questions — alas, missing in the article — are in place, I thought. Let me begin with the statement of the Pentecostal leader that “the evangelicals have less difficulty to accept Reformational brothers than vice versa.” I do not deny the factuality of these words. However, what does a statement like this, made in the context of the recognition of God’s call for unity of those who believe in Christ, suggest? Can it make some (young) Reformed students or readers feel guilty about their being Reformed and, thus, not just as accepting as the Pentecostal fellow Christians? Can such a saying without comment suggest to some Reformed people that being Reformed is not so good and that they should step over the (doctrinal) differences just as the evangelicals do? Can such a statement without comment suggest that differences with Pentecostals, as, e.g., regarding infant baptism and covenant, regarding the meaning of being born again and concerning the doctrine of the church, are much less important than the unity of being together believers in Christ?

One should remember here that, in general, for evangelicals, including Pentecostals, doctrine is not dominant. According to many, doctrine divides, while the Spirit unites. Pentecostals stress the work of the Spirit who effects the born-again disposition of the heart, so that a testimony of this experience can be given.

Without denying the importance, even the necessity of regeneration through the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of believers, as Reformed confessors, we reject the legitimacy of the dilemma between the uniting Spirit and the dividing doctrine. We also reject a dilemma between the living Christ and the doctrine concerning Christ. The doctrine of the Scriptures comes from the Holy Spirit. It is His gift through prophets and apostles to the church of all ages. It is therefore the task of the church to preserve that doctrine. The Holy Spirit Himself presses

this task and calling upon the church in His Word. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, the apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians, "I commend you because you remember me in everything and *maintain the traditions even as I have delivered them to you*" (1 Cor. 11:2).

The same Paul, through the same Holy Spirit, urges Timothy: "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and *what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*" (2 Tim. 2:1,2). Just like Spirit and Word belong together, so Christ and the Scriptures belong together. The Scriptures are God's revelation about Christ and Christ is the Christ of the Scriptures. Therefore, it was in order to abide by the Christ of the Scriptures and by the Scriptures of this Christ that the church formulated its creeds and confessions. Thus the church maintained the doctrine of the Scriptures given by the Spirit. Maintaining the teaching or doctrine of the Scriptures is therefore an act of obedience to the Word of the Spirit. This doctrine of the Scriptures includes the teaching about God's covenant with believers and their children, about the gift of infant baptism, about the marks of the church, and so on.

When we realize these things, we do not deny that a sincere evangelical or Pentecostal believer is a fellow Christian, and also a believer in Christ as his Saviour. We can even rejoice in this fact and grieve about the division, while learning from his enthusiasm and commitment to the Lord. But we maintain, for him and for ourselves, the norm of God's Word and His command that we have to keep and guard God's truth, the doctrine, which He has given to us in His Word. We call these fellow believers to accept and live by the same truth, the same doctrine, to the glory of God and we urge him to serve the unity and continued gathering and upbuilding of the church of the Lord in the truth as an act of obedience of faith.

There is another point. The evangelical leader made the remark that he was "deeply impressed by our God, who is able to bring you all together in heaven." Here we have two suggestions. The first one is that, while God is good since He brings all believers together in heaven, men on earth are sinful and bad since they keep themselves divided against God's will. Now there is division which is sinful and bad. But there is also a being divided because of the truth of God's Word as said above.

I hear a second suggestion in the statement regarding God bringing all believers together in heaven. Sure, we can be thankful and rejoice in the grace of God that He gathers all His children, all those who believe(d) in Christ Jesus, all His chosen ones, together in heaven. But is this going-to-heaven-together the norm for our conduct on earth? Is it not rather so that the will of God revealed in His Word should be the norm to live by? It is Scriptural and Reformed to maintain God's holy requirement expressed in the First Commandment: serve the LORD only, and no other gods. But it is just as Reformed and Scriptural to maintain the will of the Lord as He expressed it in the Second Commandment: serve God according to His Word, as He has revealed it to us.

Can we ask attention for experience of faith? We certainly can. It is important to learn from God's Word how believers are to live with and for their God, and how, as a fruit of faith, God will provide the certainty of faith in Him. But experience is not the norm for faith and certainty of faith. The norm for faith, including certainty, is the Word of the Lord. He wants us to live with Him by living by what He says in His Word, and so to preserve and gather His church with Him in the unity of the faith that He has revealed in the Scriptures.

We can be thankful for this Reformed heritage: Scripture and confession: what does the Lord say in His Word? True thankfulness shows in knowing and abiding by this heritage.

A NEW COLUMN

The readers, I hope especially the young readers, have by now discovered a new regular column in our magazine: "Re-

member Your Creator." It is written for young readers by two young ministers: Rev. R. Schouten of Calgary and Rev. G. van Popta of Ottawa. We heartily welcome them and their contributions, and we expect that what they write will find its way to the hearts of the teen-agers (and others). I have already heard positive reactions. May God give strength and wisdom to keep it up, and may He bless this work.

J. Geertsema



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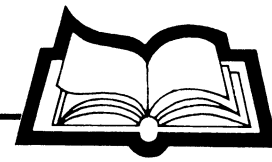
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By J. De Jong

"... but if we have food and clothing, with these we shall be content."

1 Tim. 6:8.

Back to Basics

Sometimes people think that the gospel promotes the possession of private property and that any idea of state ownership is to be rejected out of hand. To be sure, historically the state ownership philosophy has been tied to atheism. But this does not mean that the philosophy of private ownership is founded on the gospel. While the Bible allows the ownership of property, it never speaks of it — or any possession — as a fundamental right. In fact, Paul's message to Timothy has quite a different flavour. It takes us back to basics, and tells us to be content with the food, clothing, and shelter.

Paul gives this command in the context of a warning against greed, avarice, and the desire to be rich. The one who desires riches or lives in greed will never have enough. His desire becomes insatiable. As Solomon says, "All day long the wicked covets greedily, but the righteous gives and does not hold back," Prov. 21:26.

In opposition to this insatiable attitude, the apostle enjoins the labourers in the gospel to be content with little. This is not a mystical or quietistic contentment grounded in man's own strength. It is not a principle of Stoic self-sufficiency by which one becomes absolutely indifferent to the things around him. Paul harbours no grudge against goods and possessions as such. He also does not champion absolute independence and total indifference to one's circumstances. Rather, he seeks to have all things placed in the service of the gospel. And the labourer in the gospel should be content with what he needs to carry on his task and fulfil the requirements of his office. This is also the warning Paul gives to the elders and deacons earlier in his letter, 1 Tim. 3: 3,8.

Here Paul touches a theme that goes back to the fathers of the faith. Abraham was rich in cattle, goods, and possessions, yet he remained a stranger and sojourner in the land. He spent his life dwelling in tents, looking forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker was God, Heb. 11:10. Jacob leaves for Haran with only a staff in his hand and makes a vow to God: "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and clothing to wear, so that I come again to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God ..." Gen. 28:20. He is concerned about the basic necessities, and nothing more.

In the days when He lived on earth, the Lord Jesus walked in the same faith. He warned the well-to-do, would-be followers: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests: but the Son of man has nowhere to lay

His head," Mt. 8:20. In the warning against the service of mammon, Jesus also focuses solely on the two basic necessities in life, food and clothing: "Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?" Mt. 6:25. And the whole earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus is characterized by being limited to the basic needs, cf. Lk. 8:3. So Paul says of Him: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty you might become rich," 2 Cor. 8:9.

For the apostles, life was essentially the same. Peter lived with Simon, a tanner, and Paul lived at the home of Aquila and Priscilla, Acts 18:3. To be sure, shelter was an important aspect of their basic needs. But even here the apostles reflect a contentment with the basic minimum, living as lodgers rather than landowners. Paul asks only for that which he needs to do his work. In all things he learned how to be content, Phil. 4:11. And he takes pride not in his own strength or human freedom, but in the grace of God, as God has said to him, "My grace is sufficient for you." 2 Cor. 12:9.

Therefore the ownership of property is not inherently based on the gospel. If God grants these gifts, they may be received with thanksgiving. But what applies to the labourer in the gospel also applies to the whole church. A Christian must be prepared to lose all in order to gain all. For with all we have we are simply stewards of God's gifts. Therefore we are instructed by God to use all that He gives us for His kingdom, placing it in the service of His Name.

Today we are called to imitate the faith of the fathers. And the temptations are as great today as they were in their days, if not greater. The true contentment required by the gospel demands that we are satisfied with the basic necessities: the things we need to carry on our work in the gospel, and our office in God's church. For these needs we can always count on God's help.

Those who live close to the Word will not put their hope or expend all their efforts in the acquisition of property or worldly possessions. In fact, they will be watchful for dangers and temptations. For us, the gospel and the call of God must take precedence over the need or desire for property and goods. To obey is better than have! Therefore: stick to the basics! In this way we may thankfully place all our gifts before His throne.

C

Valedictory Lecture: Dr. K. Deddens

By J. De Jong

On Friday, May 4, at 9:00 a.m., Dr. K. Deddens delivered his farewell lecture at the Theological College. He spoke on the topic "Nicetas of Remesiana: Missionary, Liturge, Catechist". In his lecture he sought to combine elements from the various disciplines in both of the departments entrusted to him in his six-year stay at the College. The lecture, which was attended by most members of the College community as well as members of the Deddens family, first outlined the life of Nicetas, and then addressed his work from the three perspectives set out in the title.

Life

Four sources tell us about the life of Nicetas of Remesiana: Hilary of Poitiers, Pope Innocent I, Gennadius of Massilia, and a friend, Paulinus of Nola. Combining elements from these sources we learn that Nicetas was a bishop in Remesiana, a city in the Roman province Dacia (present day Yugoslavia), situated at the midpoint of the highway from Jerusalem to Rome. This was a well-traveled road, and it appears that Nicetas was a pivotal figure in the mission of the gospel to the larger western world. He was a Greek, but was entirely Western in outlook and temperament.

Missionary

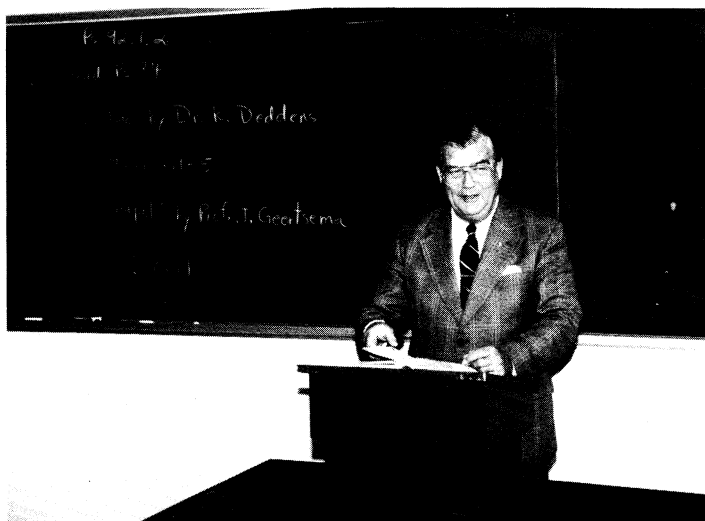
Nicetas preached to a congregation made up mostly of Roman Legionnaires, using Latin in the services. He was in a strategic position to preach the gospel to the people of the surrounding regions. He became a missionary bishop, bringing the message of the gospel to the Bessi, Scyths, Getae, and Dacians. He had a large diocese, extending from the Aegean to the Danube, and from Pontus to Dalmatia.

Paulinus of Nola tells us that Nicetas taught the barbarians to "sing the praises of Christ with a Roman heart" and to live at peace with their neighbours. Indeed, the political effects of his evangelization work were directly felt: the Goths began to live peaceably with their Roman neighbours and the Bessi brigands became monks. Monasteries and nunneries arose, and the gospel was transmitted by word and script.

Liturge

Nicetas is generally believed to have written two liturgical treatises, *De vigiliis servorum Dei* and *De psalmodiae bono*. The first treatise is a defense of the custom of nocturnal vigils as an integral element of devotional life. The second treatise was actually a sermon in which Nicetas defended and promoted the singing of psalms and hymns in congregational worship. This sermon contains a wealth of Scriptural ref-

With respect to the *Te Deum* itself, Dr. Deddens noted that it is composed of three parts: a song of praise to the Trinity, a song of praise to Christ, called the King of glory (*rex gloriae*), and a select number of texts from the psalms. Dr. Deddens spoke highly of our translation of the *Te Deum* (by W. Helder) since it does justice to the original. On the basis of the original Latin, however, he suggested one change to the last line of the final stanza: "In Thee I've trusted,



Farewell to
Hamilton...

erences about congregational singing, all of which are used to promote active psalmody in the church.

As a liturge, Nicetas was also a composer of hymns and liturgical chants. Dr. Deddens argued that the well-known *Te Deum laudamus*, (our Hymn 2) was most probably authored by Nicetas. He cited three reasons for this hypothesis: first, the original scheme of the hymn shows a Greek origin; second, the hymn originates in the vigils promoted by Nicetas and was common among the eastern churches; third, there is a definite similarity between elements in the doctrinal writings of Nicetas and the wording of the famous *Te Deum*. This point was treated more extensively in the final section of the lecture.

I shall never be confounded." A number of liturgical reasons were given for suggesting this change.

Catechist

Nicetas was also an able catechist. He wrote in a pastoral way for the training of the congregation. He is the author of a six-book treatise on the instruction of catechumens called *Instructio ad competentes*. The fifth book contains one of the most ancient explanations of the creed that we possess. This was the first time the expression "the communion of saints" was added to the creed, and Nicetas' explanation of this expression indicates that he saw this as an amplification of the article on the church, and not as a new article. Nicetas

also included the angels in the communion of saints, something never done before. And indeed, the *Te Deum* also refers to cherubim and seraphim accompanying the choir of the faithful in a glorious song of praise to God. Here Dr. Deddens found his third argument for the hypothesis that Nicetas is the author of the well-known hymn *Te Deum*.

Dr. Deddens concluded his lecture with five points highlighting the importance of this ancient figure for the church today. His life and work teach us: first, that evangelism and mission remains the calling of the church. We cannot be content to let people find their own way to the church. The gospel must be proclaimed! Second, the church must be a singing church. Already at an early age the young should be instructed in the basic melodies of the

psalter. The youth must learn to sing, and to love singing. Third, the church must maintain an ecumenical perspective in its life and worship. We worship not just as a local church, but together with all the saints who have gone before us, a great heavenly throng. We must hold on to the universal and ageless character of the church, remembering that we share the communion of faith with the brotherhood around the world. Fourth, the orthodox doctrine must be adorned with a godly life. Doctrine and life go together. Fifth, a pastoral perspective must be maintained in all the work of the church, not only in preaching but also in admonitions and church discipline. On all these points we can learn much from a figure like Nicetas of Remesiana.

At the close of the lecture everyone

rose to sing all stanzas of the *Te Deum* with Dr. Deddens accompanying us at the organ. As he spoke and then played so enthusiastically I for one could not help thinking that he felt a close bond to this ancient figure in the church that had so captivated his attention. Indeed, we know Dr. Deddens in the same way: a missionary, a liturge, and a catechist.

For six years with unusual energy he has employed his many-faceted gifts among us. We bid him and his wife adieu in the knowledge that the faith of the church as reflected in the *Te Deum* will also sustain the fellowship between us despite the distance that now arises. May the Lord also guide him and his wife and family on all their ways in the time ahead.

C

Grand Valley Builds a Church and Manse

By A.J. Hordyk

One of the smaller congregations in Ontario with its first minister is building a church building and a manse on a 3-acre property on the edge of town on Highway 25 in Grand Valley.

Since our daughter with her husband and three children moved there last summer, we are getting acquainted with the members of the local church and are getting "a feel" of what church-pioneering is all about. It reminds us somewhat of what we experienced in Burlington in the '50s. The only difference was that we were all very poor then. But there is a parallel as far as the zeal and love for the work in the Kingdom are concerned. This is very much the focal point in a congregation like Grand Valley.

And when this lives in a church, it becomes very visible indeed! Visible for the whole community of Grand Valley. There is a church and manse being built with free labour and a lot of love and dedication. What a way to witness to the world!

Our daughter had invited us for dinner on Good Friday, and took us to the site. There were 35 volunteers armed with hammers and nails, rulers and saws, busy like bees, framing the manse. The day before there was nothing but the basement walls. When we arrived in the afternoon, most external walls were up and some of the trusses. And on Saturday evening the shingles were on and most of the windows were in place. It was all properly super-

vised by topnotch tradesmen. I talked to a 10-year-old boy who was as proud as a peacock and a teenage girl who admitted she never used a hammer before. A group of ladies had looked after pea soup and lunch, and plenty of coffee. And what a good spirit. It made me feel guilty to be there without tools.

The Good Friday service was at 7:30 that evening. Some of the volunteers lived as much as an hour away. But they all came back that evening, with their families and children, to hear the message of salvation.

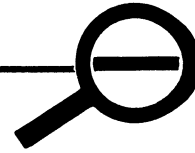
What a wonderful combination!

C



Enthusiasm and team spirit!

By C. Van Dam



The Leeuwarden Synod

On 18 April 1990 the 41st General Synod of the Reformed Churches (Liberated) since the Union of 1892 was opened in the Frisian city of Leeuwarden. The following officers were elected: Dr. W.G. de Vries, chairman, Rev. P. Schelling, vice-chairman, Rev. H.J. Boiten, first clerk, and Rev. P. Niemeijer, second clerk. In his opening comments, Dr. de Vries voiced the hope that this synod would be shorter than many of its predecessors. By Canadian standards, this will probably still be what we would consider a long synod. We hope to keep you informed.

Appointments to the Theological University

An important early action of the Synod was the appointing of Drs. C.J. de Ruijter as teacher in the diaconological (i.e., "pastoral") subjects. Readers of *Clarion* will be somewhat familiar with Rev. de Ruijter through his articles on preaching which have appeared in this magazine. The intent seems to be that after about three years, he will succeed Dr. C. Trimp as professor in the diaconological disciplines. Since Dr. Trimp will be at the compulsory age of retirement (sixty-five) next year, it appears that an exception was made in this case, allowing Dr. Trimp to serve to the age of sixty-seven.

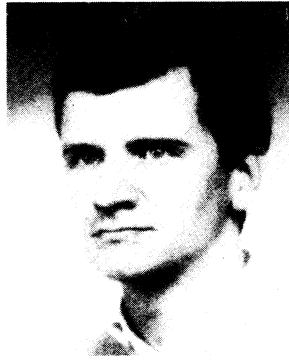
Another appointment was that of Dr. F. van der Pol, who had already been teaching in Kampen, as professor. He will be responsible for the history of the church up to 1700, as well as symbolics, the study of the creeds of the church.

"The blessing elder"

The previous synod of Spakenburg-Noord (1987) decided that the churches are to abide by the long-standing custom that only the minister of the Word speaks the benediction and gives the blessing. No less than twenty-six requests for a revision of this decision came to synod. A main point of contention was that Spakenburg-Noord went too far in this decision since the churches never asked for this and it was not in line with the decision of the Synod of Heemse that immediately preceded Spakenburg-Noord. Apparently the decisions in question were of such an ambiguous nature that more than one interpretation of them was possible and Synod Leeuwarden decided by a 12 to 10 vote

not to accede to these requests for revision.

Some churches asked that this whole matter of whether an elder can give the benediction be left in the freedom of the



Drs. C.J. de Ruijter was appointed to succeed Dr. C. Trimp

churches. The synod did not go into this because such a request was more than a request for revision and did not properly belong on its agenda. The synod committee that had studied these requests was of the opinion that the Synod of Heemse had not wanted to give a practical decision because it had not been possible to resolve the matter on a principal level. Churches where an elder pronounces the blessing can, therefore, continue with this situation.

It was clear that the churches were still divided on this issue and that it is not impossible that a future synod will deal with the matter again.

The Free Church of Scotland

On behalf of the Free Church of Scotland, Rev. K.W.R. Cameron passed on the sincere brotherly greetings of these churches and wished the Synod well. The Scottish minister delineated the contacts that now exist between the Free Church and the Reformed Churches and expressed the confidence that these ties would become stronger. The personal contacts are important. He mentioned specifically the situation in London where ten

percent of the Free Church's membership consists of people from the Reformed Churches (Liberated). Rev. Cameron noted that we can learn much from each other and it is important that we encourage each other.

The Scottish representative also described the situation of the Free Church in other countries such as Canada and the United States. In the mission fields in India, South Africa, and Peru, there are now independent sister churches.

Rev. Cameron stated that it is necessary that confessionally true churches should stand shoulder to shoulder and together defend the unassailable authority of the truth of God. He also said that in spite of all the different circumstances, we face similar problems. We may not sacrifice our confession on the altar of human wisdom and experience. We must beware of unity that occurs at the expense of the truth. The Scottish minister also declared that his church is thankful for her Reformed heritage which is so clearly articulated in the confessions of the church. He also wished the Synod the Lord's blessing.

Rev. J. de Gelder responded on behalf of Synod. He expressed Synod's gratitude for Rev. Cameron's presence. In a historical overview, Rev. De Gelder showed that also in the nineteenth century there were already good contacts between the churches of the Secession and the Free Church of Scotland after the Disruption (1843). There was much interest in each other's struggles. He continued by stating that in the last century the churches in Scotland and the Netherlands have gone their different ways. There are differences between the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity - differences in church government and the practice of church life. Yet we could find and acknowledge each other as true churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Rev. De Gelder asked the Scottish representative to pass on the greetings to the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland and ended by urging the Free Church to remain true, under God's blessing, to the Word of God according to the Reformed confession.

(The above is based on reports in Netherlands Dagblad, April 19 and 27, and May 11 and 12, 1990.)

C

By C. Van Dam

Much Appreciated Gifts

The Theological College is regularly the recipient of many gifts. Besides the regular support of the churches, there is also the much appreciated work of the Women's Savings Action, which makes it possible for the library to acquire the needed books. At a future date I hope to report more fully on this vital work, which deserves our full support.

At this time I would like to inform you of special gifts that have come our way and which were received with great gratitude. Br. and sr. A. Zuidhof recently donated over a hundred scholarly books. These volumes were mainly on archaeology, and ancient Near Eastern and Classical history, but also included writings on theology, religion, language, and philosophy. This donation is a real boost to our library! Br. and sr. Zuidhof spent most of their time in Canada in Ottawa and are now enjoying retirement in Grimsby, Ontario.

Dr. K. Deddens, who will be Professor Emeritus at the end of June, is returning to the Netherlands. However, he has gladdened our hearts with the gift of a number of books from his personal collection. They include H.B. Swete's edition of the Old Testament in Greek and some original language texts of church fathers as well as important historical and liturgical material.

We were also pleased to receive from br. and sr. P. van der Schaaf of Toronto a number of volumes of *Pro Ecclesia* from which we could fill out our own collection, *Reformatie Stemmen* (which for a time took the place of *De Reformatie* when the Nazis forbade its publication), and other material from the 1940s. Both periodicals were very important in the time before and after the Liberation from the Synodical Churches in 1944.

Furthermore, it gives me great pleasure to inform you that the young people do not forget the College either. We received a cheque of \$750.00 from the Fraser Valley Young People's League! It was part of the surplus left over subsequent to the 1989 Canada-wide rally. Needless to

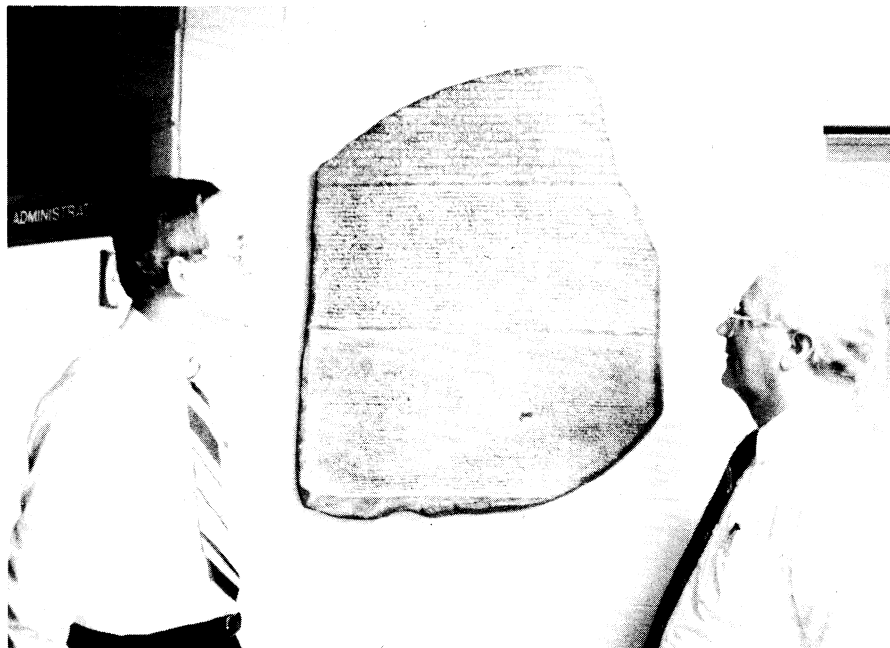
say, this gift is also greatly appreciated. We are using it to buy the thirteen-volume *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* — a classic work of continuing importance because of the vast amount of meticulous information it contains.

From the History Committee of the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman, the library was enriched with a published history of the Canadian Reformed Church and School at Carman entitled, *Many Grains, One Bread* (1989). How good it is to have in our College such historical items on our own past in this country. Such books are a constant reminder of God's faithfulness, our most humble beginnings, and the continuing task.

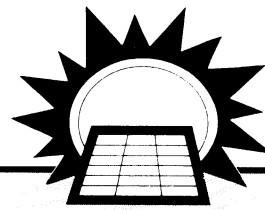
Finally, it can also be reported with joy that br. A.J. Hordyk of Burlington, governor for the first eighteen years of our Theological College, donated a museum-quality reproduction of the Rosetta Stone to our

school. It is displayed in the area outside the library. The original of this famous archaeological artifact is in the British Museum in London, England. This inscription of a decree from 196 B.C. was discovered in Egypt at the end of the eighteenth century during the Napoleonic campaigns. Since this stone contains a parallel text in hieroglyphic, demotic, and Greek, its discovery enabled the decipherment of the first two, previously unknown, ancient Egyptian scripts. This replica will enhance our foyer and will serve to call to mind the vast amount of archaeological labour behind our present knowledge of ancient civilizations - knowledge which can also be put to use in training ministers of the Word.

All these gifts are a reminder that the Theological College is truly a College of the churches! This reminder encourages us at the College in our labours for the churches and their Lord. C



Dr. C. Van Dam and brother A.J. Hordyk admiring the Rosetta Stone



By Mrs. J. Mulder

"Peter ... walked on the water and came to Jesus; but when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."

Matthew 14: 29, 30.

Dear brothers and sisters,

When the Lord Jesus used the stormy sea as His pathway He did so to prove to His disciples His power, which "enables Him even to subject all things to Himself". (Phil. 3:21) Also the wind and waves are subject to Him and, if need be, He uses them for His saving work.

At first the disciples did not understand this. Only when the Lord spoke to them, "Take heart, it is I; have no fear", they recognized Him and their fear turned into joy. The effect of Christ's self-revelation on Peter is clear from his words, "Lord, if it is You, bid me come to You on the water." The impulsive disciple is immediately ready for action. His request shows his trust in the Lord and his firm confidence in Jesus' power.

The Lord Jesus grants Peter his request. And on a word of his Master, Peter climbs out of the boat and walks towards the Lord. And as long as he concentrated his attention on Christ Jesus all went well. But as soon as he was overwhelmed by the strong winds and the surging waves, he became afraid and his trust began to waver.

However, his faith, although little, was not lost. When he began to sink, he cried to Jesus for help. And the Lord did not disappoint His wavering disciple. Taking him by the hand, He brings him safely aboard. And at His command the winds and the waves subsided.

This manifestation of Christ's power and love for His own, caused the disciples to worship Him, "Thou art indeed the Son of God".

There are many forces which constantly are trying to undermine our faith and to pull us away from Christ Jesus our Head and Saviour. Sometimes even little things cause us to lose sight of the Lord.

The church of Christ is still the main target of Satan, who tries to make us doubt the power and love of God in Christ our Lord. Sometimes the realities around us, adversity or afflictions, illness, unfaithfulness, poverty - seem to contradict the promises God once made to His people. Will it ever truly happen that all things will be new?

The Lord wants us to live by faith, keeping our eyes fixed on the Lord Jesus, on whom faith depends from start to finish; Jesus who, for the sake of the joy that lay ahead of Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2,3)

He has been tempted, but He has overcome and is now able to help those who are tempted. Life can be difficult but if it is, think then of Him, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted. The Lord Jesus Christ reaches out His mighty hand to all those who are bowed down. He says, "Come to Me, I will give you rest".

Taking refuge in Him and abiding in His steadfast love, we do not need to be afraid, for He will guide us. He will guard and protect us and bring us safely home. For He is Jesus, that is, Saviour!

From the Mailbox

Mr. Henk Hoogstra (Langley) thankfully acknowledges those, "who wrote words of encouragement and gratitude." His health is improving and he hopes to be able to start full-time teaching again in September.

One of his students, Duane Homan, who also had Hodgkin's disease, has received a bill of good health from the doctors. He too thanks our readers for the many cards he received.

And so did Trevor Hofsink. His mother writes, "Trevor even received best wishes from Florida." Trevor was also happy with the letters written to him by the children of the school in London, ON.

It is good to hear that so many of the younger and of the older ones among us take the time to write those with physical or mental health problems.

I am sure it is a great comfort to them knowing that they are not forgotten. Therefore keep it up! You help not only others, it is also good for yourself. We are sometimes so busy with our own problems that we forget those of others, which are sometimes much greater. Let's not only be interested in our own affairs, but also be considerate of the interests of others!

Our Birthday Calendar For July:

JIM BUIKEMA

"Anchor Home",

30 Rd., R.R. # 2, Smithville, ON L0R 1B0

Jim will be 29 years old on July 4.

CHARLIE BEINTEMA

401 Park Street, Chatham, ON N7M 3S7

Charlie hopes to celebrate his 15th birthday on July 20.

JIM WANDERS

2204 Headon Rd., Burlington, ON L7R 3X5

This Jim is also looking forward to his 29th birthday! It will be on July 28. We missed Jim's birthday last year because of a change of address. Let's make up to him this year!

Our very best wishes to all three of you!

"How firm a foundation, you saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He has said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled."

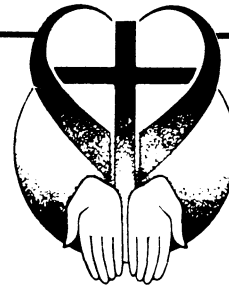
"Fear not, I am with you; O be not dismayed,
For I am your God, and will still give you aid;
I'll strengthen you, help you, and cause you to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand."

Greetings to all who read this,

Mrs. J. Mulder,

1225 Highway 5, R.R. # 1,
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund



CRWRF

News from Bangladesh

Bangladesh is home to the poorest of the poor. Although more than 58% of the approximately 104 million inhabitants depend on agriculture to support themselves, 70% of the population own less than 30% of the total land area. Another 11% own no land at all. These people struggle to exist, but the battle is often a losing one.

Our contributions assist the landless and nearly landless to improve their standard of living and receive new hope for the future. The Community Development Project which we support* in the Khanjanpur district of Bangladesh now works with approx. 1,000 families. It fosters the development of co-operatives to encourage savings and joint income-producing projects, and teaches functional literacy, health care, and other valuable skills to these very needy people.

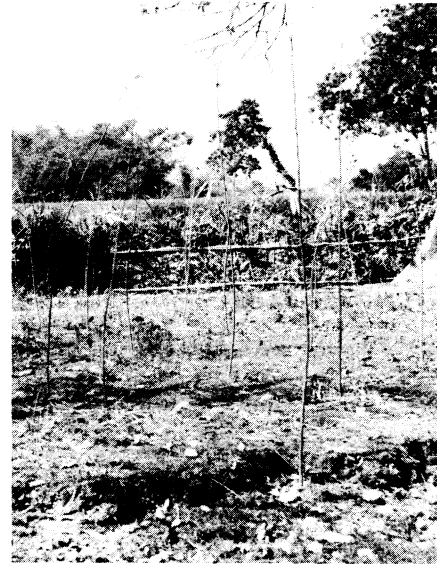
Harry Veldstra of C.R.W.R.C. recently paid a supervisory visit to the area. He

passed on this account of his visit to the village of Polashgor, one of over sixty villages participating in the program.

A visit to Polashgor

On my first visit to Polashgor we started out from the Christian Extension Services office in Dinajpur, located in the Khanjanpur district of northern Bangladesh. The purpose of my visit was to observe the various development projects that are underway in this village, and the effect they are having within the community as a whole.

We travelled to within 5 kilometers of the Indian border where we left the vehicle to approach the village by foot. After following a narrow path across small fields of rice seedlings, homes made of mud walls and thatch roofs began to appear among the trees. Coming closer I noticed that the homes were joined together to form family compounds. In the midst of



Mulberry seedlings project



Women busy producing handmade embroidery items

each there was noise and activity. Children were about, goats and chickens wandered freely, and women were busy cooking in their traditional style over a small fire in the ground. The people who live here are tribal Bengali's, descendants of the gentle-mannered Shantelese people. They are predominantly farmers who work the small plots of fertile land surrounding the village.

While Polashgor is a typical Bengali village in many respects, I know that it is typical in other ways. C.R.W.R.C. and the Churches of God Mission began a joint development program here in 1988 and, as a result, a men's group and a women's group have been formed in the village, each consisting of about 20 members.

The group members were anxious to talk about the activities they are involved in. There is a sense of hope and vision as they speak. A woman explains to me how the program operates. Every week each member contributes a set amount of money into the group savings fund, which is invested into an income generating activity such as handcraft production, originally begun by former C.R.W.R.C. worker Geraldine Ysselstein. Next she showed me the

rented field in which the women are cultivating wheat, paid for through the group savings fund. The income from these projects she explains, gives the extra income needed for basic household necessities.

Men too, are involved in income generating activities. Members of the men's group took me to see their mulberry project. The leaves from the saplings, in 2-3 years time, will be fed to silkworms as part of a sericulture savings, farmers can take loans for land rental, seed and other agricultural inputs.

As I walked further through the village, followed by group members eager to show me other projects, it occurred to me that something was stirring here, something one does not see often in Bangladesh — hope. Group members told me of their literacy classes, and of how important it is to them to become literate. Study to improve literacy skills means time and work, but it is a priority they balance with their other responsibilities. Women attend literacy classes during the day, and men study at night by lantern light.

Next, I visited Polashgor's community school. It had been organized as the result of the two groups banding together out of growing concern for the education of their children. A local landowner, I was told, donated the use of a piece of land for the school site. Approximately 70 children, from both group members and other community families, attend the school. They took me to see a large and colourful group of children sitting on the ground in the open air, receiving instruction from a volunteer teacher in the community. I was impressed with the enthusiasm and transfer of knowledge that was occurring, in spite of the lack of a school building and school aids.

Although health classes were not in progress on the day of my visit, mothers I met with informed me of the program. Health workers from the Churches of God Mission clinic in Khanjanpur were teaching them how to keep their children healthy. From earlier research I knew they were learning the basics of preventative health care and child nutrition, and that this instruction would benefit the entire family. They seemed happy with the improved health of their children and told me a healthy family gave them more time for other activities.

Evangelism in Polashgor by the Churches of God Mission, is most frequently carried out on a one-to-one basis. Christian workers demonstrate Christ's love to others, and seek ways of planting the seeds of God's truth and grace in Christ. Christian workers informed me of informal Bible studies and personal witness activities.

At the end of the day, as we returned to Dinajpur, I reflected on Polashgor, the

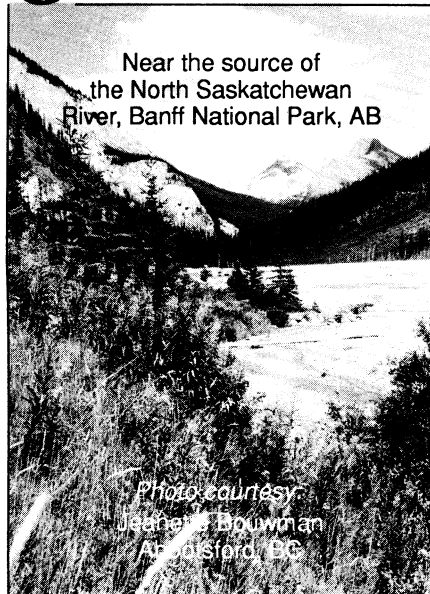


Group of children attending community school session

faces of the people who live there, and the stories they told. What stands out most is the spark of hope that was evident among the group members, and how that spark was becoming a vision for the future.

We are grateful for the opportunity to serve in Khanjanpur to meet the challenge of overwhelming need with the help of God.

OUR COVER



Near the source of the North Saskatchewan River, Banff National Park, AB

Photo courtesy of Jeanette Bouwman, Abbotsford, BC

Country profile of Bangladesh

Population: 110 million +
Per capita income: \$151 U.S.
Infant mortality rate: 121 per 1000
Life expectancy: 54 years

* C.R.W.R.C. originally began its work with marginal farmers in the Bogra district. In 1984, a separate program initiated by Peter and Geraldine Ysselstein began among the Shantal tribal people in the Khanjanpur area. This program is monitored by a joint committee of church leaders, members, health clinic staff, and the C.R.W.R.C. Field Director. The program is funded by contributions from C.I.D.A. (the Canadian International Development Agency) and by C.R.W.R.F.

C

Gifts for the work of CRWRF may be directed to:

CRWRF
PO Box 793
Burlington, ON L7R 3Y7

All gifts are gladly received. For donations of \$10.00 or more a receipt for tax deduction will be issued.

The Sixteenth Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia

By R. Vermeulen

The 16th Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia was opened on 1st of May by Rev. W. Huizinga, minister of the convening church of Armadale. After welcoming the delegates, he recalled some memorable events since Synod 1987. "At the last synod in Albany there were five churches and ten delegates; now there are seven churches and fourteen delegates. That represents quite a growth. Fourteen delegates can represent the churches better than ten. We welcome the churches at Bedforddale and West Tamar, who are represented here at a synod for the first time. May God cause this growth to continue, so that all the assemblies may be held and used for the benefit of the churches."

The Synod elected Rev. W. Huizinga chairman, Rev. C. Bouwman vice chairman, Rev. C. Bosch 1st clerk, and Elder A. Slobe 2nd clerk. As there are no classes in Australia, all the congregations are present with two representatives.

The first week was devoted to committee work, so your correspondent decided to attend during the second week. Unlike in the Netherlands, distances are very great in Australia. Whereas in Holland you can travel almost everywhere within a day, in Australia that is quite different. The nearest church from Albany is Armadale, so it takes four hours driving or some 400 km to get there.

The situation in Australia is as follows. There are now seven congregations. Four of these can be found in the metropolitan area of Perth. These four are in close proximity to each other, and in fact grew out of the original church of Armadale. The names of these congregations are: the original church of Armadale, Kelmescott, Byford, and Bedforddale. Four hundred kilometers south there is the church of Albany and 4000 km east there are the two congregations of Launceston and West Tamar on the island of Tasmania. So you can see, a widely spread federation of churches.

During the early part of the week, relations with the Reformed Churches of New Zealand were discussed. As a result of that discussion Rev. Jack Sawyer, minister of the Reformed Church of Hastings in New Zealand was present as visitor and was invited to address Synod later during

the week. He did so not as representative of the Reformed Churches of New Zealand but in his private capacity.

In its decision Synod considered the New Zealand situation carefully. It considered that "it is a reason for gratitude and joy when churches are given the obedience of faith to withdraw from apostate bodies such as the Reformed Ecumenical

As a result of these considerations and the realization that these churches are struggling for the truth, Synod decided: "to express its joy over the obedience granted to the Reformed Churches of New Zealand in withdrawing from the Reformed Ecumenical Council; to maintain contact at the present level, in order that the Free Reformed Churches of Australia may be a



Armadale's church building where Synod is held

DIANE BREUKELMAN

Council; however, it is disappointing that the Reformed Churches of New Zealand have not severed their ties with other churches with whom we could not have contact. In the case of the Christian Reformed Church of North America and the Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken contacts have actually been strengthened despite warnings from our deputies and Dutch deputies regarding the latter."

Synod noted the positive developments in New Zealand and the advisory committee considered that in order to "give a timely warning, it is good to have more direct contacts with the RCNZ. This is true also because we are geographically close to New Zealand."

hand and a foot in the struggle by the RCNZ to preserve the Reformed faith in their churches, to address the obstacles that kept us apart in the past and to continue discussions about their relations with third parties with whom we do not have any official relations ... and to adopt the recommendation regarding more direct contacts with the RCNZ and to permit the deputies to visit the RCNZ in order to clearly address the impediments to closer relationships."

An item which has been expected to cause division within Synod and which letters to Synod said was causing division and unrest in the churches was dealt with in a sensitive manner. The result should

be that the fears expressed will be laid to rest.

This concerned the relationship with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia. The PCEA is closely related to the Free Church of Scotland; thus their candidates for the ministry often study at Edinburgh. The FRCA deputies have had extensive contact with this church. Visits have taken place both ways to explore further the divergencies between the two church formations.

Matters such as the way both churches view the church have been high on the agenda. Also discussed were the question of adherents, the position of children in the covenant, and pulpit exchanges with, for example, ministers of Baptist persuasion.

Deputies for contact with the PCEA submitted an extensive report of their activities over the past three years. It was clear from the discussion at Synod that there is a difference of opinion regarding how Reformed the Westminster Standards are. It was also stated, however, that historically our churches both in Australia and in the Netherlands have always regarded the Westminster Standards as truly Reformed. It was felt by some that especially

on the question of the church the PCEA understanding is at variance with their own confession. On the other hand, one of the delegates warned that we must be careful lest we expect the PCEA to accept our views of the church rather than what our confession and Scripture say about it.

The carefulness with which the FRCA are dealing with this matter is caused by the realization that this church is, so to speak, on our doorstep, and that therefore, should relations become closer, we ought to unite into one federation.

As a result of the careful way this was dealt with, the recommendations of the advisory committee were, after some amendment, accepted by Synod. Synod "expresses its thankfulness to the Lord that the PCEA continues to give evidence of desiring to serve the Lord according to His Word." It further "expresses its appreciation for the fact that the PCEA deputies for relations with other churches have taken time to study and discuss matters with our deputies and encourages the PCEA to intensify these discussions."

Synod then instructed the new deputies "to work towards a mutual recognition of each other as true churches of our

Lord Jesus Christ and, in the light of this goal, to continue to study and discuss further with the PCEA the remaining areas of concern specified by Synod 1987, viz., the supervision of the Lord's table, the practice of pulpit exchanges and the position of children in the covenant. In this discussion about the areas of concern, the confession of the doctrine of the church should be addressed when applicable. Due attention must be given to our concern about possible unscriptural concepts regarding the 'pluriformity of the church'. All this should be done in the light of God's Word giving heed to the complete doctrine of salvation." It was also decided to exchange visitors at deputy and synodical level."

While the question of the ICRC has still to be dealt with and will undoubtedly cause some heart-searching by the delegates, the positive approach of Synod toward the PCEA gives reason to expect that the fears of some about possible division will not eventuate. The brothers, under the direction of the Holy Spirit and with the prayer of the congregations, are endeavouring to promote the unity in the churches.

(To be continued)

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty

Hello Busy Beavers,

Busy Beaver *Trina Jelsma* wrote a story I think you will enjoy.

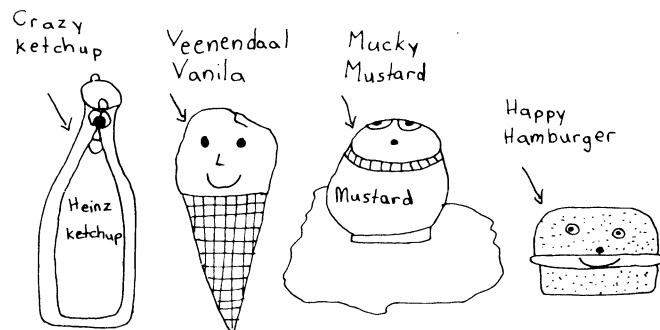
How the Pig Got Its Curly Tail

Janice was a seven-year-old girl with long straight hair. Tomorrow was Aunt Lizzie's wedding. Janice was so excited! Finally tomorrow came. To keep busy Janice dressed her pet pig Pinky in doll clothes and played with her. Janice had lunch and so did Pinky. Then Janice got on her lacy white dress and her Mom came to curl her hair. Pinky sat on her favourite place, Janice's head! Her long straight tail got caught in Janice's hair, but no one noticed. Suddenly Janice's Mom curled the hair with Pinky's tail in it! Pinky squealed, very frightened! Janice's Mom separated the tail from Janice's hair. Pinky's tail was curled! Years after, Pinky grew up and got babies - with curly tails! And more and more pig nations grew with curly tails. They still remember how Pinky the first pig with a curly tail got that curl!



CARTOONS

by Busy Beaver *Alison Veenendaal*



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Christina Bergsma*. Thank you for the puzzles. Do you read lots of dog stories, Christina? I could think of some you would really enjoy. Let's hear from you again soon, all right?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Alison Veenendaal*. I see you have no problems keeping busy. Keep practicing those cartoons Alison. I think the Busy Beavers, and others too, will enjoy them!

Welcome to the Club *Albert De Boer*. And thank you for the puzzle. I hope you'll enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. And I do hope you get that pen pal you want, Albert. Let me know.

And welcome to you too, *Karen De Boer*. We are happy to have you join us. Thank you for the picture. I hope you'll write again soon, Karen. And I hope too, that you get that pen pal!

Of course you may join the Busy Beaver Club *Jaclyn Hulst*. We hope you will enjoy joining in all our activities. Maybe you will write some of those Busy Beavers who want a pen pal! Bye for now, *Jaclyn*.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Miranda Hulst*. You didn't tell me what grade you are in, Miranda. Maybe you will write and tell me, and also tell me about your family and yourself!

I'm glad you enjoyed your Easter concert, *Trina Jelsma*. I think I would have liked it, too! I see you've been very busy, Trina. Thank you for sharing. I'm sure the Busy Beavers will enjoy your story.

Thank you for the poem and picture, *Brad Van Oene*. I enjoyed both. Thank you for sharing.

I see you've been very busy, *Margaret Nijenhuis*. I really enjoyed your letter and some of it the other Busy Beavers will enjoy, too, I'm sure. Keep up the good work. Do you make lots of cartoons, Margaret?

How did you enjoy your friend's birthday party, *Andrea Feenstra*? Thank you for making up that puzzle for us. How long did it take you, Andrea? Do you have a pen pal? Maybe you will write someone who wants a pen pal?

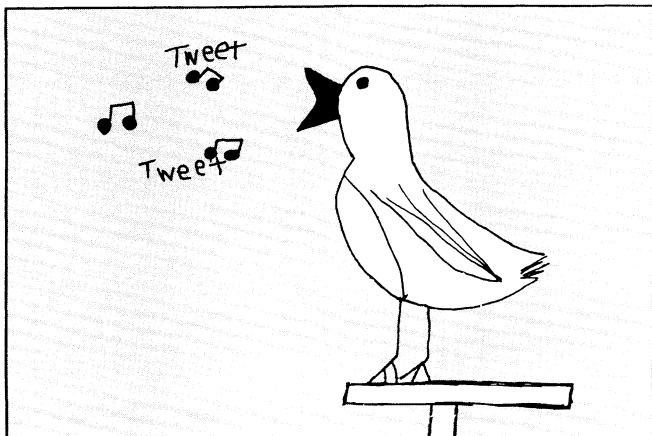
Busy Beavers, we need someone to exchange letters with these two people. Don't be shy. You write FIRST. It's fun getting letters back, you know!

Here are the names:

<i>Karen De Boer</i> (age 9)	<i>Albert De Boer</i> (age 11)
Box 164	Box 164
Neerlandia, AB	Neerlandia, AB
T0G 1R0	T0G 1R0

A CODE WITH PICTURE

by Busy Beaver *Margaret Nijenhuis*



A =1	I =9	R =18	7	15	4	13	1	4	5		
B =2	L =12	S =19	2	5	1	21	20	9	6	21	12
D =4	M =13	T =20	19	16	18	9	14	7			
E =5	N =14	U =21									
F =6	O =15										
G =7	P =16										

Quiz Time!

ANIMALS

Animals play an important role in the lives of people. Match (using your ruler) each statement with the correct animal.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Egypt was plagued with this amphibian. | a. Cows, Gen. 41:18 |
| 2. Spoke to its rider. | b. Sheep, 1 Sam. 17:34 |
| 3. Carried away sins on the Day of Atonement. | c. Ram, Gen. 22:13 |
| 4. Licked the sores of Lazarus. | d. Lion, Judges 14:5,6 |
| 5. Samson killed one with his hands. | e. Camel, Gen. 24:64 |
| 6. A pharaoh dreamed of fourteen. | f. Dogs, Luke 16:21 |
| 7. Transported Isaac's bride. | g. Leopard, Jer. 13:23 |
| 8. Sacrificed as an offering by Abraham. | h. Frog, Ex. 8:6 |
| 9. Cannot change its spots. | i. Goat, Lev. 16:21 |
| 10. Tended by David for his father. | j. Ass, Numbers 22:30 |

FAMILY NAMES

Many of you Busy Beavers will be learning French. Busy Beaver *Christina Bergsma* would like you to match these French and English family names.

- | | |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. grand-père | a. brother |
| 2. grand-mère | b. sister |
| 3. frère | c. girl cousin |
| 4. mère | d. grandma |
| 5. père | e. uncle |
| 6. oncle | f. aunt |
| 7. tante | g. mom |
| 8. soeur | h. boy cousin |
| 9. cousine | i. dad |
| 10. cousin | j. grandpa |

(Answers below)

SPACE WORDSEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Andrea Feenstra*

Look for:

Mercury
Venus
Earth
Mars
Jupiter
Saturn
Uranus
Neptune
Pluto
satellite
orbit
astronaut

T	L	E	A	P	L	U	T	O	U	M	C
O	T	H	T	R	A	E	U	V	S	U	J
S	U	M	A	R	S	N	A	E	C	O	U
A	M	E	L	S	O	S	N	N	S	W	P
T	N	R	L	U	M	T	O	U	A	L	I
U	B	C	U	N	M	S	R	S	T	O	T
R	R	U	N	A	E	P	T	C	E	I	E
N	O	R	I	R	R	A	S	I	L	W	R
M	T	Y	L	U	C	C	A	N	I	L	S
N	N	T	O	S	O	R	B	I	T	C	C
H	I	B	B	E	N	U	T	P	E	N	A

Answers

Family names: 1. j, 2. d, 3. a, 4. g, 5. i, 6. e, 7. f, 8. b, 9. c, 10. h

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

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty