

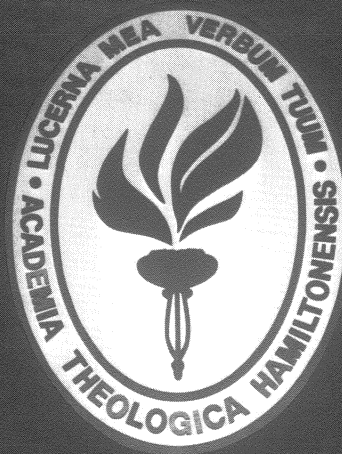


Clarion

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S · P · E · C · I · A · L

A Special Issue

By C. Van Dam

It gives us much joy that a special issue of *Clarion* can be devoted to the Theological College even before the College evening. This is not a normal occurrence. Why then a special issue now?

The Theological College has gone through more change in the past year than at any other time in its history. We, therefore, thought that a feature issue would help the readers to appreciate what is happening. In this way the larger community will be able to join in a more meaningful way in giving praise to the Lord for His faithfulness and goodness as seen in the events at our College.

This past year has seen a fifty percent turnover in faculty. Of four professors, two became emeriti and two young Doctors of Theology could take their place, as appointed by the General Synod of Winnipeg (1989) of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The teaching of Dogmatics passed from Dr. J. Faber to Dr. N.H. Gootjes who was installed as professor of Dogmatics on September 8, 1989 and the instruction in the Ecclesiological and Diaconological disciplines goes from Dr. K. Deddens to Dr. J. De Jong, who will, D.V., be in-

stalled at the College Evening this year on September 7, 1990.

There is another reason why a special College issue is warranted. Many of the readers of *Clarion* are not able to visit the College. With this issue we hope to give an impression of what takes place. You will read interviews with retired professors as well as two students. The pictures in this issue will tell their own story. In this way we hope to bring the College closer to you. This is important, for the Theological College does not have an existence independent of the Churches. No, it exists through and for them! It is the "School of the Churches."

Those who labour at the Theological College appreciate very much the close relationship with the churches. This association gives our work a clear context. We labour in the midst of God's people for the training of ministers who are to proclaim the Word of God faithfully. We therefore value your support in the form of your interest, gifts, and, above all, prayer. May this *Clarion* issue help to strengthen the bond between the school and the churches. We look forward to seeing many of you at the open house and the College Evening on September 7! C

The College from the back.



The College Evening

By J. Geertsema

In this issue of *Clarion* the reader finds again an announcement of the College Evening. In this announcement we not only speak about the evening, and the things that are to be done, but also about an "Open House" in the afternoon. Many have seen the building. But there are also many who did not visit the College as yet. We thought that it might be good to give you a special invitation. We like the members of the churches to come and see the place where we, teachers and students, work in the service of the churches. We also like to explain to you how "it all" works here. How the study is set up and is arranged. About the building and how things are done in the College I like to add a few remarks.

We are still thankful, every day, for the present building. It fulfils its function so much better than the old 'mansion' at Queen Street in downtown Hamilton. The lecture rooms are larger. The rooms in the previous building could not contain the number of students in a proper way. In the "higher class" we hope to have ten students this coming year. The library is more than hundred percent better. There is on this point really no comparison possible. Costly books do not belong in a damp basement, where possibilities of expansion did not exist.

The reader understands that the professors each have their own field of study and teaching. When a student starts his studies at the College, he enters the so-called Freshman Year. This year is introductory. Emphasis is placed on the knowledge of the biblical languages, Hebrew and Greek, while there is a course in Latin as well. Besides this, the students have to learn the Three Forms of Unity (once again) and receive a course in the knowledge of these Reformed symbols. Then there is a course in Philosophy and an introductory course in the Diaconological subjects. The latter deals with biblical words for preaching, being an office-bearer, and the like.

When the student has completed this first year with an average of at least 65 percent in his marks and no failing mark in any of the subjects, he is promoted to the theological years, called the Sophomore Year, the Junior Year, and the Senior Year. During these three years a certain program is followed and completed. The study material of Church History and Church Polity, e.g., is divid-

ed in three parts. And so is Dogmatics.

The study of the Old and the New Testament subjects is set up in such a way that during the Sophomore Year the world of the Old and New Testament is studied, including Old Testament institutions, as the priesthood, and the kingship in Israel. During the Junior Year the subject is in the first place Canonics. It deals with the Old and the New Testament Canon: the Bible books, their contents, the authors, the addressees, and the circumstances under which they were written. The Senior Year is devoted to the history of revelation in the Old and in the New Testament. During these three years the students also receive instruction in the practice of exegesis. This is done in the last part of every year. As for the New Testament, the first year we practice the exposition of the Gospels or Acts, the second year we are busy with the explanation of the letters of Paul, while in the Senior Year an effort is made to interpret the Letter to the Hebrews.

The above can give an impression of the preparation of students for the ministry. This is, however, only an impression. The students, but also the professors, will be able to tell you that they all have to accomplish much work. The professors were used to this already when in the ministry. Although the work of preparing the lectures and staying up-to-date and fresh requires a lot of studying. And the students have to learn to do a lot of work, because they have to do the same as ministers of the Word. If a student at the College expects an eight-hours-per-day, five-days-per-week work schedule as minister in a congregation of Christ, he must either change his mind or go home. Being a minister in the church demands, in principle, a service of twenty-four-hours-per-day, seven-days-per-week.


Now it is so that we live in an age in which we receive tools that are quite complicated, but nevertheless very useful. Work can be done so much more efficiently with them. Obviously I am referring to the computer. Almost all the ministers by now work with this tool. In this connection I would like to point to the second last line in the announcement of the College Evening. It says that the offering will be for the computerization of the College. Preparing the lectures, the administration of the College, the preparation of articles, and more

things could be done so much more efficiently with computers. So the thought and desire came up to work more with this tool. Discussions on this point led to an investigation whether computerization would financially be possible.

When at the same time the need arose to change the library administration from working with cards into working with a computer, which in the end will be considerably cheaper (see elsewhere in this issue), the Finance and Property Committee, in cooperation with the ladies of the Women's Savings Action, made this computerization possible. This did mean, however, that part of the money was received as a loan. The loan is interest-free, however. Now to help us to pay this money back, it was decided to have the College Evening collection for this purpose.

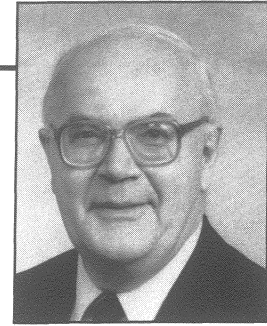
I may mention here that with the new computer and printer the new Handbook of the College could be made print-ready. This will mean a saving of close to a thousand dollars. Besides, the plans are to publish more articles and books in the future. Also for this purpose the computerization as we have it now will certainly serve the churches in general and the College in a special way. It is clear that we would like to recommend this offering for your consideration.

Coming back to the staff members at the College, three of them are known quite well to the churches, since they have served for a number of years already, first as ministers of the Word. One is not so well-known yet: Dr. N.H. Gootjes. The Lord willing, this will change soon. Articles are being prepared for *Clarion*, and the announcement of the College Evening tells us that Dr. Gootjes hopes to give his inaugural speech. It will deal with the reality of the wrath of God. Next year it will be the turn of Dr. De Jong. We look also forward to this.

I may end with a personal note. It is an impression which I have. Having been at the College now for four years, I can say that there was a good cooperation among the professors before the present change. Now, with this fifty percent change: two new professors, this good cooperation has not changed. It is a pleasure to work together at the College, in the service of the churches, under the Head of the Church as our common Master and Saviour. May our God continue to bless us. 

Interview with Dr. Faber

By J. Geertsema



Question: You are now retired after two decades of teaching at the College. During these twenty years you also served as principal. How would you characterize these twenty years?

Answer: If I speak about those twenty years of the College then I would first of all go back to the situation of the Canadian Reformed Churches in 1968 during the Synod of Orangeville, the synod that appointed me to be professor at the Theological College and also principal. I think that the situation of the churches was a dangerous situation in so far that the training for the ministry of the Word was completely dispersed. There was first a trend to have education by several ministers in the manse. We may be thankful for the work that has been done and there is one minister serving in our churches who is the product of those first attempts. But, some young men had gone to West-

man had gone to Kampen. If we had maintained the situation that part of the students went to Philadelphia, and part to Kampen and the rest were trained in different manses, it would have boded ill for the churches. There would have been a threat with respect to the unity of our Reformed testimony. After some time we would have received a group of ministers who had picked up their theological education in different places and who had undergone different influences. This would have been a threat for the unity of the Canadian Reformed Churches and for the clarity of their witness. I have always seen it as my task also to use the Theological College as a means of binding the church together in the Reformed faith. Those churches are few and widespread all over Canada and the Theological College is one of the most important means of binding those churches together in a concrete manner. They have something that they

Question: Now that you have lived in the midst of these churches for these twenty years, is there a development in the churches and if so, in your opinion, what would you say about that? Do you think that the development is positive or negative?

Answer: Such a question is difficult to answer. You need more historical distance in order to see developments in the past and to see in which way those developments go. With all due reserve and again with all due modesty I would nevertheless try to make some remarks about the development in the churches during the years 1969 to 1990. In the first place the apostle Paul says the natural is first then the spiritual. Let me say that the development as far as I can see with respect to the economic situation of the members of our churches is a development for which we can be very thankful. When we arrived, one could not expect too much from the members of the congregations, also financially. Those were still the years of the first struggles. But, especially during the 70s and the 80s there has been a tremendous improvement in the economic situation of most of our church members and I think that we should be thankful for God's blessings. The members of the congregations have used that economic prosperity for the development of the life of the churches in general, not only erecting many beautiful church buildings but also developing Reformed education. Here in Hamilton in 1973 the Timothy elementary school opened, in 1975 the Guido de Bres High School, and again some years later the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College was established. If I look at the local situation (and I realize Hamilton has become kind of a center for Reformed education) then there is a tremendous difference between 1969 when we came and now, and I think that is a difference for which we can be very thankful. So as far as that is concerned you can say that the development was a positive one. However, the development in a spiritual sense is much more difficult to evaluate. Nevertheless we may try to indicate certain things and



The Rev. J. Faber when he was appointed Professor at the Theological College, 1968. Pictured are (from left to right) Rev. D. Vander Boom, Rev. G. Van Dooren, Rev. L. Moes, Rev. J. Faber, Rev. H. Scholten, Rev. L. Selles, Rev. H.A. Stel.

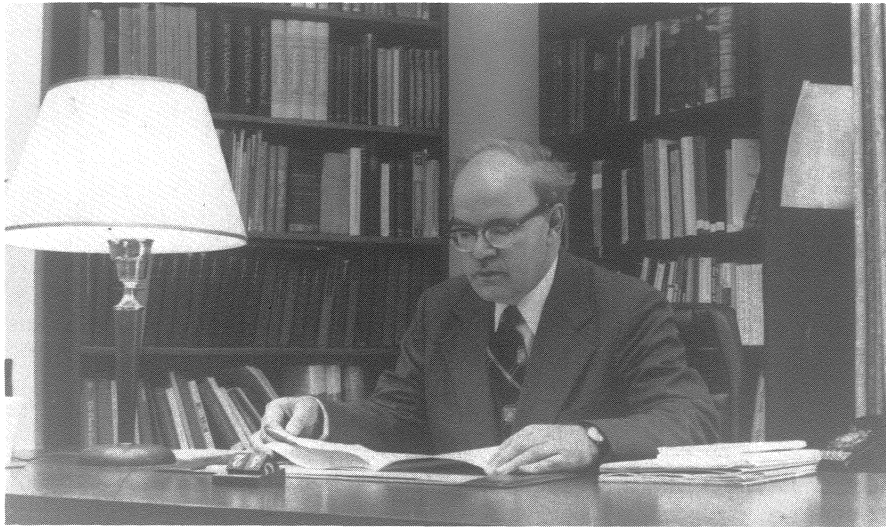
phia. In the Netherlands there was an upheaval in the churches that also affected the work of the Theological College in Kampen so that it was even difficult to have good contact in correspondence. Earlier, one Canadian Reformed young

stand behind together, which they have to care for together. They also have an institution that by the grace of God delivers young men to them to become ministers of the Word, young men who have been trained in the same manner.

if you ask also whether there are negative developments then let me first say that with the economic development I see the danger of secularization and materialism. People can be so engrossed in material

Christ. We need these contacts. They may keep us free from sectarianism." That last sentence was debated at the synod of Winnipeg in 1989. But I think that a warning against sectarianism is

contact can remind us of the greatness of the ongoing church-gathering work of our Lord Jesus Christ and that we need those contacts. That is one of the points that I think that the church life of the Canadian Reformed Churches in the 70s and 80s has become a little stifled compared probably to the church life of the 50s and the 60s.



In earlier days, Dr. Faber at work in his office.

things that they forget to seek the kingdom of God first and its righteousness. Sometimes I modestly ask the question whether those lean and meager years of the beginning 60s and certainly of the 50s were in the spiritual sense not better years than the 70s and the 80s and whether we have not undergone in the 70s and 80s a process of secularization. In the second place, I myself have always thought that being Reformed means that we do not depart either to the right or the left but that we walk the way of God's Word in binding ourselves to our Reformed confessions and church order. I have the impression that in the first years the Canadian Reformed Churches had a kind of freshness and openness in the new set-up of church life in Canada. But did it not become a little bit stifled in the 70s and 80s? For instance, it was the Canadian Reformed Churches that began the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, not the other way around. But, sometimes you get the impression that nowadays people think: what do we do or what have we done or why should we bother? Something of the freshness of trying to be instrumental in the ongoing gathering of God's church that there was in the 50s has been stifled. I think for instance of the fact that at the last synod in Winnipeg there was a report in which there was one sentence in connection with this specific point I just mentioned. This sentence was, "Although modest the ecclesiastical contact with the OPC reminds us of the greatness of the ongoing church-gathering work of our Lord Jesus

always a good warning. If you are completely free of sectarianism and you fight against that then you will listen to that warning and leave it at that. But if you react very strongly against such warning you give at least the impression as if you do not understand that an ecclesiastical

Question: I would like to come back to the continuing need for the College — in the midst of the churches. Could you say a little bit more about that need — now from an historical point of view.

Answer: Certainly, for the bond between the Theological College and the churches is one of the things that is very dear to my heart. We should not go overboard either by saying that there is a text in Scripture that says that churches must have a Theological College. There is no abstract commandment valid for each and every situation. There can be very small churches that can not have a Theological College. I think for instance of our South African sister churches. You can not say that they live in sin because they do not have their own Theological College. That does not take away that we receive God's revelation in Scripture and live by that revelation in Scripture, and God reveals in his Word — and we think now especially of the New Testament — that the church is the pillar and bulwark of the truth. The church is so to speak the publication board of the gospel. The



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church has to proclaim the gospel in this world and that is one of the first privileges and tasks of the church of God. For that proclamation ministers of the Word and missionaries are needed. Therefore you can say that if the churches have to be the pillar and the bulwark of the truth and if the churches have to guard the gospel of truth entrusted to them then it is very important that the church itself has the complete control of the training of the ministry of the Word. We can also think of the well-known text of the apostle Paul in his letter to Timothy, 2 Timothy 2:2, "and what you have heard from me before many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." Paul as a spiritual father calls Timothy his son (verse 1) and then in verse 2 exhorts Timothy again to entrust the gospel also to other faithful men in order that a relay race of the gospel may find place throughout the centuries and the torch of the gospel be passed on to the next generation of preachers. In the whole revelation of God about his church and about the task of his church in this world there is the need of the training for the ministry by the churches themselves. That has also been seen throughout the ages. I think of the way in which Calvin in 1559 established the Academy in Geneva and then wrote those famous words to the persecuted churches in France that they should send the wood and in Geneva they would make arrows of it in order to endure the spiritual battle and to fight the spiritual battle in France. I think of the way in which the seceded people in the Netherlands in 1854 established their Theological Seminary in Kampen. Historically speaking, Hamilton has a strong link to that Kampen of 1854. Men like Lukas Lindeboom stressed the necessity of the link between the church and the training for the ministry over against the somewhat supercilious ideas of Abraham Kuyper about a sovereign theological science, free from the state and free from the church.

The bond between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Theological College in Hamilton is a two-way street. The College should always be aware of the fact that it is born out of the churches and is there for the churches to serve them as well as possible. Theological professors should not lord it over the churches and in my opinion not even as advisers be permanently present at general synods. On the other hand the churches have to acknowledge the place of the College within their midst. To elaborate on this last point, let me use an example that has been written about lately in *Clarion*. I think about the discussion concerning the decision of the last synod with respect to the appointment of professors and the procedure involved. Both Rev. P. de Boer

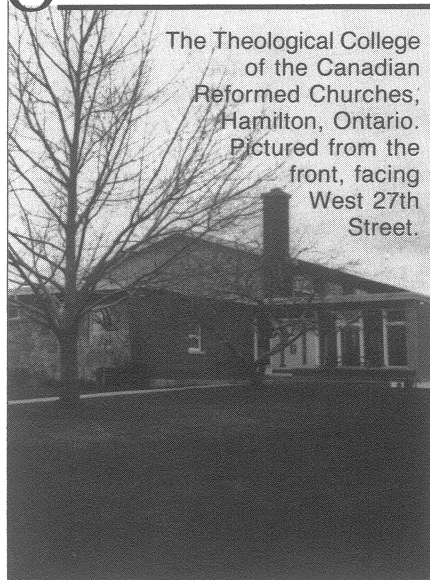
and Rev. W.W.J. VanOene wrote about this matter. Both brothers made good points but neither of them made the right point. Rev. de Boer made the good point that members of a General Synod are ultimately responsible for the appointment of professors at the Theological College and that they therefore should be well-informed. Rev. VanOene made the point that appointments are being prepared first of all by the Senate of the Theological College and then by the Board of Governors and that the report to the General Synod is the result of a proposal that has been prepared by the Senate and Board of Governors and that these brothers should be trusted. That was a right point. But it did not answer a basic question. If the synod wants to have more information beyond the written report of the Senate and Board of Governors what does synod have to do? Now the synod decided to have the confidential report about proposed professors sent to the delegates one month before synod convenes. I think indeed as Rev. VanOene indicated that it is a dangerous path. That decision sounds to me more like American ideals of democracy than according to Reformed church order and I think that decision should be revoked. Both brothers forgot that there is a very simple solution. In the past the principal of the Theological College did all the preparatory work for a proposal to the Senate and to the Board of Governors and he drafted the report for synod. The Synod of Winnipeg decided to invite the principal of the Theological College for very brotherly, friendly farewell words to be spoken to him. But why did that synod not simply ask that principal to

be present at the appointments, to answer questions and to elaborate orally on all the information that he had gathered? Why should there not be in the future the very simple rule that if there is an appointment to be made at the Theological College also the senate will be represented during the discussion? Why that fear in the Canadian Reformed Churches of using the Theological College? This is only an example. I also think of the fact that the churches have used the professors as deputies in important committees and that they were often the men who wrote the reports for the synods; but, they were never invited or allowed to speak even one word about their report to elucidate it or to defend it in a General Synod over against ill-informed counter-proposals. We even had the situation that the sentence that I spoke of earlier was being attacked in the presence of the man who had written it but he was not asked to speak one word about that sentence! I think that is a serious mistake. I would urge the churches to use the professors at the Theological College better in the future than they have done in the last twenty years.

Question: What attracted you to the study of dogmatics?

Answer: The Lord God has led my life in such a way that I have never wanted to be anything else than a minister of the Word. I was attracted to the ministry from my youth. Within the field of the ministry there were two completely different fields that attracted me. The first field was the field of mission. In my youth I was very attracted to the field of mission but I think that I did not have the practical gifts of being a missionary so that I had given up that idea. The second aspect was that right from the beginning I was attracted to study, particularly in dogmatics. Especially two figures played a great role. In the first place the Rev. S.G. De Graaf, one of "my" ministers in Amsterdam whom I regularly heard in his deep and profound preaching of the Word of God and his catechism preaching as it is now to be seen for a part in his book *Het Ware Geloof*. Rev. De Graaf who was also my teacher in the Gereformeerd Gymnasium and among other subjects, he introduced me to dogmatics in a way that made me very enthusiastic. In those years of my gymnasium training starting in 1937 I also came into contact with "De Reformatie" and the articles of Dr. Klaas Schilder. I was thrilled by the dogmatic expositions of Dr. Schilder not only in "De Reformatie" itself in his polemics but also in the weekly installments in which Schilder wrote the first edition of his exposition of the Heidelberg Catechism. So it was clear right from the beginning that dogmatics would be my favourite field of study. Con-

OUR COVER



nected with my interest in classical languages and my interest in the study of history it was especially the study of the doctrine of the church in the early church that drew my attention. In that respect I differ from my teachers, both De Graaf and Schilder.

Question: Why do you think that the study of dogmatics is a necessary part of the theological studies at our College?

Answer: I answered that question in 1974 by speaking at the College evening about the significance of dogmatology for the training of the ministry (published in *Essays in Reformed Doctrine*). Dogmatics brings together all the elements of the theological study — a very important part of the biblical studies, especially of exegesis and of the history of God's revelation in the Old Testament and the New

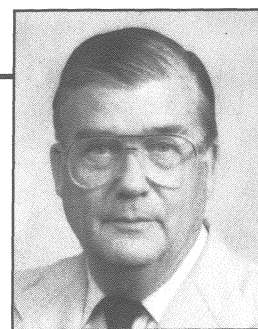
Testament, the study of church history and especially of the development of the doctrine in the course of the centuries within the church. If I think of the disciplines that are related to the office — the diaconological disciplines — then in order to be a good preacher of the Word, we have to have a clear insight into the cohesion of God's revelation and to know the relations between the truths that God has revealed in His word. It is precisely dogmatics that gives us the feeling for that cohesion and those associations and connections within God's revelation. It is clear that the preaching of the Word of God according to the Heidelberg Catechism needs a good training in Reformed dogmatics. There has been a theologian who compared the man of dogmatics to the director of the orchestra and said that

he calls up, as it were, the violins of the biblical exegesis, and then he calls up the trumpets of the church history. He may be the one who brings it into a beautiful symphony in which all those other and very important parts of theological study come together, flow together into a symphony. The symphony of dogmatics had the love of my nonmusical heart.

Thank you Dr. Faber. We wish you and your wife the blessing of the Lord in your retirement, we are thankful for what you have done for the College and so for the churches these past two decades. We wish you and your wife the blessing of the Lord that you may continue to be a blessing both for the College and for the churches. C

Interview with Dr. K. Deddens

By J. Geertsema



Question: Dr. Deddens, thank you for allowing us this interview for *Clarion*. You have written quite a number of articles for *Clarion* and we appreciate it now that you are almost departing from us that we can still have this interview with you for the special issue of *Clarion* about the College. You have served the College and the churches on this side of the Atlantic Ocean for six years. As you look back on these six years did you enjoy your work at the College and in the midst of the churches in North America?

Answer: I enjoyed the work at the College very much and also to be in the midst of the churches in North America, to give advice as professor of church polity. It was nice also that I could visit all the churches and could speak or preach in all the churches.

Question: When you look back how would you characterize this period of your life's work?

Answer: I must say that it was more or less the crown on my work as a minister of the church as I served the churches for about 33 years before I came to Canada. I also served the churches as a missionary. So, this period was more or less the finishing touch, a crown on my work as a minister of the churches.

Question: So when you had to teach diaconology — the subject about the work of the office-bearers and give advice

to the churches — could you do so building upon your experience as a minister, as a missionary, and as a member of the committee in Holland for contact with churches abroad?

Answer: Yes. Especially with regard to diaconology it was very profitable that I could use that experience. More than once I had to say in the lectures that it was my experience that such and such could be done better in this way than in that.

Question: Can you tell us in a few words about the importance of the subjects you taught. Let us begin with ecclesiology.

Answer: Ecclesiology has to do in the first place with church history. I went through the whole church history within 3 years. I always thought it important to find connections between all kinds of facts. I kept in mind what my teacher K. Schilder said that after the first three centuries no new heresies were invented. Heresies found later on in the church were all variations on an old theme. So I always tried to find connections between what happened before and what is happening now, and thus to see the line in church history, and not just mere facts. In the second place, there was also church polity. It is very important for the students to know the different systems of church polity, to emphasize the Reformed system and also

to know the Reformed church order. In church polity you also had the opportunity for practical applications. The students had to make case studies. When they are in the congregation later on they will experience all kinds of cases where they have to solve the problems. I tried to do that with them in a kind of workshop and also in the lectures.

Question: Can you also tell us something about diaconology?

Answer: Yes. Diaconology is also very important for the work of a minister. We have in the first place homiletics, not only the history of homiletics, to know what homiletics actually is, but also the sermon sessions. I must say that was always a weekly highlight. In the second year the students had to deliver two sermons, in the third year three, in the fourth year four. Altogether they had to deliver nine sermon proposals. These sermons were criticized by the students and by myself. This was a very helpful tool for the training for the ministry.

In the second place the topic of liturgics, which was my favourite subject. Liturgy has to do with the whole matter of worship. The Reformed liturgy is so important. We have in our Reformed circles a beautiful worship service.

Then in the third place catechetics.



Dr. K. Deddens delivering a lecture.

In catechetics we discuss why it is so important to stress the confessions of the church and to teach them to the young people. I also taught how to teach. The students had to do classroom work.

And finally *poimenics*, which deals with counselling, and home visitation. This deals with the work of the ministers together with the elders.

Then there were the courses introduction to diaconiology and public speaking for the freshmen. It is good that we now have at the College also the possibility of videotaping so that the students can see themselves and learn from it.

Further, there is missiology (it belongs to diaconiology but it is a separate subject).

It deals with mission (including home mission) and the history of religions (Islam, Buddhism and so on). The College also offers a special advanced course for training for missionaries. Four times this course was given.

Finally there was also the Latin course for the freshmen. It is important to know Latin. Then you have access to, for instance, Calvin and the authors of the first centuries in the language in which they wrote.

General speaking, especially diaconiology has to do with the practice of the ministerial work in the church. I always tried to show how important it is for a minister to know not only the history of the different subjects but also how to put

them into practice when you are a minister of the church.

Question: You had to teach quite a number of subjects. Now you retire and go back to the Netherlands. Will the churches there, the Lord willing, be able to make use of your experience?

Answer: In the first place, they have already been requesting pulpit supply. There are also many vacancies in Holland.

In the second place I have also been asked to write more books and some books are to be published in English, the Lord willing.

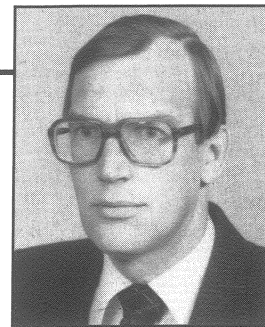
I was also asked to act as chairman of the GOV (Gereformeerde Omroep Vereniging — Reformed Broadcast Society). They transmit from Monte Carlo to Cyprus in English, and to Hungary and Czechoslovakia. They also tape in Papiamento, the language of Curaçao, Aruba and so on. They asked me to become chairman because I am familiar with the Papiamento language, as well as English. I will have to do quite a bit of work here. The work is different, of course, but I can use my experience over the years. I was asked also to go to Cyprus and to the Philippines sometime in the future because of the need for more training for the ministry.

We are thankful that you will continue to publish also in English.

Dr. Deddens, we thank you and your wife and family for your time of service here in our midst. We hope and wish that the Lord may give you health and strength so that indeed you can be of further service in and for His kingdom and church in this world. ☐

Interview with Dr. N.H. Gootjes

By J. Geertsema



Question: You have been teaching now at our College for one semester. What is your first impression about your task here?

Answer: I have a broader task. When I was teaching in Korea, I had only one or two subjects, part of dogmatics and part of Greek. Now I have more subjects. The main subject is of course dogmatics which is concerned with the doctrine of the church. When we read Scripture do we have all sorts of loose and separate

elements, or do we have unity, structure? Can we combine and understand it? That is the concern of dogmatics. It is very exciting to try to find the structure of the Bible. I am not the first one to do so. It has been done right from the beginning so you will have to take into account the whole history of dogmatics and also the way this structure has found expression in the confessions of the church. That is at our College a special subject. So I teach not only dogmatics but also sym-

bolics. Symbolics means that field which studies the symbols, the confessions of the church. Thus I have to study the old confessions, the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed and also the Reformed Forms of Unity, the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism and the Canons of Dordt.

Another field that I have to study and

to teach is ethics. This area is completely new to me. Other subjects include philosophy and a general survey of theology. So you can see that I have my work cut out for me.

Question: Although you have so many subjects, did you set a goal for yourself with the acceptance of your calling among us?

Answer: Not especially a goal for Canada, different from Korea. The thing that interests me the most and I think that it would interest all dogmatians is the relation between Scripture and dogmatics. Your field is New Testament and exegesis. I am a dogmatician. That does not mean that we work in completely different fields. What you as New Testament scholars discover should be reflected in dogmatics. But how? This is what interests me. How can we develop and purify dogmatics from the things we learn from exegesis? Of course, I am not the only or the first one to do this. This is already an old tradition in Reformed churches. To begin with, Bavinck did so by even quite a lot of exegetical material in his dogmatics. Then there is K. Schilder. One of his main contributions to dogmatics was that he always asked for the Scriptural proof and then tried to decide what we should keep and what we should not keep from traditional thoughts. This tradition of Bavinck and Schilder went on in my teachers Prof. L. Doekes and Prof. J. Kamphuis. It interests me too. I hope to be able to show how important exegesis is for dogmatics. On the other hand I hope that the exegetes will see how important dogmatics is for exegesis.

Question: I agree that there is a strong relationship and that the two have to work together — the dogmatician and the exegete. You mentioned already a few times the work that you did in Korea. Can you tell us something about that period. How was life in Korea for a European family?

Answer: We have always tried to live within the Korean community. Especially in the capital of Korea, Seoul, there are special compounds where missionaries live together. They do not live among the Koreans. They live separately and they only go out to teach or whatever they do to work among the Koreans. They live their own separate lives. We always tried to live among the Koreans, to work together with them and to cooperate with them. We even had Korean students living in our house for eight years. They say the Western world and the Eastern world are different and it is true. I do not think that we will ever be able to think as a Korean. Also our whole social pattern is different. So, in a sense it is hard to live among the Koreans because their whole way of life is so much different from ours. On the other hand we had quite a number

of good friends who helped us and with whom we worked together.

Question: Can you give an example of that different social structure?

Answer: Yes. If a Korean invites you for a meal you should not expect him to invite you to his house. He will invite you

where the people believe God's Word and they want to follow it. They love the Word of God. They have suffered quite a lot from persecution. Ministers died during the Japanese occupation. Church members died because they refused to bow before idols. It is a strong church.



Dr. N.H. Gootjes, visibly enjoying his new task.

to a kind of restaurant, for traditionally the houses were very small and you could not very well receive a guest there, so that it would be considered poor and cheap to receive someone in the house. You have to bring him to a restaurant and then they tend to spend more money on you than they can afford. You have to do it. You have to honour the guest. It costs him much money.

Question: Can you refuse knowing these things?

Answer: No. The only thing you can do is to say that you do not choose that expensive dish because you like the cheap one more.

Question: With respect to that life and work in Korea, how was it for you as a Reformed minister and teacher to work at a Presbyterian seminary?

Answer: My situation was a bit peculiar. I was not a minister in Korea. I was still a minister of the Dutch Reformed churches. But I was loaned to the seminary of the Presbyterian churches in Korea to teach. I liked teaching there especially with the different background. The church has existed there for over eighty years. Mission work started just over a century ago. You can not expect them to be as developed theologically as the church in other countries. But it is a church

There was a colleague teaching there too. When we taught something it was sometimes a surprise for them; they had not expected it. But you could always communicate with each other on the basis of the Word of God. And if they had not expected something and they asked why I said what I did, they were willing to accept it if I could explain it on the basis of the Bible. So they are not shut in within their own thought patterns; they are open on the basis of the Word of God. Because of the situation of the church in Korea, I had to oppose Pentecostalism and Neo-Pentecostalism (the largest and the quickest growing church in the world is the Pentecostal church in the capital, Seoul). There is the feeling in the country that if you want to be a successful church, a growing church, a developing church you have to be a bit Reformed, Presbyterian, of course, but also a bit Pentecostal. So they feel the pressure from Pentecostalism and wonder how much of Pentecostalism they can adopt and use. I had to oppose, and to bring in theological arguments why we can not follow it. I had to study up on the work of the Holy Spirit more than I had to in Holland.

Thank you, Dr. Gootjes. We wish you a good time here that you may be a blessing for the churches here with your work.



Meet Two Students!

John Van Woudenberg

John Van Woudenberg came to the Theological College from Chilliwack, B.C. this past fall. Besides his full-time preoccupation of studying theology, his many practical gifts have resulted in his becoming the official handyman at the College whenever light maintenance work needs to be done.

Question: You have a degree in Science (Animal Science — Agriculture). What made you go from Science to Theology? What brought you to the College?

Answer: That's a good question. I always had it in the back of my mind, but must say that when I was in high school and university, I did not think that I could

gather that is your experience as well. at the College. As you know there is quite a shortage of ministers. What struck you about the College when you first came as a freshmen last fall? What were some of your first impressions?

Answer: An immediate favourable impression was the totally different atmosphere from what one experiences at a secular university where one is confronted with unbelief. In that sense it is almost relaxing to come here! Also, at the College there is much more of a one-to-one relationship with the professors.

Question: Of course being small can have not only advantages but also disadvantages. This year the freshmen class of six was large for our standards. How was

I gather that is your experience as well.

Answer: Indeed, although I must say that taking sciences the way I did, with extra courses, was a good preparation for me, for the work load was considerable too.

Question: Do you think it is worth it?

Answer: Certainly! You sure learn a lot in a short time. You increase your knowledge of Scripture very substantially very soon. The same applies to one's knowledge of the Confessions.

Question: The first year is in a sense preparatory for the three years that follow. What are your expectations for the future?

Answer: There won't be as much stress on the language work. I'm really looking forward to studying other courses and getting into theology proper.

Question: Are there any other comments about the College which you would like to make to those who read Clarion?

Answer: There's a great need for ministers right now. I would urge potential students to consider studying at the College. People should not think that by going to the College they somehow become isolated from the rest of the world. This is not at all true. The studies here are very relevant to the real life questions and needs faced by Christians in the world.

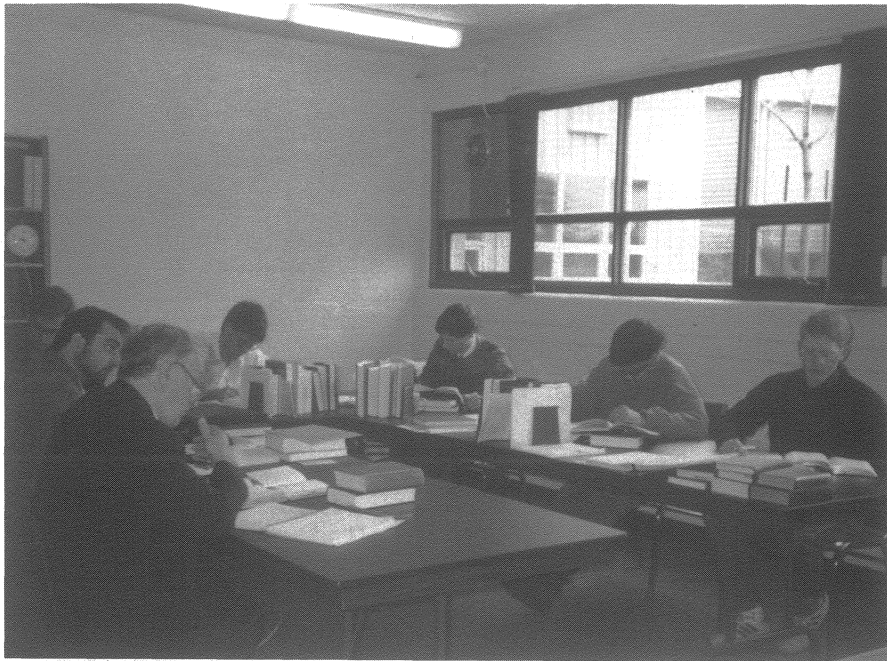
Alfonso D'Amore

Alfonso D'Amore came to us last year from the Reformed Church of Italy at Ischia (which is an Island off Naples). Although he is an Italian, he was born in Canada. He is a member of the Free Reformed Church in Dundas.

Question: You come from Italy. Could you tell us something about your background? Where did you study before you came here?

Answer: In Italy I studied for the normal five years at elementary school and three years at middle school and five years at classical grammar school. In Italy the grammar school is considered to be one of the best and it gives access to all university faculties.

At the university I studied political science. It was not the proper choice. But at that time I thought, as long as I get a university degree before I study theology. I had planned to become a minister may-



Classroom scene.

handle the language requirements. After I graduated from the University of British Columbia, I started working for a feed company. But, the thought of studying theology did not leave me. I started taking a German course and discovered that I could handle it. From then on the desire grew ever stronger to study for the ministry.

life among the students? Was there much interaction?

Answer: You get to know the students quite well, some more than others. Time constraints due to homework do limit interaction though.

Question: Most students experience quite an increase in workload once they leave university and come to the College.

be in the Salvation Army so I did not pay enough attention to the university faculty. Then I met Rev. Atkinson. I had already started a particular program at the university so I could not change anymore. It would not be good to lose any more time.

Question: But how come that you as an Italian came to study theology here in Canada? Did that have something to do with this Rev. Atkinson?

Answer: We are somehow connected with the Free Reformed Church in Canada especially because we are supported by the church in Hamilton. We are almost on the level of a sister church. I hope that we will have a full sister relationship. There was also the advantage that I was born in Montreal and so as a Canadian citizen I could have all the advantages living here in Canada. My only problem at the beginning was the language.

Question: That explains how you came to Canada, but how did you happen to know about our College.

Answer: I did not know about the College, but my minister, Rev. Atkinson, said it is a Reformed college. They have the same background and you can trust that whatever they will teach you is good.

Question: How do you like Canada? How do you like studying here at the College? Is studying here in Canada much different from studying in Italy?

Answer: I like Canada. It is completely different. The first days I was here I almost had the impression that I had entered a different world. Something so big and the distances are so great. A person really feels lost for the first few days, then you get used to it. I also like the snow and cold weather.

Concerning the studies, it is different. I am used to a different approach. We always have oral exams in university for example. And it never happened to me that you have to hand in papers to the teacher so that they can check your homework and give it back the next day.

Question: But then if a teacher has, say, sixty students in one class how does he manage all those oral examinations?

Answer: For the grammar school the average is usually thirty students per class, but if there are exams of maybe 400 people the teacher has a number of colleagues to assist him. And the exam is very selective. If you are not able to properly answer the first question then you are immediately out, there is not another chance. I found that I was helped much by the fact that I had a good memory.

Question: We are happy to have you here. What do you plan to do when you are finished? Do you plan to become a minister here in Canada, or do you plan to go back to Italy and work there? You could

also of course work among the Italians here in Canada. Could you tell us about your plans.

Answer: Up to this moment my plan is to go back to Italy and to do something for the religious situation that is completely disastrous. Protestant churches, the most popular such as the Methodist church, the Pentecostal church or the Baptist church no longer have any doctrinal background. Many of them know the Heidelberg Catechism, for example, but there is no evident application in a religious life. Religion has become something that you have to consider sociologically. This happens also because many ministers especially from the Methodist church are members of the Communist party and they portray a new kind of social approach. Sometimes I have the impression that they look at the church as something that can tell the state what to do. I remember that one day I was on campus of the Methodist church and we had a sermon which sounded more like a political manifesto.

Question: So you plan to go back to Italy . . .

Answer: . . . to fight. I do not have precise plans but the Lord has led me up to now and I am sure that He will continue to lead me.

C

The Library

By C. Van Dam

Holdings

In this short article I would like to tell you something about the college library. At the moment, it contains about 20,000 volumes. This seems like a large number, but compared with other libraries, for example, in Kampen, it is quite unpretentious in size. We have books in English, Dutch, German, French, Latin, and Afrikaans covering all areas of the curriculum: Old and New Testament, (including auxiliary disciplines like history, language, archaeology, and geography), Dogmatics, Ethics, Symbolics, philosophy, church history, church polity, evangelistics, missions, homiletics, and liturgics. A rare book collection contains old and valuable



The Library. In the back there is a place for study and research.

volumes from as early as the 16th century. Many of these have come from the library of the late Dr. C. van der Waal which we received. There are still several thousand foreign language volumes from the van der Waal collection which are not yet catalogued, but which are accessible by title and author.

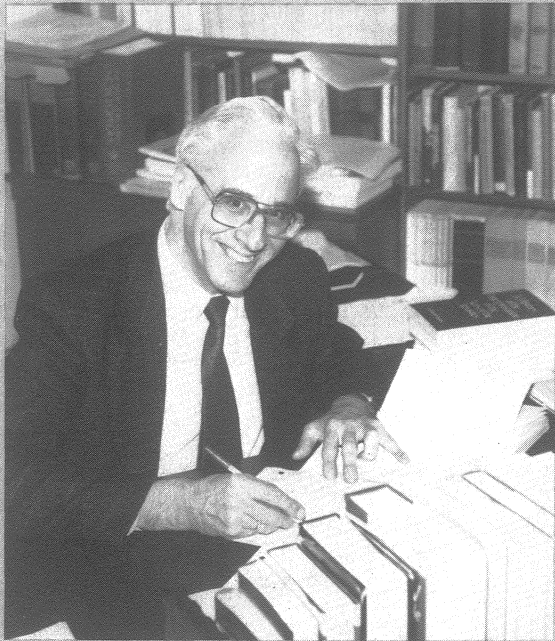
The college library subscribes to slightly more than 150 periodicals and journals in all the fields of study that are taught at the College.

Because we cannot and do not have everything in our Library, the city of Hamilton was chosen as the site of the College because of the proximity of McMaster



The remainder of the professors of the College

Prof. J. Geertsema



Dr. J. De Jong

Dr. C. Van Dam



University. We, therefore, have on microfiche access to the catalogue of holdings (since 1973) in McMaster University's Mill's Library.

Cataloguing

At present the library uses two card catalogues — one in Dewey classification (which is an older system that is still found in some public libraries) and one in library of Congress classification (which is used in university libraries). We are gradually eliminating the Dewey catalogue, converting all holdings to the library of Congress classification which is more suitable for a scholarly library. With this conversion, library records are entered into a computer. It is now possible for those using the library to call up information on

books in the Library of Congress classification. Eventually the entire library will be computerized. This means a considerable saving of labour and material, and thus of money, because a full card catalogue with up to ten cards per book (title, author, subject) no longer needs to be printed, catalogued, and stored in cabinets.

Library staff and volunteers

Although the principal of the college serves as the Librarian, the real work of cataloguing is done by a professional, Miss Marian Van Til, B.A., M.A., M.L.S., who is the Associate Librarian. She works on a part-time basis and we appreciate her valuable services. Among her many and varied duties, Miss Catherine Mechelse

also serves as Library Technician for which she has formal training.

Volunteers from local congregations give valuable assistance for the smooth operation of the library. Currently Mrs. Marsha Ostermeier and Mrs. Alice Schutten give their much appreciated time and talents for the benefit of our College.

The Women's Savings Action

Last, but not least, the Women's Savings Action should be mentioned. This committee now provides *all* the funding for our library through their diligent efforts of collecting funds from each congregation. We are very grateful for the vital contribution the many volunteers in the congregations make by collecting

funds. Our library would be unimaginable without their efforts!

Sometimes one hears the comment: "Don't they have enough books yet?" and the suggestion is made to stop this work. Although such a remark can be understandable since we have about 20,000 books, yet, to stop now would be a bad mistake. The task of buying books and keeping up to date in the different disciplines cannot stop. To give a simple example, — who would go to a mechanic

who has not kept up-to-date with the developments in cars, or to a doctor who does not know which medications are available? Also at the College, we need to keep up with the developments and trends so that we can properly do our work of equipping young men for the ministry. There is indeed no end to acquiring new books, while we have our task in this the last age. A good and up-to-date library is of utmost significance. While the size of our library is very mod-

est by most standards, we are convinced that the quality is high for we are careful how we spend your money as given to us by the Women's Savings Action. Again this year some important works have been acquired as will be mentioned in the Principal's report in September.

We look ahead to the continued support of the sisters in the congregations, a support that is deeply appreciated and of vital importance. C

Women's Savings Action

This special issue of *Clarion* would be incomplete without an article devoted to the Women's Savings Action. For those who are perhaps unfamiliar with the history of this organization it may be good to recount how the Women's Savings Action was established. Soon after the opening of the Theological College in the fall of 1969, delegates at a meeting of the League of Women's Societies in Ontario decided to organize the Women's Savings Actions for the College. This decision followed a tradition started in the Netherlands after the Liberation in 1944 when the library in Kampen had to be built up again at the Theological College and a women's savings action was started. When a similar action got underway in Canada, Women's Societies across the country were invited to participate in this venture, and representatives are now found in virtually every congregation.

The funds collected by the Women's Savings Action have mainly been used to build up the library; in fact, it is now the only source of income for the purchase of



The library's plaque.

A volunteer at work in the library.



books for the College. Elsewhere in this issue you can read how valuable a contribution the Women's Savings Action makes in this regard. As well the Women's Savings Action has financed the purchase of a number of necessary teaching aids. In 1984 they were able to make a very substantial contribution towards the purchase of the new College building.

In the beginning of this work for the College, each family received a tin marked "Women's Saving Action"; some of the older members of our congregations probably still use that same tin. Over the years with inflation many families have simply given a cash or cheque donation. We have just now implemented a system whereby each representative is authorized to issue tax receipts to those who so desire. Materially the Lord has blessed each of us differently; whenever you are called upon to make a donation be assured that whatever amount you give, whether it be a tin of change or a large cheque, it is received with thankfulness. Let each and everyone of us continue to work together in this very important means of financial support for our Theological College.

We are grateful that as women of the church we are also able to participate in the work of the College that men may be trained in the ministry to preach the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Presently serving for the Women's Savings Action are:

chairman
Mrs. E. Mulder
1225 Hwy 5, R.R. #1
Burlington, ON
L7R 3X4

secretary
Mrs. J. Van Dam
642 Ramsgate Road
Burlington, ON
L7N 2Y1

treasurer
Mrs. C. Zietsma
54 Como Place
Hamilton, ON
L9B 1Y4 C

By C. Van Dam



Leeuwarden III: Relations with Churches Abroad

The ongoing Synod of our Dutch sister churches has recently dealt with a wide variety of issues concerning ecumenical relations which are of interest to us. Because many of the topics dealt with are also discussed in one form or another in our circles, the main gist of the discussion as reported in *Nederlands Dagblad* of June 14 and 15, 1990, will be included.

Discussion on rules for relations with foreign churches

The deputies for relations with churches abroad had proposed one single form of sister-church relationship, although they left open the possibility of entering into a fraternal relationship with those churches that did not want to enter a sister relationship. The committee dealing with this point at synod, however, proposed that besides the normal sister-church relationship, a further regulation of sister-church relation would be made for

churches which could not yet accept all the normal rules for full sister-church relation. From such churches no attestations would be accepted and for ministers from such churches the pulpit would not be open. This committee also proposed not to enter into a sister relationship with any church that had an unacceptable contact with other churches.

These committee proposals at synod were extensively discussed and widely opposed. Criticisms raised included the following. If you recognize a church as a true church, should you then not be consistent and deal accordingly and not try to take away a normal sister relationship by all sorts of additional rules? The Reformed Churches (Liberated) sometimes create the impression that they are some sort of central bureau for all kinds of churches over the whole world. Who are we that we can impose all kinds of rules on other churches?

Professors from the Theological University in Kampen were present as advisors and also had input into this discussion. Dr. J. van Bruggen wondered in how far one must strive for unity when dealing with foreign churches. He pleaded for a more practical approach. A relationship with a church that originated from Dutch emigrants was indeed a very specific relationship of full unity. For the rest he, however, urged that we proceed from a model of encouraging each other, rather than judging each other. "No church is perfect. Each has his own mistakes. We see them with others and others see them with us. Let us help each other to strive for the good." Dr. J. Douma warned against adopting a lecturing tone over against Presbyterian churches. Both of these professors urged that one form of sister-church relationship be adopted.

On the other hand, Dr. M. te Velde thought that both the proposal of deputies as well as that of the committee at synod missed the key point. How many types of relationships are desirable? He thought it was idealistic to have only a sister relationship. The contacts are varied and should not be forced into one particular mould.

Different relations and consequences

The complexity of the present situation was underlined by H. Hoksbergen who noted (*Nederlands Dagblad*, June 15, 1990) that in reality there are four forms of contacts. In the first place, there are the emigrant churches in Canada, South Africa, and Australia. Secondly, one can think of the churches that are the fruit of Reformed mission work, such as in Indonesia and Brazil. Thirdly, there are contacts with Presbyterian churches in English-speaking countries, who have the Westminster Confession. In doctrine they are very similar to Reformed churches but their church polity is different. Finally, one can think of the young churches in the third world, specifically, for example, South East Asia and Zaire.

This diversity makes the setting of



Synod took place in the Church at Leeuwarden North, the Netherlands.

common rules for all difficult. The first category still thinks in Dutch Reformed terms. This is often different in the case of Presbyterian and third world churches. Their church life has another background or context. Even though there is clearly the unity in Christ, the practical consequences of how to relate to each other as different church bodies are not always simple or self-evident. Hoksbergen correctly notes in this regard that neither Scripture nor the Confessions give such rules. This situation can lead to giving each other more latitude in international relations than one would be prepared to give within one's own church federation. For example, in the Netherlands (and Canada) the Reformed churches normally require an attestation from visitors so that they can participate in the Lord's Supper. However, in Presbyterian Scotland a personal oral testimony suffices. There is something to be said for both practices. There is also something to be said against both. This is a typical example of differences in which we should give each other freedom as sister churches. Another example Hoksbergen gives is the matter of admitting ministers to the pulpit. The criteria will be different in Reformed and Presbyterian circles. We should leave

freedom in such matters when making rules for sister church relations. More examples could be given, for instance, from the third world. However, these sensible comments from Hoksbergen are sufficient to show that the matter of setting responsible rules is quite intricate. After all, one must not bind the other party more than is necessary.

It is possible that some may say, "Why bother with all these contacts?" Hoksbergen correctly points out that such contacts are very encouraging and enriching. Christ's work continues all over the world. We may know ourselves bound to believers elsewhere. We may also offer help and encouragement to these brothers and sisters and receive the same from them.


New rules

The Synod eventually decided to have rules only for sister churches. The temporary relationship of ecclesiastical contact was scrapped since in practice it did not appear to satisfy. This does, however, leave the problem of exactly how to handle present relationships with foreign churches that are not sister churches.

The rules which the synod decided on for contact with sister churches abroad

include the regulation to take mutual heed that the sister churches do not deviate from the Reformed faith in doctrine, church polity, discipline, and liturgy. The new rules also mention helping, encouraging, and sharpening each other to be witnesses of the Lord Jesus Christ in word and deed in this world.

Among the provisions for exercising the sister church relationship, the following are also noteworthy. The churches shall accept each other's attestations and the pulpits shall in principle be open to each other's ministers. With respect to relations with a third party, the rules cautiously state that the implications of such a relationship with a third party should be carefully examined to ascertain the meaning of such a relationship for the church involved and to ascertain what impact this relationship should have on the sister relationship. The new rules also note that in certain countries more than one church or church federation can be recognized as a true church of Jesus Christ. Thus the possibility of having a relationship with more than one church body in one country is not excluded.

Next time we hope to report on the new sister-church relations initiated by the Synod in Leeuwarden. 

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R. Schouten

Father's World

Summer is a time for walks in the park, for hikes in the mountains, for baseball games against another congregation. Summer brings us out into the world again after the semi-hibernation of winter. And even in a world that has grave environmental problems, there does remain the dearest freshness deep down things. We breathe the sweet air, laden with the scent of the neighbour's apple tree. We watch the bluebirds build their nests. Bees buzz. People walk on the street, enjoying the evening breeze.

And every Sunday afternoon, Christian churches gather together in order to profess their faith in "God the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth." We worship God because we know that this rich summer world is Father's world. Everything in our lives depends upon our knowledge of God as Creator. The further articles of the Apostles' Creed rest upon this first statement about the Creator. Sin

and salvation have no meaning apart from the fact of creation. Sin means the distortion and pollution of creation. Salvation means the restoration and glorification of creation.

The Bible begins with the fact of creation. "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Today a battle is being waged in order to preserve this scriptural truth. Evolutionary thinking makes strong inroads even among so-called Christians. And so it is right and good that faithful believers emphasize the truth of creation. The universe is not eternal. Matter is not eternal. It had a beginning. And life is not the product of chance. We human beings are not cosmic accidents — as evolutionary thinking implies.

But in the heat of the battle against evolutionism I sometimes wonder if we haven't actually lost sight of the meaning of our confession of God as Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. Is

this a confession that in any way moves us? We must realize that the Bible never speaks of creation as simply a bare fact. Creation is not an abstract idea. The Bible's language about creation is always joined to praise!

But can we praise God as Creator if our eyes are not wide open to the Creation? Our Belgic Confession speaks of the two ways along which we can know God. These ways are the creation and the Scriptures. In Article Two, we confess that the universe is before our eyes as "a most beautiful book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as so many letters leading us to perceive clearly the invisible qualities of God, namely, *His eternal power and deity*. . . ."

It should be stressed that Article Two is speaking about a believer. It is the believer who knows God through creation. Unbelievers don't even *want* to know God. They remain unmoved by the Song of



Creation. God transmits His glory through created things, but the unbeliever is not tuned in to this broadcast. He can't hear it and he can't see it. Of course, the problem is not with the broadcast. On the contrary, the message is loud and clear. The problem is with the sinner who closes his heart and mind against God. God made man good and upright, able to hear and see, but man has hardened himself in sin.

John Calvin often said that only through the spectacles of Scripture do we begin to understand and appreciate the book of creation. If you give a beautiful book to an old man with dim eyes, he won't be able to read it. But if you give him the right kind of glasses, he will see and read and enjoy.

In a similar way God unplugs our ears and gives us the right kind of glasses so that we truly see and hear. The Holy Spirit gives us new minds, new eyes and new ears so that we can tune in to the broadcast of creation which declares the Creator's glory.

Are you listening? Do you hear the heavens telling the glory of God and the universe proclaiming His handiwork (Ps. 19:1,2)? This is a speech which no unbeliever can hear! Do you hear the babies chanting the glory of God (Ps. 8:1)? Have you ever really seen the sun, coming forth like a strong athlete from the starting blocks (Ps. 19:5)? Did you watch as the warm sun urged new growth from the ground, as empty brown patches of soil became riotous displays of colour? With David, did you ever praise God for the fact

that you yourself are fearfully and wonderfully made (Ps. 139:14)? What a piece of work, indeed, is man! Did the first pink glow of a summer dawn ever remind you of Psalm 104? There we read that the invisible God dresses Himself with light as with a garment! (vs. 2).

The point of all these and many, many more passages is that creation *manifests* God. Sure, the unbeliever is blind to this revelation. In fact, the natural mind of man is far more inclined to worship the creature. Only the mind of the spirit leads us from the creature to the Creator. Through the Spirit we get the Biblical eyesight and insight we need to see the glory of God in creation.

Through Christ, who restores us to real humanity, we start to realize again that the world is like a great theater. You go to a theater to see a show. Well, the world is a never-ending show. In Christ, we learn to see and to love this show. It delights us with its variety. We start acting like little children going to the zoo for the first time. They gape at the neck of the giraffe; they are amazed at the mouth of the hippopotamus. The ludicrous barking of the monkeys delights them. The child sees everything freshly. To the child everything is equally fantastic and delightful.

Well, we all ought to be more like children. We ought to be surprised at the miracle of the commonplace. We live in Father's beautiful world. It is singing a song of praise to Him. And the world is inviting us to join in. It declares God's glory and it wants us to join in this declaration!

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

How often don't we shortchange God by our dullness, by the feebleness of our perception, by our failure to see His wisdom. When God had finished His work, He said that everything was very good. But God wants us to share in this admiration. He wants to be praised for His works.

I think we all have to learn to see the world afresh as the theater of God's glory. Christians should be very interested in the world. Christians should be the most enthusiastic scientists and artists and bakers and builders. For in every trade or profession, Christians realize that they are busy in and with the creation of the Lord God Almighty. He made the atom, He designed the landscape, He created wheat, He formed the tree from which came the wood. And He made man in His own image so that, as His own representative, man might love and care for this creation, and bring out its many possibilities.

It's important that we love and know the world in which we live. Nobody can know all. Sometimes we have to restrict our areas of interest and investigation. But pray for a sensitive spirit and a discerning eye, a receptive ear, so that you, too, can be carried along by the planet's praise.

We live in Father's World. If we know Him as Father in Christ, we will grow in sensitivity and appreciation in His works. But if we refuse to believe in and to give our lives to Christ, we will be increasingly alienated from the Creator. And, instead of swelling in praise, our hearts will shrink and perish.

Many young people live highly artificial lives. Instead of living in harmony with creation, they distort creation by means of drug abuse, illicit sex, debased music and literature, perverse language, abusiveness toward teacher and parent. Their hearts don't beat in harmony with the beautiful world in which they live. Instead of admiring and praising God's works, they idolize the distortions of these works in unbelieving culture.

It may look attractive. And for a while, it's fun. But then the emptiness sets in. The freshness of life disappears. People wither away.

You can avoid that sad discovery by remembering your Creator in the days of your youth. You can avoid the tragedy of modern youth by studying the wisdom of your God in the created world.

Enjoy the show in this great theater. Enjoy created life. For wherever you cast your eyes in whatever field of learning, you will find that there is not one spot in the universe which does not display the glory of *your* God and King. Life is a parade, a never-ending pageant, a continuous spectacle of God's glory. Enjoy it! And don't forget to sing along! **C**

Rethinking Redemptive-Historical Interpretation

By N.H. Gootjes

We are discussing the question how to relate historical events recorded in the Bible to our lives. We concluded by giving four examples of application of a historical text: bigamy is all right, long hair is dangerous, one must not live in luxury, and using a dialect should be discouraged.

The mistake in these applications

Most Christians (would it be too optimistic to say: all Christians?) would agree that the examples of application given in the preceding article, are wrong. But where did the train run off the rails? The mistake was not, as in the case of the historical details, that there was actually no application for today. For in this case the stories of Scripture were used as something profitable for teaching, reproof, etc. What was mentioned were very practical things concerning marriage and lifestyle. If we are convinced that this kind of application is wrong, we have to find the reason for it, in order to avoid this wrong type of application everywhere.

First of all it should be pointed out that the presented applications all go against the goal of the Scripture passage from which they were taken. It is true that Jacob had two wives, and that he even had concubines. But Genesis 29 neither agrees with it nor does it hold up this situation for us as a good example for our marriages. The situation was caused by the deception of father Laban and the wish of Jacob to marry his beloved Rachel anyway. Actually the rivalry and the fighting that was going on in the house of Jacob do not exactly make this marriage of Jacob the prototype of successful bigamy.

But all this does not belong to the goal Scripture has in recording this story for us. God is telling us in this part of the Bible about the origin of His chosen people of Israel. This nation cannot be proud of its ancestry. Their origin lies in cheating and greed. But God used the fraud of a father-in-law and the strife between two sisters about who could produce most sons, to build His Old Testament church. He in this irregular way gave many sons

(and daughters, Gen. 46: 7, 15) to Jacob and thus began to establish the nation He had promised to Abraham. In other words, the bigamy of Jacob is recorded in Scripture not as an example (either positive or negative) for marriage, but to show that the church is not the result of human effort, but only the work of God who, even through sinful human actions, fulfills His promise to Abraham.

“Everyone who has really read Scripture will agree that its historical parts tell the story of God’s redemptive history”

The story of Absalom’s death is not meant to be a warning against a certain hairstyle. The point is that Absalom rebelled against the anointed king and disobeyed God’s ordinances. God showed this in the way Absalom died. Absalom was not taken prisoner by someone on the battlefield; without man’s doing Absalom was trapped in the boughs of a tree. In this way God showed that He protects His anointed king.

Next, the food and clothes of John are not mentioned in Scripture as an example to stimulate us to eat and dress likewise. There is no trace in the text of a command like: Do as John the Baptist did. If it were really important for Christians today to follow John’s example, it would have been a part of his sermon. But even though a summary of John’s preaching is preserved in Scripture, in which several very practical applications are mentioned (Luke 3:10-14), a warning against a luxurious lifestyle is missing. As a matter of fact, John the Baptist was

wearing desert clothes, and eating desert food. He showed in dress and food that he was the one who in the wilderness had to prepare the way of the Lord (Is. 40:3; John 1:23). In other words, food and clothes belong to John’s unique calling to announce the coming Messiah, and are not a general protest against luxury.

It is clearer than daylight that the story of Peter’s denial of Jesus is not a story about the dangers of using dialect. This part of history shows the fulfilment of Jesus’ prophecy that all disciples would deny Him. Even Peter did not dare to follow Him on the road of His suffering. Jesus Christ had to suffer all alone, and it looked as if His careful work of preparing the New Testament church in His disciples was a complete failure. Even His staunchest disciple failed Him. The denial of Peter was, seen in this light, part of Christ’s suffering.

The first answer to the question why the applications given above are wrong, is therefore that they do not fit in with the goal of the text. The Author of the Bible had something else in mind when He had these stories recorded. This leads immediately to the next question: What then is the goal God has in making known to us the stories recorded in the Bible? That goal can be summarized in a few words: It is to tell us of God’s redemptive work. The basic reason why the examples discussed above were not satisfactory is that the stories were not seen as a record of God’s redemptive history.

Redemptive history

What then is this redemptive history? As a short description the following may serve: Redemptive history is God’s gigantic rescue operation spanning all centuries to save His people from their sins and the punishment which followed it. This redemptive history has two focal points: God who saves and man who needs salvation. When man through sin had become corrupt, God did not leave him in his sin but went out to him. God told Satan in man’s hearing that the seed of the woman would fight and finally over-

come him (Gen. 3:15). Since that time God works in this world to fulfill this promise. God will continue to do His salvation work till the return of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This redemptive history is a unity. This unity stems first of all from God. One God is performing the work of redemption. He made the plan of salvation before the creation of the world (Eph. 1:4ff., 1 Peter 1:20). During the Old and the New Covenant the same God is giving Himself to His people and saving them (Gen. 17:1, Mark 12:26). He also announced redemptive history as a unity (Gen. 3:15).

The unity of redemptive history is also visible in the Christ. He has laid the foundation for our salvation in His suffering and death, and has brought to light full salvation in His resurrection. The believers of the Old Testament could not receive salvation without Christ, and we who live now while Christ is no longer among us, can only be saved through Him.

The third mainstay in the unity of redemptive history is faith. Already in the Old Testament, God in guiding His people showed that they could trust Him, and He required faith. The New Testament is no different. This is why Abram's faith can

be the example of faith for New Testament believers (Rom. 4:19ff.).

Also the final goal of redemptive history is the same for all. The believers of the Old Testament did not just expect earthly blessings, they expected the new Jerusalem (Hebr. 11:10, 16). We today are looking forward to the same goal of history, the restoration of this perverted world.

Redemptive history is a unity, but at the same time it saw a number of important changes. We can distinguish different periods. The central period is no doubt the time that Jesus Christ came into this world to live, teach, suffer, die, and live again. The preceding time can be divided into two periods. There is first the period from the beginning of sin until Abram; during this time God worked salvation in the whole world. This was followed by the period from Abram to John the Baptist; during this time God concentrated His redemptive work on Abram and his offspring. The time after the ascension of Jesus Christ can also be divided into two periods. First the period of the apostles, in which became visible the difference Christ's work made for church life. Finally the period after the apostles, in which we are living now.

The changes are connected with a difference in the scene of action where God performs His redemptive work. This first took place in the whole world. Then it concentrated on Canaan, beginning with Abram and continuing until the resurrection of Jesus Christ. But since Pentecost, God's redemption is again going out with power into the whole world.

There is also a difference in secondary promises. The main promise is of course the same: communion with God on the basis of the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. But for the patriarchs this promise was connected with a promise of a son. It is important for the believers today to realize that God did not promise sons (or children, for that matter) to everyone in the church. Later the people of Israel received the land of Canaan by way of a special promise. It was a kind of guarantee for the fulfilment of God's promise of salvation. The New Testament church does not have a country promised to them. The New Testament believers however receive the Holy Spirit in a sense in which He was not given to the Old Testament church.

Another difference concerns the offices. In the period preceding Christ the offices of prophet, priest, and king ap-

LETTER TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor

Re: *Bralectah*

There are collections for "Bralectah" in our churches, periodically, but I am of the opinion that not many people know more of the work of this organization than that they help the blind. That is why I think, some more information could do a lot of good to many people. For instance, for people who have had an accident or a stroke and lost through that, the ability to read. Or old people who have not the strength to hold a book, lying in bed.

Bralectah is not only giving an excellent service to the blind, by producing "Braille," but has also developed a full library of Christian books, which are read by first-class readers and put on audiotape. The readers are volunteers. An extensive catalogue shows you hundreds of books from well-known Dutch authors as: v. Dorp-Ypma, K. Norel, N. van Dijk-Has, Barend de Graaf etc., etc. Also books for

young and old, poems, sermons, important speeches, *Nederlands Dagblad*, *De Reformatie*, etc., all in Dutch.

For older people who still think a lot about Holland, who remember books of Foka van Loon, Jos van Manen Pieters etc, it is an enormous help to listen to so many old stories, it breaks the long days or evening, in former times used for reading.

As not all people are the same, that is why there is such large variety to choose from.

Costs?

You do not have to be a member of "Bralectah" in order to use their services, but understandably, a gift is more than welcome. The tapes are mailed to you free of charge, and can also be mailed back to Bralectah, by turning the address label, and mailing as "SERVICE MAIL" free of charge, the post-office will supply you with a green sticker for that purpose.

Bralectah will send you an information tape, plus a catalogue, of which you make a choice of approximately a dozen books, mail it back the normal way, and wait for the tapes.

First send your application to:

BRALECTAH ADMINISTRATIE:
(FOR TAPES IN DUTCH.)

Mevr. N.v.d.Vegt-Visser.
Kallenkote 61,
8345 H.H. Kallenkote,
The Netherlands.

For tapes of *CLARION* and *IN HOLY ARRAY*:

Mrs. N. DEWITT
16 Barnston Island,
R.R. 12, Surrey B.C. V3T 5J4.

I hope you will accept this letter for *Clarion*; my wife and I find it a blessing from the Lord.

Brotherly Greetings from
C. Lindhout

peared gradually. During the first period after Jesus Christ's ascension God gave apostles and prophets in the church. But we also see gradually appearing the offices we have now: deacon, elder, minister. This is connected with a gradual increase in the content of revelation, until this replacement of prophets by ministers and elders heralded a new era, without any further increase in the content of revelation.

Besides the basic unity of redemptive history and the differences that have occurred in the course of this history, one more aspect should be noted. It is the fact that not everything that ever happened in redemptive history has been recorded in the Bible. To follow our division in five periods, the Bible narrates only a few things about the first period. A history of thousands of years from sin entering into this world up to Abram is recorded in only eight chapters (Gen. 3-11). The history of Abram and his family, leading to the history of the people of Israel, is relatively well documented, but here too several gaps can be noted. About the life of Israel in Egypt and about the last centuries before Christ's birth we have almost no records in Scripture. Again, Scripture covers the important redemptive acts that occurred in the first century A.D. But nothing is recorded about the progress in the following centuries.

When we say that Scripture in its historical parts describes the history of redemption, this cannot mean that the whole of redemptive history can be found in Scripture. Redemptive history begins with God calling Adam after his sin, and will not end till Jesus Christ returns. But the Bible records of this great history only so much of the crucial moments and the progress as we need to know.

Moralizing and psychologizing

Everyone who has really read Scripture will agree that its historical parts tell the story of God's redemptive history. But the strange thing is that, as soon as the historical parts are used for teaching, reproof, etc. this character of Scripture is forgotten and redemptive history ignored. When it comes to applying the stories to our situation, suddenly not God and His redemptive work, but man and his life take centre stage. This results in two ways of explanation which we can call: moralizing and psychologizing.

Moralizing concentrates on man's behaviour. When Scripture tells us about a person doing something good, this is used as an example to follow; when it speaks about someone doing wrong this is used as an example to warn against sin. To give some instances of this approach: Just as Jonathan helped his friend David along (2 Samuel 20), we too

HYMN 22

U. heilig Godslam Geneva. 1562 Middelburg. 1933

1. Thee, ho-ly Lamb of God, we bless:
 Thou'st through Thy cross re-demp-tion sent us,
 And to the Fa-ther dost pre-sent us
 As priests and kings in ho-li-ness.
 Thou, Sav-iour, Thou hast ran-somed us.
 Hence we will hon-our and a-dore Thee,
 And cast in grat-i-tude be-fore Thee
 The crowns by grace be-stowed on us.
 A-men, A-men. Hal-le-lu-jah!

have to help our friends. Or the opposite: We should not persecute someone as king Saul persecuted David.

This kind of approach often has a reward system connected with it. Then the events recorded in Scripture are used to show that good behaviour will be rewarded, while bad behaviour will be punished.

The other approach is psychologizing. This method concentrates not so much on the outward action as well as on the inward state of man, his feelings and experiences. To give again some examples: Just as David was sad when he saw his city Ziklag destroyed (1 Samuel 30:4), we, too, as believers have our sad experiences. And in the same way as David, when he had to flee for Absalom, received

food and other support from Barzillai (2 Samuel 17:27ff.) so our faith too will receive unexpected relief even in sad times.

What to think of this way of applying the stories? Here Scripture is not used just to get some historical information without any application. There is a clear message for our lives. Also it is not a message that has nothing to do with faith; the relation of the event to faith is made clear. But there is yet another important question to be answered: Are these applications in accordance with the goal of Scripture in its historical parts?

Next time we hope to show why this approach, however attractive the applications may seem, does not do justice to Scripture. — *to be continued*

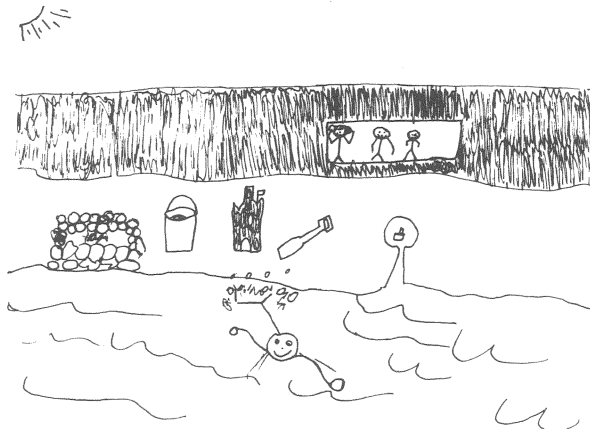


Hello Busy Beavers,

Let's start with Busy Beaver *Laura Aasman's* poem and picture about

SUMMER







Summer's here
 And school is out!
 Children
 are playing all about.
 I love to play
 with my friend,
 And I'm glad that I can!
 And to me
 It's very clear
 That I'm glad summer's
 HERE!



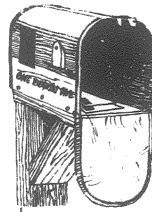
HOLIDAY STORIES

"A couple of days ago we went to a place where dolphins and sea lions and some other animals are. It is called Atlantis. It was nice watching the dolphins. One lady was pushed by her heels by two dolphins right into the air about four or five metres high. There were three little baby dolphins as well with their mother. It was really nice to see them do all sorts of other tricks. I cannot mention them all. A day before we went to Atlantis, we went to Perth, the big city. We went to a big museum there and an art gallery and an old jail. We had a look around the other shops there, too. It is quite a long train ride there. It is a three-quarters of an hour drive."

by Busy Beaver *Nellie Bosveld*

"Once upon a time there was a  who lived in a red . It was a holiday from school. He got a ride on a . It was fun to see the world. He went through the . It looked like  when you look down you can see . That is what it looked like.

by Busy Beaver *Aileen Feenstra*



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Suzanne Schouten*. We are happy to have you join us. Are you enjoying doing things this summer, Suzanne? Will you write and tell me your birthday, please?

Then I can include you in our birthday list.

A big "Hello" to last year's *Grade Three* at Smithville's John Calvin School. Thank you for your letter. I love "communicating" with all my nieces and nephews! I would like to hear from you which part of your "Communication" study you liked best, and also what you are doing to enjoy your summer holidays. How do you like today's puzzles? Bye for now.

Were Calico's kittens cute, *Jessica De Haas*? And how is your dog doing? And what are you doing to keep busy these holidays, Jessica? Have you entered our Summer Quiz contest? Write again soon!

Quiz Time!

"CODE"

by Busy Beaver *Arlene Winkelaar*

A-1	B-2	C-3	D-4	E-5	G-6
H-7	I-8	J-9	L-10	M-11	N-12
O-13	R-14	S-15	T-16	W-17	Y-18

— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
16 7 8 15	8 15	16 7 5	

— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
4 1 18	16 7 1 16	16 7 5	

— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
10 13 14 4	7 1 15	11 1 4 5	17 5	

— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
17 8 10 10	14 5 9 13 8 3 5	1 12 4	2 5		

— — — —	— — — —	— — — —
6 10 1 5	8 12	8 16

"SQUARE-OFF"

by Busy Beaver *Marlaine Vanderhorst*

Please find 18 words going clockwise around the square-off.

T	A	B	L	E	C
G					L
N					O
I					T
T	S	E	R	E	H

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____