



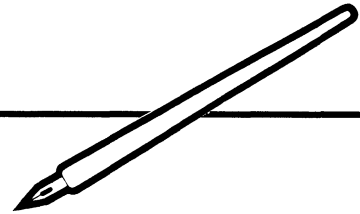
Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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How do we “produce” teachers?

By J. Geertsema

Sometimes your editor receives the request not to add his comments immediately to letters to the editor, but first to let the readers take note of it. He can give his reaction, if he wishes to do so, in a next issue. Your editor acted according to this wish with respect to the “Letter to the Editor” of Jack Scholtens. Br. Scholtens sees the biggest problem of our schools and school boards, and the solution to it, in money. He wrote: “Why don’t we have enough teachers today? Money! That’s right, money, everyone knows it...” And especially the league of our schools was accused. Two reactions have already appeared in a previous issue. In my opinion, those reactions were justified. Besides, there are more sides to this matter. The salaries of our teachers may not be high, as was stated in the Kampen report that was discussed in the article of Mr. VanderVen and to which Mr. Scholtens reacted, so that for some this causes problems, especially in areas where the price of housing is extremely high. However, we must also reckon with the many faithful members of our school societies, often parents of quite large families, who faithfully pay their school fees every month besides their contributions for the church, and who often do not know how to make ends meet month after month. Nevertheless, they contribute, because they believe that God’s kingdom comes first. And they put their trust in the Lord that He will provide. These members are not a small minority. The school boards and the league have to reckon with these members as well.

There are also members in our churches for whom it is not a real problem at all to contribute for the church and pay their membership fees for the schools. The difference in income has sometimes led to the suggestion to change the membership fee system and have the members contribute according to income.

However, are there not deeper problems, that lay at the root of the problem br. Scholtens sees? Is there not the problem of the membership, or rather, the lack of members? One of the ways in which more money would become available is the faithfulness of ALL the wage-earning members of the churches. I use here the word faithfulness. We speak of Reformed school education for the children of the congregation as being a matter of the *covenant*? This characterization is correct. However, by doing so, we have therewith admitted our communal responsibility for those children. With this “we” I do not mean the parents only. I mean ALL the members of the church(es). For covenant means community of God’s people who stand

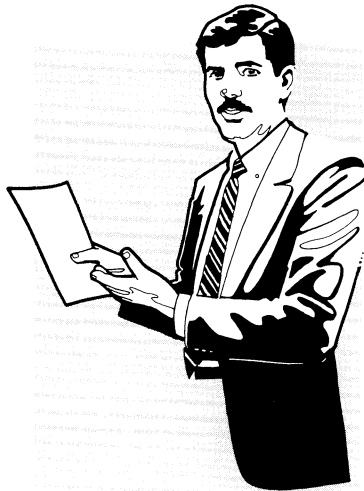
together and support each other in working together for the cause of the Lord.

One can sometimes hear church members say that they can quit membership in the school societies when their children are through the school. As long as they receive the service of education for their children from the school, such parents feel co-responsible. But when they do not need this service anymore, they quit membership and contributing. One of the arguments is, I heard, that they did not promise anything with the baptism of those other children, and that they are, therefore, not responsible. In this line of thinking the *covenant* as not only a relation with God but also a relation of brothers and sisters together does not function anymore and becomes a dead thing. The *covenantal* education of the children of the church is felt here as a burden, a compulsory matter. And one asks: do we live just for ourselves? Are we concerned just only with regard to our own children? Is the Reformed school education for the children of the Lord more and more becoming a matter of paying for services that are bought? Where are the Reformed principles? Are we indeed more and more money minded?

I understand that br. Scholtens is concerned with respect to our schools. If the lack of teachers continues and even increases, this will mean that schools have to close their doors. Br. Scholtens seeks to prevent this. I can appreciate that. It is also our calling to take appropriate care of the teachers. We have to appreciate them in their work, which often means labouring sixteen hours per day, week after week. I am afraid sometimes that this appreciation is missing, too.

But let us go back to business. Br. Scholtens writes that we need “a dose of good old fashioned ‘free enterprise capitalism’.” High demand and low supply drives the price up. Is it so, then, that if the teachers job starts to mean that one can make good money, like in a business, according to br. Scholtens, young people will consider teaching as a career?

Let me begin with acknowledging that the situation is not easy for a young person who leaves high school and does not become part of the wage earning work force, but continues to study. When he goes to school and spends the next four or five years studying for two-thirds of the year, while working the other one third in order to pay for his study, there cannot be much of a down payment for a house, when he becomes a teacher, marries and sets up a family. And when the start is kind of difficult, while the going is meagre, it can be very hard financially.



“We still do not depend on the government. We depend on the LORD.”

This must be realized. Our modern society is a very expensive society. We cannot escape this situation, also not the male teachers who have the responsibility for a family in our society. This has to be taken into account by the school societies.

But there is also here another side. We must not forget that there is the living God Himself, and that there is the matter of faith in and dedication to Him and His cause. We have to watch out that we do not leave Him and the faith commitment to Him out of the picture in our discussions and our writings about this matter. First of all and most of all we have to stimulate and urge each other to maintain the dedication to the LORD and His service and, as part of it, to the Reformed school education of the children of the covenant. Will more money truly produce teachers? Must the government be approached as the provider of that necessary money? Is that the way?

Br. Scholtens has expressed his concern. I would like to add my concern. When I hear and see and read things, I, too, fear that money becomes an important reason that we have a shortage of teachers, but this then in a different way.

We live in a society in which making money is the most important thing in life. Our society has been made this way by its people, not the least by its leaders. The general picture is that in our money making society people are first and foremost making money for themselves. Now it is my fear that this attitude has quite an influence also among us. I mean, among us as older generation, and *therefore* also among our young people. They have examples; they learn this attitude. They hear and see: the most important thing in life is making money, the more the better. Indeed, if this attitude becomes stronger, who wants to become a teacher? Again, although I acknowledge the concern of br. Scholtens, just because only the matter of money was mentioned as the cause of the shortage of teachers, this letter of br. Scholtens has not helped to fight this phenomenon, this attitude, that making money is the most important thing in life. On the contrary, it has, in the way it was written, supported and promoted it.

Allow me to add something else. I see another reason. It is that many a teacher finds the most difficult thing in his career that he is not backed up by the parents in a conflict situation. Teachers notice that students, when rebuked, are unwilling to submit to them in humble submission (biblical words!). The cause is lack of respect, not just with the student, but first of all with the parents at home. When teachers hear from a student: "My dad says he is nuts anyway" the battle is lost already. Who is willing to teach in such a situation? Who can? Our modern world lives by the revolutionary slogans of a humanistic philosophy: liberty (human rights, *my* rights) and equality (all people are equal; I am equal to anybody else; also I as student). Is this *practice* (not as theory, as our philosophy, but as our way of acting) conquering our attitude? Is this cancer eating away the Reformed, biblical foundation for the existence of our families and schools as well? Do we, in a natural way, respect those only who are great in our eyes? Or do we show respect, as Scripture teaches us, because of a *God-given position*? I hope we do not lose the latter biblical attitude.

I expect that there remains among our young people in the church of Christ the knowledge and acceptance of our Reformed principles, the trust in the LORD, who has to, and can, and will provide the means, when we serve Him. He will take care of His servants. He has proven this constantly in all history, also in the history of the last thirty, forty years here in this country.

Indeed, this does not mean that we will always be able to keep our Reformed schools. We live in a god-less and ungodly society with a government that does not want to live by what the Bible teaches. Nevertheless, God rules. And as long as He gives us our schools in the way of our faith and faithfulness to His Word, He will also provide the means. We still do not depend on the government. We depend on the LORD. And when our church membership lives in that faith, and, therefore, as *communion* of saints, remains faithful to God and to His Word, and so to each other, the means will be

there, as well as the loving care and concern to provide adequately for the teachers who are, then, received with thankfulness from the hand of the LORD. If there remains this faith, our churches will also continue to produce, besides the means, the teachers themselves. To speak in line with Psalm 127: It is in vain to produce teachers, if the Lord does not provide (produce) them. However, in the way of faithfulness, we may trust, that He will do the providing, and that so our churches will continue to produce them.

However, if we lose this trust, this faith and faithfulness, because we become a communion of religious people making money just for themselves, then we have lost everything, the thankfulness, the loving care, the Reformed principles, and also the money for the schools and . . . the teachers. Therefore, let us watch and be on the alert, and have our eyes open, and our loving heart, and, most of all, the Word of God in a humble, obedient faith. Only on that basis church and school can continue to exist. **C**



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REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

A most beautiful book

This past July my family and I had the privilege of spending our vacation in one of Ontario's magnificent Provincial Parks. For three weeks we lived underneath towering pine trees, birch and oak. We shared the beauty of God's creation with many creatures, great and small. Daily we saw graceful deer. Brazen chipmunks pulled peanuts out of our hands. We lived beside squirrels, blue jays, butterflies, spiders, an old turtle, and even the odd snake. We saw the wisdom of God in the gulls who keep the beach clean of the garbage. We heard the coyotes howl in the evening. Nightly a family of four raccoons, mom, dad and the kids, would leave footprints on our table.

We intruded into their God-given domain.

We felt the hot sun, the cool breeze, the cold rain. Several times we were permitted to witness a sound and light show much more impressive than anything Canada can offer on July 1st. We heard the voice of the LORD which can split a tree to its roots, which shakes the wilderness. We saw the voice of the LORD flash forth flames of fire. The voice of the LORD made the oaks to whirl. All we could cry was, "Glory!" along with King David, the author of Psalm 29.

One lazy afternoon my brother and I paddled our air mattresses out about a half kilometre into Lake Huron and then allowed the metre high waves to sweep us back to the beach. As the waves did their work we discussed how good it is for peo-

ple of the Book to enjoy the other book.

In Article 2 of *The Belgic Confession* we confess how God makes Himself known to us. The church of all ages confesses:

We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe; which 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*, as the apostle Paul says in Rom. 1:20. All these are sufficient to convict men and leave them without excuse.

We are the people of the Book — of the Word of God. We have come to faith in the LORD God and His Anointed through the proclamation of the Word. This is how God makes Himself better known. As the catholic church continues to confess in Article 2 of *The Belgic Confession*:

Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word as far as is necessary for us in this life, to His glory and our salvation.

In His grace God has made Himself very well known to us by His Word. We immerse ourselves in the Book. We listen to the Word proclaimed. We read it. We study it. We drink deeply of the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ announced in the Book. We hear the commandments of God, the demands of the covenant, and learn that we are to obey them out of

thankfulness for a free salvation.

The Word also tells us that God has created all things, and that He preserves and governs all things. And then, from the perspective of faith worked in our hearts by the Holy Spirit through the Holy Word, what a joy and privilege it is to spend several weeks in the midst of God's creation and witness firsthand His preserving and governing power. How pleasant it is to dwell among His trees, ferns, and poison ivy. To live for a while in the forests and fields God gave to His creatures, outside of an air-conditioned study, away from the telephone and the microwave, the IBM and the Hoover, is a wonderful thing.

As we floated in on our air mattresses, it was impossible to keep Article 2 of *The Belgic Confession* out of our minds. God's creation was spread before our eyes as a most beautiful book. All creatures, great and small, were like letters written by the hand of God leading us to see clearly the eternal power and deity of God.

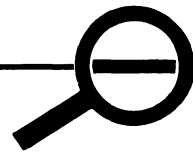
How great it is for the people of the Book to enjoy the beautiful book of God's creation.

Praise God for the water and the trees.
Praise the LORD for the rustling breeze.

Praise Him for the thundering blast and the lightning bolts He does cast.
Praise God for His creatures, great and small.

Praise Him Who in wisdom made them all.





Leeuwarden IV: New sister churches

After the Synod meeting in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands, decided on new rules for sister churches, as reported in the previous *Clarion*, several far reaching decisions were made. Our Dutch sister churches initiated new sister church relationships with several churches abroad.

The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

The contact with the RCUS is a fairly new association for the Dutch churches. The relationship started several years ago in connection with giving aid to the young Reformed churches in Zaire (Église Réformée Confessante). These Zairan churches had enjoyed support from the RCUS for some time before our Dutch sister churches got involved. (See *Press Review* in *Clarion* of March 31, 1989.) The RCUS has its origin in eighteenth century German emigrants to the United States. After much struggle against liberalism, only a remnant of this once large church is left. This Reformed church of about 3500 members has the Heidelberg Catechism as its official confession. (For more on the history, see *Clarion* of May 12, 1989.) Rev. R. Grossman, a minister in the RCUS and a professor at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, was at the Synod in Leeuwarden. He spoke of the faith they had in common and informed the Synod that the RCUS had no difficulty in adopting the rules of a sister relationship. He was very encouraged with the contact that had already existed with the Dutch churches in the past. The RCUS was also represented at the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) held last year in Langley.

The Deputies for Contact with Churches Abroad proposed to enter into a sister church relationship with the RCUS. This proposal was accepted on June 15 in the presence of Rev. Grossman. This must surely be a decision that will encourage the RCUS and we are happy with the true ecumenical desire evident in this decision. There is, however, one aspect of this decision that makes me sad. Why could the Canadian Reformed Churches not have been more involved? After all, these

churches are, so to speak, on our doorstep. According to the report in *Nederlands Dagblad* (June 16), there had been contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches about the proposal to enter into a sister relationship with the RCUS. However, the Winnipeg synod (1989) never dealt with this matter. Apart from a reference (in the report of our Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad) to some contact with our deputies initiated by our Dutch sister churches about the RCUS, this matter apparently was not discussed at Synod. The RCUS is not unknown to us. There has been contact with this church from diverse quarters. We also have a student at the Theological College who has come from their midst. It would have been wonderful if the Dutch contacts and efforts at closer relationships with the RCUS could have been more closely integrated to our own fledgling contacts so that a decision about sister church relations could have been made in close consultation. Now that this has unfortunately not happened, may the Dutch decision encourage us as churches to take all the necessary steps to see whether we should not follow the Dutch example.

Église Réformée Confessante of Zaire

In a related decision (although it took place about a week later), the Leeuwarden Synod decided to enter into a sister church relationship with the Confessing Reformed Church of Zaire (Église Réformée Confessante). This church's origin is closely associated with the radio broadcasts of Rev. A. Kayayan in the French "Back to God Hour." From the beginning they enjoyed much support from the RCUS which was subsequently joined by help from our Dutch sister churches. There are thirty congregations with a total membership of about six thousand. This church is very young and humanly speaking can expect to benefit much from the relationship, both spiritually and materially. This new tie will also enable the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands to become more involved for the Reformed cause in this vast country of central Africa.

Free Reformed Church of the Philippines

On June 15, the Synod decided to enter into a sister relationship with the Free Reformed Church of the Philippines. This ecclesiastical body originated when the congregations involved had separated themselves from baptist thinking and become Reformed. There are now six congregations and five ministers. The one who is the most well-known is Rev. Joy Vigno who attended the ICRC held in Langley. To be sure, questions were raised whether this relationship should be entered into now. Does the church federation there really function? Do we know enough about them? Deputies, who were enthusiastic about these churches, were able to answer such questions positively.

As a result of this decision, aid that has been coming from our sister churches will be intensified. A sum of f 15,000 will be made available to these churches on an annual basis. The purpose is to help build and promote Reformed church life in the Philippines.

The Free Church in Scotland

Also on June 15, it was decided to offer the Free Church in Scotland a sister church relationship. This decision was apparently not taken lightly. Questions were raised about their policy governing admission to the Lord's Supper celebration and also to their pulpits. In response, it was stated that these churches are strict with regard to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The Church Order of the Free Church carefully circumscribes who can participate. No attestation or document however needs to be produced. Their practice is otherwise. It was also pointed out that it is of crucial significance that this church is faithful to the Scriptures and their confessions. The fact that they have the Westminster Confession has historically never been a problem for Reformed churches. It was also pointed out that there are many and long standing contacts with the Free Church so that these churches are not strangers.

Reformed Presbyterian Church in North Ireland and others

Without any discussion, the Synod also decided on June 15 to offer the Reformed Presbyterian Church in North Ireland the sister relationship. It was noted that several differences have been thoroughly discussed. There was agreement on the covenant and this was clearly a true church.

The Synod also decided to maintain the sister relationship with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, also of North Ireland. It will surprise no one that similar decisions were made with respect to other existing sister relations such as those with the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia.

Sister churches and continuing contacts

In total, sister church relationships now exist with nine churches (besides the three new ones mentioned above and the Free Reformed Churches of Australia The Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland and ourselves), these include Die Vrye Gere-

formeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika, the Gereja Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia N.T.T., and The Korean Presbyterian Church.

In addition to sister churches, there are churches with which there is ecclesiastical contact. The Dutch contacts with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia and the Reformed Churches of New Zealand will be continued and these churches will possibly be visited. If possible, the contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church will be strengthened. The contact with the Presbyterian Association in England will be continued as well. Other contacts that will be further pursued are with the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan (Second Presbytery), the Evangelical Reformed Church in Singapore, and Reformed churches in Sri Lanka and Japan.

Positive developments

It is clear that our sister churches have made many decisions of great importance with respect to their relations with churches abroad. The chairman of the Synod, Dr. W.G. de Vries, said in an interview after the Synod was finished with its agenda

that he was happy that Synod had the insight to realize that you cannot treat all churches alike. A young church in the Third World must be judged differently than an old Presbyterian church. He added that we have also learned that we must not everywhere seek a Reformed Church (Liberated). We may not impose our pattern on others. Each church must act in its own responsibility and according to its own circumstances.

It is most encouraging to see many of the contacts of the Dutch sister churches grow into closer relationships. In a shrinking globe where apostasy and a new paganism grows, especially in the Western world, the mutual help and assistance we can be for each other is not to be underestimated. In such a development we can see something of the greatness of the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church. He continues His gathering labours by His Spirit and Word. May we more and more have an eye for that and so give glory to Him.

The above is based on reports in *Nederlands Dagblad* of June 14, 16, 23, 29 and 30, 1990.



Rethinking Redemptive-Historical Interpretation³ By N.H. Gootjes

We continue in this third article the discussion about what to do with the events recorded in the Bible. They have to be applied, but how? Can they be used for moralizing and psychologizing? We gave several examples of this kind of application.

Reading the Scripture passages these examples were taken from, we will notice several unsatisfactory elements. The first is that only one element is taken out of the complete event and is generalized. Why then are the other elements not generalized? It is perfectly true that David, when he saw Ziklag destroyed, was sad. Scripture says he wept. But why is only this element taken out of the story and used as a general example? Scripture goes on to tell that David's soldiers now turned against him and wanted to kill him (2 Samuel 30:6). Of course this fact cannot so easily be generalized as can the fact that David wept. But using one out of two connected events and neglecting the other seems to be a rather arbitrary way of applying Scripture.

Further, the specific position of the people who play a role in the story, is neglected. Once someone starts thinking about it he will realize that the stories in

the Bible are almost without exception about people who have a special position which the general believer does not have. They are patriarch or ancestor of the nation of Israel, prophet, priest or king, and apostle. That makes it hard to apply what happened to them directly to ourselves. E.g., David was the anointed king of Israel. So when Jonathan became the friend of David and helped him, the true picture is that the crown prince Jonathan took a step back and recognized David's precedence (1 Samuel 20:13-15). This story shows more than just friendship; it shows Jonathan's obedience to God in serving in love the future king of Israel. When this is a central aspect of the text, it may not be left out as soon as we start applying the text.

Another factor which is often neglected in a moralistic or psychologizing application is the result of an event. Jonathan, who recognized and loved David, and Saul, who persecuted him, died on the same day. A consistent moralizing application would run like this. He who persecutes his neighbour, will be punished, as Saul was killed. He who helps his neighbour, will be . . . punished, as Jonathan was killed. This application though logically

consistent, is blatantly wrong. Does this not show that the stories in the Bible cannot be used for a simple reward system?

The most important question is, of course, what is the role of God in the application? In moralizing and psychologizing the emphasis is on man, on his actions and his soul. God is at best only indirectly referred to. Recall the moralistic application that we should help poor refugees just as Barzillai once helped David. In this application God is not mentioned, nor is there any need to refer to God. The fundamental reason why these applications fail is the fact that God's place in history is neglected.

This leads to the conclusion that redemptive history as it is recorded in Scripture is not given to us for easy moralizing or psychologizing. The connecting link between then and now which is emphasized in Scripture is not moral behaviour or psychological experiences. The connection is that the same God is realizing the same salvation by the same faith because of the work of the same Jesus Christ, to us who are living in a different period of redemptive history. In brief, the connection between the people in Scripture and us today is God's redemptive history.

Therefore the application of the historical parts of Scripture should be redemptive-historical. The following four examples will try to show and explain this further.

Cain and Abel (Gen. 4)

Genesis 4 begins by telling that Adam and Eve had two sons, Cain and Abel. When the boys grew up and each had chosen his profession, the relation between them soured. Cain became angry at Abel and finally killed him.

A moralizing application could run along these lines. Cain committed a terrible sin in killing his brother, but we should realize that we all have the same sinful nature as Cain. Therefore we should be very careful to avoid the temptation. You can see it every day in the newspaper: family members shooting and killing each other. Don't have firearms in your house! To this can be added that the end of the story shows that God punishes murderers severely.

But probably the story lends itself more easily for psychologizing. Then the emphasis is on the motive behind Cain's action. Cain is said to be very angry. Even though God warned him, Cain allowed his grudge to grow till he finally killed his brother. Then the application is: Do not let your anger rankle. You won't be able to contain it. And if you let go, you will be punished.

There is nothing in this kind of application that goes against Scripture. God warns against killing (sixth commandment) and a building up of anger (Eph. 4:26). The problem is, however, whether this use of Genesis 4 explains the story of Cain and Abel according to God's intention in having it recorded. There are several problems that make us feel uneasy about this.

1. The text does not only speak of anger against a brother but first of all of anger directed against God. When Abel brought an offering to the Lord, God regarded him and his offering, but when Cain brought an offering, God did not regard him. The anger Cain showed against his brother Abel was in fact directed against God, who seemed to favour Abel more than him. When Cain killed Abel, he robbed God of someone who obeyed Him. Cain did not want to really bow before God, and this killing of his brother was the final step in his rebellion against God. The first objection against the applications given above is that God was there only a supporting actor, while in the story He is the main character.

2. The context shows in what light this story should be seen. Of particular importance is Gen. 3:15. On that occasion God had announced that He would put enmity between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. Gen. 4 tells us how the serpent in Cain attacks God's faithful servant Abel. This is neglected in moral-

izing and psychologizing explanations.

3. God's punishment is referred to as a deterrent against killing or hating, but is not seen in its significance. If the goal of the story was to warn against killing, why then does not God execute the murderer? This would also be consistent with later Old Testament law. Instead, Cain is driven away from the land where his relatives live (4:11,14). True, Cain is not let off lightly, but it is also not the maximum punishment, the death penalty.

However, to understand the meaning of this punishment we should realize that at that time the family of Adam and Eve constituted the church. This extradition means excommunication (see vs. 16). If Cain does not repent, this will mean the beginning of eternal punishment. And it is already a sign of his unbelief that Cain does not worry about his expulsion but about his death (vs. 14).

All this leads to a different, broader and more religious explanation. The focus of Gen. 4 is not: Do not kill or hate your (physical) brother, but: Serve God. For whoever does not serve God will, according to God's institution of Gen. 3:15, dislike those who serve God. This dislike does not necessarily lead to fratricide, but it will lead to attempts to rob God of his servants. This explains why Christians in this world will always feel the pressure of the world in lifestyle, oppression, and ridicule. God's punishment of this will be excommunication, first from the community of the church, but, when there is no change, from the New Jerusalem.

Elijah (1 Kings 19:4)

After Elijah had gained a victory at Mount Carmel, and the priests of Baal had been executed, the opposition against Israel's God had not died in Israel. Queen Jezebel sent a message to Elijah vowing that she would have him killed by the next day. Then Elijah prayed: "It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life."

Bible readers tend not so much to moralize but to psychologize this text. But a

moralizing explanation is possible. It could be done in this way: The fact that Elijah prayed was not wrong in itself, but this prayer went beyond the limits of a good prayer. For he prayed to be allowed to die. This contains for us a warning to be careful when praying. We should not exceed the limits of what one is allowed to pray for. We should never pray for our death.

When we do not want to evaluate this prayer so negatively, a more positive approach is also possible. Then we can draw a moral lesson from the place where Elijah prayed. To concentrate on this very important prayer, Elijah went to the wilderness. When we therefore have to pray for something really important we should leave the noise of everyday life behind and try to find a place where we can concentrate.

This text is, however, mostly used for psychologizing. Then the mood of Elijah behind this prayer is analyzed. Elijah in this life-threatening situation went to the wilderness to pray alone to God. He felt he could no longer carry on. His duty was too heavy. Therefore he asked God to be allowed to die. Many people feel the same way, at one time or another. Their burden in life becomes so heavy that they wish to die. It can also happen to us that we despair. But just as God gave new strength to Elijah, God will (sometimes weakened to: can) give new strength to us. Through God's help we will be able to live on in the midst of troubles.

There are also other, more positive possibilities for psychologizing. E.g., many people fear death but Elijah was not afraid to die. He could die without fear and could even wish for death, because he had always faithfully served the Lord. Therefore someone who has always faithfully served the Lord has no reason to be afraid for death. He can even pray to be allowed to die.

The preceding shows that one text can give us a fair number of different lessons. Do we have to choose among them or can they all be used? First of all we have to consider whether these applications do justice to the story. A closer reading of the text will reveal that several important elements have been neglected.

There is the fact that Elijah was not just anyone. He was not only a prophet but as a prophet he had a special duty to fulfill at that moment in history. It fell to him to be the leader in the deadly struggle with the Baal worship which had become popular among God's people.

Further, the role of God is minimal in these explanations. At best He comes in at the end of the story, as the address of Elijah's prayer.

Then the context, especially God's reaction to Elijah's prayer, is neglected. Yet it is very important for a correct evaluation of Elijah's prayer. Elijah went to sleep after

CHURCH NEWS



CALLED TO:

Winnipeg, MB Rev. K. Jonker
of Launceston, Tas.
Western Australia

THORNBURY:

Worship services will be held September 9, 1990 in Orangeville due to the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

he had prayed, but an angel woke him up and gave him food. The angel did not solve Elijah's problem, he only prevented Elijah from dying peacefully in his sleep. Elijah had to eat and drink and had to travel forty days to meet the Lord. From this it is evident that the Lord disagreed with Elijah's prayer.

Before we apply this to our situation today, we first have to take into account the specific situation in which Elijah lived and his role in it. That seems only to make the application more difficult since Elijah's time was different from our time, and his role was unique. Elijah had to fight the Baal worship in Israel. But for his prayer in the wilderness he left the country. This means that he left the battlefield and gave up the fight. Another element in the text points in the same direction: Elijah had left his servant behind (vs. 3). Because he was not going to fight any longer he no longer needed a servant. So what Elijah was doing comes down to desertion.

But here is not a private soldier who leaves the battlefield, it is the general who gives up the battle. Whatever psychological tensions may be behind it, and we may surmise they were considerable, this leaving the country of Israel was a sin. Then the prayer connected with it, the prayer to

be allowed to die, is an expression of the same sin — a sin all the greater since Elijah was so important for the struggle.

We can again connect this with the prophecy of enmity and Satan's destruction in Gen. 3:15. This prayer shows that even the powerful Elijah could not be the one who conquered God's adversary. God's people needs another, a better general to gain the victory in this struggle, someone who would not buckle down under the strain of continuous opposition. In this negative way the story points forward to Jesus Christ, who did not give up the fight even on the cross, but conquered Satan in His death and resurrection.

To see all this clearly is very important for a correct application of Elijah's prayer to ourselves who live in a different situation. The battlefield is no longer Palestine, but the whole world. Also our position in the battle is different from that of Elijah; we are not generals but only private soldiers. And we have to reckon with the fact that though the struggle still goes on, our general Jesus Christ has gained the decisive victory.

From here follows the application for today. If God did not allow Elijah to give up the struggle before Christ's victory, all the more we who live after this victory can-

not and should not give up struggling against the influence of worldly religion in the church. Worldly religion can come under several guises: from scientific to New Age. People are gullible, and the priests of worldly religion seem to be in the majority. People in the church can begin to think: "When so many believe it, there must be some truth in it." And their obedience will be divided. Partly they will obey God, and partly they will follow the current God of the world. Then the opponents of this worldly religion can get weary. What is the use of their struggle against it? But through this story they have to learn that God does not want to hear their wish to give up. Even less today than in the days of Elijah. For Jesus Christ has gained the decisive victory.

Therefore the prayer of 1 Kings 19:4 cannot be used as an example to follow in disappointment. Then the approach would be that we can understand Elijah's disappointment, and that we too have at times the same feeling. But in fact the text warns us not to give up the good fight of faith as long as God allows us life on this earth.

— *To be continued*



NEWS MEDLEY

By *W.W.J. VanOene*

For a few times, I think, we did not mention anything about the Australian brotherhood, and for this reason it is almost mandatory that we start with them this time. This is the more so because the Rev. VanDelden and family will have arrived safe and sound at the place of their destination. I expect that their trip from Vancouver to Perth was less eventful than the one from Edmonton to Vancouver! We shall not elaborate.

In any case, by the time our readers receive these lines the installation in the Church at Bedfordale will be a thing of the past and the work will have been begun. May the VanDelden family acclimatize soon, especially spiritually, that is: become acquainted and feel one with the congregation and the neighbouring churches. Going by our own experience we have no doubt that this will go very smoothly and fast.

For the first time I also received some particulars concerning the churches in Tasmania, although not directly from them. Enclosed with the District Bulletin and *Una Sancta* was a neat booklet entitled *Yearbook 1990 for the Free Reformed Churches in Tasmania*. It is a very neat booklet indeed, and when browsing through it I saw how thankful the brothers and sisters can be that there is regular traffic between Tasmania and the West Australia region, especially of young people. One finds numerous families having the same surname, which does not make for a very healthy situation, for if no change occurs, relatives will have no choice but to marry relatives. Influx of "new blood" is important, and we are happy that this is the case indeed. It would be nice if the Tasmania churches could be included in our medley, but then I have to receive the bulletins

Let the Church at Bedfordale be the first one from whose part in the bulletin we quote. "A brother and sister ask that more

attention be given to Thanksgiving Day and the congregation be encouraged to prepare for the special Thanksgiving collection; perhaps this should be a 'special purpose' collection. Consistory believes that we should not measure thankfulness by the results of the collection. However, if we are thankful to the Lord it will show up also in what we give."

In connection with collections we turn to Armadale. "An interesting observation is that whenever we have two collections, the deacons' collection is down by around 40%. This means that many people simply split their gift over the two collections. This should not be so. It does not seem right to reduce the gift for the needy and to put it in the second collection."

No, it is not right indeed to reduce the gift for the support of the needy if this is needed. But does it not teach us to some extent that having two collections should remain an exception? For those who are single or newly-married as well as for those who no longer have children at home it is not so difficult to give the full amount for the needy and on top of that what is needed for the other purpose. We do have, however, several large families and when there are two collections, we should not be too surprised when they have to reduce their contribution for the one cause if they want also to support the other. Everyone can calculate what such a family most likely will contribute through the collections.

In view of the above we might doubt the wisdom of the following decision. No growth was reported "in church reserves, which means that no provision can be made for future development. To meet this need, it is decided to hold a second collection on the third and (if applicable) fifth Sunday of every month for a church development fund, to be held separately from general church funds."



Armada passed a few items on from a mission meeting held. "An important item from past discussions is the training of indigenous ministers for the work in PNG. Albany had first thought of sending another ordained missionary for that task. However, at the last meeting of cooperating churches it was decided to set up a special committee to investigate this matter and to come with recommendations."

Finally, "A proposal is made to stop the Dutch services at the end of 1990. Ward elders will speak to the elderly members to ascertain their needs and views." It is not strange that this proposal was made. We also recall that a check revealed that the brothers and sisters who have difficulty with the English language would rather listen to a tape from the Netherlands than tune in on the live services where a sermon was being read by an elder. Because there are other means available to fill their needs, it will be a good thing when the whole congregation can come together in the one regular afternoon worship service.

Kelmscott reported that they received a "Letter from the Armadale organists, requesting the minister to pass the liturgy to the sexton on Thursday evening preferably but no later than Friday evening." Wow! With the exception of the last years of my active ministry the liturgy was not available until some time early Sunday morning. I certainly would have been in a bind as the result of this request. Most ministers dedicate the latter part of the week to sermon preparation. The beginning of each week is usually taken up by catechism classes, consistory meetings, visits that can be brought in the evening only, other meetings, and so on. This should be taken into account by the organists, too. Is the congregation not often requested to contact the minister as little as possible in the end of the week? It could be that many of my colleagues have more self-control and are better able to schedule their time than I had or was, but even Friday evening would have been too early for me for many years. Because the songs are selected only after the completion of the sermon preparation, nothing should be expected too early.

Byford reported that a total of twenty families have settled in the Rockingham area by now. This goes nicely into the direction of another church being formed there. I have only one remark here: Don't try to get another one of our Canadian ministers. Our vacancy rate is too high and we have none to spare.

Byford also decided that Hymn 1A shall be sung at the Lord's Supper. There is progress.

It is not the Rockingham but the Rockway area that we direct our attention to next. We gathered this from the Lincoln bulletin. First we read that the consistory "dealt with the request ...for institution of a new church in the Rockway area...A few 'technical' details are still to be resolved after which we may look for the support of the consistory and classis to give the final 'go ahead'."

A later issue of *The Vineyard* told us that "the consistory approved our proposals except a minor boundary change....the use of Lincoln's churchbuilding for worship services, and the budget which will be drawn up after receiving a few particulars on the rental of Vineland Public School. After having received these there will be a meeting with the members involved, the Lord willing."

At the one place there is progress in more than one respect, in the other place there is some sadness. It must be a sad thing indeed when something disappears that was established with heartfelt love. "The sadness of selling our school becomes more of a reality now that preparations have been made for selling the inventory," we read in Watford's bulletin.

The Watford consistory appointed "Greeters to welcome people especially guests to the worship services." The consistory also decided that the minister and the "serving elder" will greet the worshippers as they leave the building. "This will be done during the summer months." Especially the last sentence contains a wise decision. When the weather turns cooler or even cold it is very unwise to have the minister standing in the draft

coming through the open door, because in all likelihood the man is not completely dry after having delivered a sermon.

What I cannot consider such a wise decision is the following. "Remuneration for office-bearers attending classis is discussed. The proposal to raise the amount to \$75.00 from \$50.00 is rejected with the understanding that any delegate who needs extra compensation should feel free to make that request."

But that is now exactly the difficulty: who would feel free to ask for more? Perhaps someone who receives hourly wages and can calculate precisely how much he loses in wages when attending a classis. I fear that the same situation will occur that we find when mileage remuneration for family visits and so on is involved. All office-bearers should give the treasurer a statement and accept the remuneration. If anyone feel that he should return the amount to the church, that is up to him, but no one has to know this. And the ones who need the remuneration feel free to keep it.

Besides, is it realistic to set the maximum reimbursement at \$50.00 per day for a brother who is delegated to a classis? Working five days a week a brother would have an annual income of \$13,000.00. I am out of touch with the wages, but am convinced that no one could meet his obligations towards church, school, and family from that amount. Of course, one who receives a monthly salary and from whose salary nothing is deducted for the day he is absent will not ask for anything anyway, neither will a minister. But to delegate a brother and to limit him to \$ 50.00 a day when he loses wages for that day does not seem right to me.

"We have a permit !!!" That is the triumphant exclamation we found in the bulletin of Burlington East. Construction was scheduled to start on July 3rd. "If all goes well, then this time next year we should be well on our way to putting the present difficulties behind us. We should then be able to start our services at an hour which best suits our preferences, and we should be sitting on soft pews in airconditioned comfort." In a comfortable pew, so to speak. See below for the dangers of such comfort.

After having told you that the Burlington East Vacation Bible School saw no fewer than 69 children attend, we turn our attention to Orangeville.

The consistory decided not to increase the frequency of the Lord's Supper but to keep it at four times per year. Too bad. There was also a "letter from the 'Thornbury Group' concerning further details on the worship services in Thornbury. These are to be held at the Craigleith Community Hall, just off Highway No 26, on Blue Mountain Road. Worship time to be 10:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m."

"Beginning this fall," Brampton stated, "we shall be advertising the 'Gift from Heaven' correspondence course in the *Toronto Star*." Consequently the bulletin contained the request for volunteers to mark the answers and to answer questions.

At a Toronto consistory meeting "The Agenda was adopted. The deacons were excused so that the elders could give reports on home visits made. After the deacons returned, the chairman thanked the elders who had completed their terms for their diligent service; at which time they left for the evening."

If I reconstruct the course of events correctly, then the elders that reported were the ones whose term of office had ended, but who were still present to give the reports on visits made since the previous consistory meeting. And, as is the practice within the churches, it was absolutely taboo that the deacons heard these reports. They had to be sent away for a while and were allowed to return after the reports had been heard.

Do not misunderstand me: I do *not* say that the Toronto consistory acted improperly. On the contrary, given the whole situation within the churches, the brothers could not proceed differently. What I want to draw the attention to is the, in my view silly, situation that deacons have to be "excused" because family visits are reported. Shhh! the deacons are still here and the door

is not yet closed ! Is that a fruitful cooperation between office-bearers ? When are we going to return to the situation that the consistories are formed by the minister(s) of the Word, the elders and the deacons, as we confess in the Belgic Confession ? Now I sometimes read in a press release that the consistory decided something but that it will not become effective yet, "pending approval by the deacons." What can the poor deacons do, whose number is always smaller than that of the elders? They have not heard the discussion, could not weigh the arguments pro or con, and all they can do is nod in agreement. We should reconsider the whole situation.

We return to the "comfortable pew." I am not going to tell you from which bulletin I gleaned the following passages, for the malady signalized here is wide- spread.

"What I will say now is not meant for every person, although most of us will find ourselves reflected in it from time to time. I refer to the matter of the public worship service, and more specifically to the matter of staying awake and paying attention during the service. It can readily be granted that not every sermon has a scintillating appeal. It can also be granted that even when the spirit is willing, the flesh can be weak. But one wonders, quite frankly, whether it is either the sermon or the body that brings the real problem. Sleeping in church is also often the result of a simple lack of interest and inability to be moved by spiritual truths. When the minister must bear witness to at least five or six slumbering souls (and we are speaking of adults), and to at least five or six others who never give any indication that they are listening, then this might indeed bring a crisis of self- confidence for the preacher.

"But in a pastoral sense and more seriously, it also brings a great concern for these souls. Why do they sleep? Why do they daydream? Why do they gaze into open space, counting cobwebs in the corners? As Reformed people, we have always confessed the centrality of the Word. We believe that the Holy Spirit uses the Word as preached to both create and strengthen faith. ... But in order to do its saving and renewing work the Word really has to be heard and understood."

More could be quoted from this bulletin, but the above may suffice to draw the attention of all to this evil. In one particular church I always see a brother sleep through the whole service. He does not nod, his head does not jerk back, his chin just rests comfortably on his chest and he sits there, unmoved and without moving. He must really be strengthened when he gets home, but not by the preaching. And there are more of whom the same is to be said. May the warning be taken to heart.

We jump all the way to the Immanuel Church in Edmonton. Its consistory had a meeting with the consistory of the Orthodox Reformed Church. Now, I would not be surprised if some of our readers get mixed up with the different names. The Orthodox Reformed Church was formed by people who left the Christian Reformed Church and are being served by the Rev. Cecil Tuininga, a retired minister. With them the consistory of the Immanuel Church in Edmonton is entertaining contact and is having discussions to see whether any basis can be found to come together. The matter of the confession regarding the church occupies a large section of the discussions. Understandably so, for many false rumours are still going around about what the churches really confess concerning this point.

We continue with the same church. "Council has been informed of the availability of a used pipe organ. It was not considered financially feasible to pursue it at this point." Again: too bad.

Regarding another tune for the Apostles' Creed the Immanuel consistory decided : "Rather than use the worship as a place for experimenting with new hymns, the congregation is requested to stay for a little while after the afternoon worship service next week....Copies will be distributed, and then we can try and sing it together."

In a later bulletin the consistory reported : "New harmoniza-

tion and melody of the Apostles' Creed is discussed. This lacks support. The musical technical arguments were not found convincing. The Committee for the *Book of Praise* will be notified." This is the first consistory of which I have read an official reaction. Personally I agree with their judgment and I know that more are of the same opinion, notably also some very capable organists.

In Houston "the singing of the Apostles' Creed in the worship services is discussed. After some discussion it is decided to sing the creed once every three months, before the celebration of the Lord's Supper."

Houston put the manse up for sale and the committee of administration is looking "into the buying of a property for the new manse."

The consistory of the same congregation appointed an Evangelism Committee whose task it will be to stimulate the congregation, to organize activities, to advise the consistory, and to take up contact with other similar committees in the sister churches.

Smithers, too, pays due attention to the task of spreading the Gospel in the neighbourhood. A meeting is scheduled for September. "There will also be a discussion on a proposal which the Evangelism Committee is undertaking: encouraging women to set up neighbourhood Bible Study groups in their homes."

With great joy it was mentioned expressly that one brother made profession of faith who had been brought to this joyous moment as a fruit upon the work that is done among the native population in the Smithers region. We do not glory in the work of man, for we realize that we cannot even work the faith in the hearts of our own children, let alone in the hearts of others, but we realize that it must be a strong support and encouragement for the Rev. Marren to continue this work. It is with gladness that we mention it in our column as well, and are certain that the whole brotherhood rejoices with us.

"At a recent consistory meeting the matter of musical notation of the Psalms and Hymns was discussed." The discussion dealt with the so-called accidentals and with the rests.

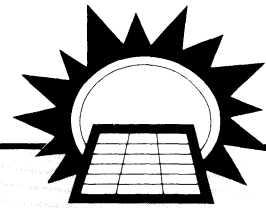
No one will deny that the singing in the worship services is an important element of our service to the Lord. Nor will anyone deny that it is extremely important that this singing be as proper and correct as can possibly be achieved. Yet I must state that the musical notation, accidentals and rests are not an *ecclesiastical* matter with which a consistory may deal. Once again I must state: How many of the brothers are music-technically so educated that they can judge this matter? If a consistory considers it wise to ask the organists or someone else who is capable in this field to have an introduction at a congregational meeting, one could hardly object, even though a congregational meeting is a meeting of the consistory with the congregation. But as a *consistory* to discuss and decide about accidentals and rests appears to be out of place. An ecclesiastical assembly should or may not deal with these matters.

A short while ago I wrote about Synod Smithville 1980 deciding to replace a beautiful tune with another one, decided upon by synod. That, too, was a non- ecclesiastical matter, something from which not only that synod but every synod should abstain. If complaints come from the membership, and if a general synod is convinced of the seriousness of the complaints and that they live with a very large part of the membership, it can ask the Committee for the *Book of Praise* to come up with an alternate melody, but it is wrong when that synod itself decides that a certain melody shall replace an existing one.

Likewise it is wrong when a consistory decides that the congregation shall or shall not sing the "accidentals," or where a rest shall be honoured and where it shall be ignored. Music-technical questions are no ecclesiastical matters in the sense of Art.30 C.O.

With these outpourings we leave you to your reveries. Have a fond afternoon, as I hear on CBC, close to 3:00 p.m. You know what and whom I mean.





By Mrs. J. Mulder

"The dragon . . . pursued the woman."

Revelation 12:13

Dear brothers and sisters,

This chapter speaks of the warfare between the Church, symbolized by "the woman" and her great enemy, Satan, here called the "the dragon."

Satan has been unable to prevent the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the child of the woman. Since Christ Jesus has made full satisfaction for sin and has been taken up into heaven, to God and His throne, Satan has been thrown out of heaven. He has lost that part of the battle. He has no longer any grounds for his accusations against those who seek their salvation in Christ Jesus and in Him only.

From now on the earth became the dragon's domain. Filled with wrath, because he could not devour Christ, the child of the woman, his only intention is now to ruin and destroy the woman herself, the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Satan lets no opportunity go by to harm her, to let her suffer and if possible to destroy her.

If we want to be true and living members of the Church of Jesus Christ, we must be aware that we constantly have a great and terrible enemy. Being loyal to our Head and Master, we will experience sooner or later conflicts, enmity and suffering. The dragon is pursuing the woman!

But by faith being in Christ Jesus, we may also be assured of God's constant care and protection.

He gave the woman the means to escape Satan's attacks. He gave her powerful wings to fly away from Satan's destructive attacks into the wilderness. [vs. 14]

God wants the Church to use those wings. She must not challenge Satan, neither try him out; no, she has to flee away from him and his agents; she must avoid him.

The position of the Church is that of a woman, pursued by Satan, fleeing into the wilderness. There in the wilderness God has prepared a place for her. There she is, just as Israel during their journey through the desert, taken care of by the LORD. There He feeds and nourishes her with His Word and Spirit. There she is every day surrounded by the miracles of God's grace and loving care.

As long as the Lord Jesus Christ has not returned our position in this present world is that of "strangers and sojourners."

The Church is pictured here as a woman, weak and vulnerable; unable to take care of herself. As such she is an easy prey for the evil one, whose intention it is to sweep her away from her foundation, away from her trust in God and His Word.

Time and again Satan has tried — and he still is trying — to destroy the woman.

But as long as we cleave to our God, sincerely trust and obey Him, we may miss out on many things, but never on the care and grace of God. When we forsake the world and let ourselves be fed through the ministry of His Word and the use of the sacraments, we may be assured of God's protection against the attacks of Satan.

In the care of our Almighty God and Father we are perfectly safe. Although surrounded by a fierce enemy.

Therefore we always again take refuge in Him believing that the gates of hell will never overpower the Church of which Jesus Christ is the Head and we by grace may be members, not only now but forever.

Our birthday calendar for September

MARY VANDEBURGT

17244-61 B Avenue
Surrey, BC V3S 5M7

Mary will be 34 years old on September 11.

JERRY BONTEKOE

"Anchor Home,"

30 Rd., RR 2

Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0

Jerry hopes to celebrate his 26th birthday on September 14.

PAUL DIELEMAN

307 Connaught Avenue

Willowdale, ON M2R 2M1

Paul's 21st birthday is on September 29. [Paul is a good story teller, as many of us found out during the closing program at "Camp BOO."]

Congratulations to all three of you!

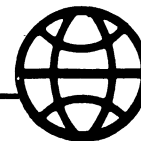
Recently a mother asked me why her child's birthday was not mentioned in our "Ray of Sunshine." There are maybe also others who are not aware of the fact that I always wait for a request from parents, family or friends. For I do know that some prefer not to be mentioned in our column.

But every new name is most welcome! Just let me know.

Greetings,

Mrs. J. Mulder

1225 Highway 5, RR 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4



By *W.W.J. VanOene*

The Free Reformed Church at Pretoria SA (Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk) decided to abolish the rule that the men and boys should stand during prayer in the worship services. Pretoria was the only church in the South African federation where this rule was still in force. This was a custom taken over from the sister churches in the Netherlands, where it was a custom in former days, as was the case in South Africa.

Questions arose in the congregation about this custom. The temperature in the auditoria is often quite high, and several brothers could hardly remain standing until the prayer was concluded. Several women also complained because it irritated them that sometimes during public prayer the brothers in the pew behind were half-leaning over them. From now on the brothers may remain seated during prayer. (ND)

MADRID (INS).

The protestant churches and the Jews in Spain have received the same rights as the Roman Catholics. This was done in a declaration in which they were called "religions with their roots in the country." Discussions took place with the Islam as well, but these were broken off because the Koran contains various ethical rules that conflict with Spanish law (e.g. regarding polygamy). (ND)

Women will soon be able to hold the office of elder and be ordained as ministers in the Christian Reformed Church of North America. The CRCNA synod decided June 19 that churches may ordain women to all offices of the church at their discretion. This decision must be ratified at a second meeting of the synod (!! VO) in 1992 before it will take effect.

The decision of the church (?? VO) took place after 20 years of studying the matter. Committees had worked over questions of office, of scriptural interpretation, and of the theology of headship. Even with the study the synod remained divided. More than seven hours of debate were needed before the deciding vote of 98-84 was taken. At times during the debate it appeared the synod might be stalemated, as various procedural motions passed with a difference of as little as two votes.

The synod voted to change the Church Order, Article 3, by deleting the word male from its description of church office holders. The new article reads:

All confessing members of the Church who meet the biblical requirements are

eligible for the offices of minister, elder, deacon, and evangelist.

Changes in church order require approval of a following synod. Usually this is done in one year, but the synod decided that ratification should wait for two years. In view of deep division over the issue, the synod felt that a longer period of time for edification and discussion of the issue be given to the church. The synod asked local congregations not to implement the decision until ratification is complete. (REC NE)

The synod of the Christian Reformed Church of North America decided to strengthen the authority of the Synodical Interim Committee and to create a position of Executive Director to coordinate the work of all the agencies. The SIC will in the future receive the plans and reports of the agencies first, rather than have all agencies report directly to synod. The SIC will be charged with developing a master plan for the church.

While the strengthening of the center was being considered, Canadian churches within the CRCNA had also proposed regional synods. The Canadians believed that their different cultural context and the different legal system required that the church have an official body that was clearly identified as Canadian. However, the synod felt that the Canadian proposals did not have sufficient rationale. (It would certainly work against the hierarchical development that becomes evident in the above as well. VO) It appointed a study committee to study the reasons for regional synods, and the matter will be returned to the CRCNA synod in 1993. (REC NE)

The Reformed Churches in the Netherlands will enter into a sister church relationship with the Reformed Church in the U.S. and the Free Reformed Churches of the Philippines. Further they will offer a similar relationship to the Free Church of Scotland and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland. (ND)

In the presence of a "deputy" a decision could be taken in connection with the Reformed Church in the United States. They form a rather small federation with which we came into contact by way of the work in Zaire and which we soon recognized as a fully Reformed federation. We had the Rev. Grosmann in our midst on behalf of these churches and this with joy. He could also be present when the decision was made to enter into a sister church re-

lationship with these churches. The president addressed him and together with him the assembly sang Psalm 134. He himself responded in a manner that revealed a Christian cheerfulness, so that such moments move the heart before God. It is a moving moment indeed, such recognitions of the work of the Lord in the world. (Ger.Kerkb.Gron.Fr.Dr.)

Comment

We have some question marks. In how far were our deputies for contact with churches abroad either consulted or informed or aware even of this development? Are our Dutch sister churches running a little too fast and, as far as we are concerned inconsiderately, or are we too slow and too unwilling to "recognize the work of the Lord in the world"? It is several years ago that the Rev. Kingma had contact with what was then called the "Eureka Classis." More contacts ensued. Were we too slow in recognizing what our Dutch sister churches discovered in an amazingly short time?

The Synod of Winnipeg 1989 gave our Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad the mandate, among other things, "to request the churches abroad that in the matter of relationship or contacts with third parties 'there be consultation and coordination between sister churches.'" And further "to request the churches abroad that contacts in countries where sister churches are already established be made not independently but in consultation with these sister churches." I am certain that our Committee dutifully sent the Acts of Synod Winnipeg to the corresponding committees of foreign sister churches. Perhaps they even drew the attention of these committees to the relevant passages. But must I conclude that our Dutch sister churches have completely ignored these reasonable and correct requests made by Synod Winnipeg? If our foreign sister churches go their own way anyway and do not bother to honour such reasonable requests, we might as well forget about all the friendly gestures and save the cost of sending and receiving delegates at the broadest assemblies. Mere friendly gestures do not get us anywhere. There are American Reformed Churches in the United States and these churches "live in" with the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches. Were they consulted?

That the Rev. Grosmann is teaching at Mid America Reformed Seminary is no impediment, of course, but was the point

that the Reformed Church in the U.S. has officially recognized M.A.R.S. as the institution to which they will direct their students touched upon? Was "Hamilton" mentioned as well during the discussions? We do not deny the right to study where one wants to study; we only point to an official stand.

It is easier when one lives at a distance of some fifteen thousand kilometers or more to make a decision such as our Dutch sister churches made than when one lives next door or even in the same country. Has the position of our American Reformed Churches — and these were already sister churches of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands — constituted any point of the discussions? Our American Reformed Churches long for the moment when there will be a sufficiently large number of them to form their own federation. It is an abnormal situation that they "live in" with the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches. (We reject completely the hierarchical concentration of "power," such as is found with the Christian Reformed Church whose latest synod incomprehensibly rejected the renewed request for the reviving of regional synods. Keep all the power in Grand Rapids!) How beautiful it would be if there could be a merger with the Reformed Church in the U.S.! If our deputies for contact with churches abroad have been involved and know more about it, they would provide an important service to our church people if they gave us some particulars and kept us abreast of the developments. Is it no longer in their mandate from time to time to inform the membership about their activities?

As for the recognition of the Free Reformed Churches in the Philippines, we saw the Rev. Joy Vigno at the International Conference of Reformed Churches in Langley last year, but, alas, did not have the opportunity to hear his speech by means of which he familiarized the delegates to that Conference with the situation of the churches he represented.

We realize that the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have the same financial resources as the much larger federation of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, where, besides, the cost of education does not have to be borne by the membership. But we do find again that the recognition came quite speedily. Granted, I did not read any report by the Dutch deputies and have my knowledge only from what the press produced. Another factor I take into account is that for more than five years I have not received any official reports sent to the churches and thus am not as well-informed as might have been the case otherwise. My question is again: Are we, perhaps, somewhat slow and dragging our feet in this respect?

I realize that our Committee for Contact with Churches Abroad did not receive the mandate from Synod 1989 to look around and try to find out whether there are any true churches of the Lord Jesus Christ in other parts of the world. Besides, I do not think that it would be the task of such a committee to scan the ecclesiastical field in other countries. We do not have the resources nor is it advisable to send a few brothers all over the globe to "search and find out." If there is a church in our midst that is convinced that contact should be taken up with a specific federation or church in another country, this church has itself to do the investigation and come to the sister churches with well-documented proposals. Only then can our Committee receive the mandate to investigate further and come with a recommendation.

It could very well be that at a future synod a proposal will be found to extend recognition to the Free Reformed Churches in the Philippines, as our Dutch sister churches have done.

These Free Reformed Churches in the Philippines issued the first quarterly issue of *Life and Times, The Voice of Today's Reformation*. In this tabloid one can find various contributions dealing with fundamental questions. Reformed theology is being described and explained to some extent, the Three Forms of Unity are seen and defended as being necessary. Perhaps I should give a sample of the writing.

"I read of a story about a church wherein members were discussing whether to buy a chandelier or not. An old man stood up suddenly to object: 'First of all,' he said, 'I doubt if one or two in this church can even spell "chandelier." Sec-

ond, we do not have any here as far as I know, who can play one. And third, we ought not spending money for chandeliers when the church needs lights so bad!'

"We can laugh at this old man's lack of learning. But does not this reflect the exact replica of ourselves when it comes to our theological heritage?

"We are indeed ignorant when we are:

- taking sides without much study.
- making a verdict without Biblical evidences.
- playing roles of a judge who with biased verdict fought everything and/or everyone opposed to us
- rejecting something we have not carefully studied.
- criticizing, antagonizing and finding fault at something we have not yet understood.

"We don't want to appear polemical.

However we cannot evade not to, in our great concern to determine, declare and defend the truth. To our dear Christian friends who are prejudiced to the Reformed Creeds/Confessions, to them, this is heartily dedicated. Our prayers is that they may learn to ask questions and patiently seek for the answer with an objective mind. May we shun ingenious display of ignorance."

Henk VanDyken is working in the Philippines, sent by the Dutch association De Verre Naaste. In a brief article (in Dutch!) he wrote, among other things, the following.

"Reformed" It is most beautiful and almost unbelievable that on the island of Negros a Reformed foundation is lying. For a considerable time already, the Rev. Joy Vigno has proclaimed the rich gospel of Jesus Christ. Through his study of, among others, Calvin he appropriated the doctrine of God's sovereignty and covenant. Meeting Rev. Vigno in 1986 was revealing to some brothers and sisters in the Netherlands. In June 1989, Rev. Vigno was allowed to attend the ICRC in Canada as an observer, something that resulted in an enormous stimulus for the development of the reformed church on Negros.

"The small ecclesiastical community desires to spread a good Christian testimony in the midst of much misery. The dominating Roman Catholic Church — all-powerful for four centuries — and the marginal Baptist movement — in American style — often remain often very superficial. The reformed group around the Rev. Vigno tries gradually to achieve some sort of a Reformation whereby the whole life changes to God's honour."

The remarks have grown into an almost full-scale article. It was not the intention, but now that it is a fact I am happy with it. In any case: we remained on the international scene.

OUR COVER

Long Beach, West coast of Vancouver Island

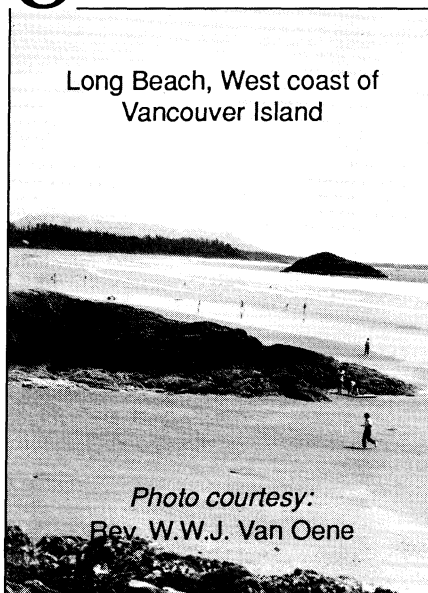
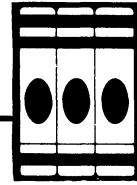


Photo courtesy:
Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene

BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



GOD MEANT IT FOR GOOD

Ted Hoogsteen, God Meant it for Good: The Covenant and the Church Today, Welch Publishing Company, 1989 (Paperback, 99 pages, price (\$10.).

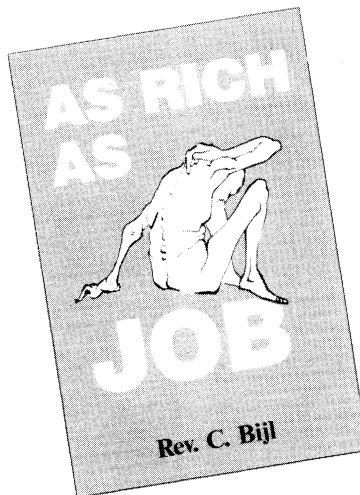
By C. Van Dam

This brief study of Genesis 37-50 is worth reading and pondering. In fourteen short chapters, the author, who is minister of the First Christian Reformed Church at Brantford, Ontario, explores the basic meaning and relevance of "the history of the family of Jacob" (Gen.37:2). He clearly does this from a perspective that is dear to us. Not man, but God and His great faithfulness and work of salvation is central. This is covenant history. That central fact is never forgotten. This also provides the link to today. The covenant God and His dealings today cannot be seen apart from His dealings with His people in the old dispensation.

From this vantage point, Hoogsteen points out some of the implications of what we read in these moving chapters of Genesis. Before he actually gets into the Biblical account, he places this last part of the Genesis within the context of the Scriptures. He reminds us how Psalm 105 and Acts 2 relate and interpret the events recounted here. His conclusion stresses God's faithfulness and that subsequent covenant generations can and should trust the Lord for He is faithful to His Word and will open the future for His Church.

Because the author regards the account of Genesis not as solely a human story, but as a chronicle of God's covenant faithfulness, he is able to serve his reader with good insights. On Genesis 47, he indicates clearly the sin of Jacob in favouring Joseph and so intimating that Joseph and not Reuben should have the right of the first-born. Jacob did not wait for the Lord's direction on this crucial point. The result is that sin is multiplied in the household of Jacob. If it were not for the Lord and His faithfulness...! On Genesis 48, the evil of Judah is put in the context of the important place that he occupies in God's purposes with His people. The disarray and sin within the covenant community is clearly sketched. Again the grace of God is highlighted and we are reminded of the need to maintain the antithesis placed by God between the covenant people and the world.

Throughout his work, Hoogsteen relates the Genesis account to today. On the whole he is quite successful in this, although not always. For example, his comments on pluralism and oneness could be seen as somewhat contrived and not really coming from the text (p. 70). However, such is generally an exception. His comments on feminism, for instance, in an excursus (pp. 73f.), are quite appropriate and perceptive. Also, the author is true to his original goal; namely to show that God's faithfulness to His covenant is the dominant theme. "God meant it for good" (Gen. 50:20). These words of Joseph are the theme throughout the book.



AS RICH AS JOB

C. Bijl, As Rich as Job, Kampen, the Netherlands: Van den Berg 1989 (paperback, 91 pages, \$11.95, available from Inheritance Publications, Box 154, Neerlandia, AB, T0G 1R0).

By C. Van Dam

This book deals with certain chapters from the book of Job and is the result of sermons delivered on this part of Scripture. The author is minister of the Reformed Church (Liberated) in Zwolle, the Netherlands and this material was originally published in Dutch in 1986.

The stated purpose of this short volume is to help those who have a difficult road to travel and who have questions about God's intention. Studying the book

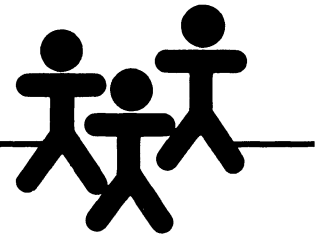
of Job is apt for it deals with suffering and God's purposes. However, a scholarly or detailed investigation is not presented here. The author purposely keeps it simple because he wants the message to be as accessible as possible in order that people may be helped.

The author has succeeded in this purpose. Why? Because he emphasizes God's faithfulness and not man's ability to withstand suffering. Why was God so confident over against Satan that He allowed the evil one to torment Job and try to have him deny God? The reason is that God would not have His work in Job destroyed; for example, His work of faith. Thus when Satan waited for Job's curse after he lost virtually everything, he does not hear the curse. Instead he hears Job's praise of God. God had not explained to Job why it happened. Such an explanation was not necessary. God even allowed Satan to touch the very body and health of Job. God was confident. Not because he knew Job himself could persevere, but because His work in Job would stand.

It is from this perspective that the author deals with selected chapters of the book of Job. He does it in such a way that the person of Job is not far from us. The encouragement that this part of Scripture brings is brought close to home.

This book is full of good insights as the author deals with the cry of Job, "I know that my Redeemer lives" (Job 19), his search for wisdom (Job 28), and God's response from the whirlwind. God convinced Job of His omnipotence and wisdom and so Job found rest. "Job did not have to learn how to understand, but how to believe" (p. 77). With respect to God's response to the three friends, Bijl writes: "The shocking thing ... is that God's wrath turned against three marked defenders of His guidance. Apparently that's possible: people who defended God but were still condemned. How is that possible?" (p. 78). Job's health, wealth, and happiness were restored. Experience teaches us that this does not always happen with Christians. "So why is Job's happy ending still very important for all Christians?" (p. 83). After the horrors of World War II, how do we know for sure that God still loves those who love Him? (p. 91). For an answer to these and related questions, the reading of this book is recommended. Although the translation is not always felicitous, the comfort and instruction given here is never lost.

C



By T.M.P. VanderVen

Parents in the School

Parental schools would not live up to their name if the topic *Parents in the School* would not receive much attention. In *HOME AND SCHOOL* (Burlington) teacher Grutter answers the question, *Are parents needed at John Calvin Christian School?* Her answer is a resounding yes!

Yes, you read the title of this article correctly and there is no need to rub your eyes and take another look. Are parents needed at JCCS? Do teachers look for parents on the parking lot before or after school? Do they wait for a telephone call? Do they look for you at a PTA meeting? Are parents really needed at JCCS?

According to the school handbook, the school is intended to equip children for a life of service. In *unity* with the church and the home, the school teaches children about their task of service in God's kingdom. Parents can be a tremendous help to the teachers and ultimately their children in this task of service, by keeping in contact with the teacher about their child, helping the teachers in or out of the classroom and by attending PTA meetings.

Keeping in contact with your child's teacher is an effective way to keep up-to-date on your child's progress. A phone call to the teacher about a concern you might have could be confirmed by the teacher and a meeting could be set to follow up on the concerns. Parent-Teacher interviews are an excellent opportunity to discuss your child's progress, academically and socially. The routine contact between parents and teachers is far better than periodic phone calls when a problem occurs. Routine contact keeps everyone informed.

Parents can also help out in the classroom. Parent volunteers have worked quite effectively in many classrooms. Some parents have volunteered for several years in a row. This type of help could consist of listening to children read, going over math facts or helping to do research in the library. Or it could be more involved, by taking a small group for a part of the morning, or working on several activities. This allows the classroom teacher to do more specialized work with another group in the classroom. These groups could change from week to week.

If a parent does not feel comfortable working with the students in the classroom, that parent could help the teacher in various other ways. You could volunteer to

drive on a class trip, supervise a group of children on an outing, work on a picture file, or even do some extra typing for special projects.

Another way parents could interact with the school is at Parent-Teacher Association meetings. The PTA, again according to the handbook, has as *its purpose*, to give parents and teachers opportunities to discuss common concerns about the education of the children. The objective of these meetings is to share concerns and examine issues, but also to promote fellowship and provide more of a relaxed atmosphere, where parents and teachers may become more acquainted with each other's roles and responsibilities. These meetings give parents the perfect opportunity to discuss with other parents, what the children are learning about in school and how they are learning it. Parents can ask questions about some of the new ways of teaching various subjects. Sometimes, as a teacher, it is disappointing to see how few parents show up at these meetings. Most often almost all the teachers attend these PTA meetings, but where are most of the parents? It would *ALMOST* seem that some parents really are not that interested in their child's education.

The involvement of parents in their child's education is ultimately in the best interest of their children. Involvement of parents in the school should not be primarily for the teachers or the parents, but for the children who spend most of their waking hours during the week at school. Increased communication with the classroom teacher will enable parents to keep on top of certain situations at school regarding their child. When home and school work together, the child will benefit. Helping the classroom teacher in or out of the classroom will enable the children to experience some more specialized teaching and possibly doing some extra projects. Attending PTA meetings will enable parents to become more aware of what their children experience each day. They will learn about what their children are learning.

So, in answer to the question with which this article began, YES, we do need parents at JCCS.

Many of you have already shown that you realize there is a need, and your assistance is greatly appreciated. JCCS is

a parental school, where parents and teachers work together to help the children in their task of service in God's kingdom. Increased contact and awareness between the home and the school, will in the end, result in the utmost benefit to the children and their education.

Yes! Parents are needed at JCCS!

At the teachers convention held during March in the fair town of Carman, Dr. J. Visscher also discussed this topic under the title, *The Role of the Parents in the Christian School*. I pass on a section from the summary of Dr. Visscher's address as found in Coaldale's *MESSENGER*. This section underscores the need for a solid, knowledgeable relationship between the parents and the school. The importance of this cannot be underestimated. Our schools are parental schools, and therefore parents are the first educators, knowledgeably and prayerfully participating with the teachers at school in the Reformed education of the children of the church. Please read and consider.

Parents need to educate themselves. That involves dedication, not abdication! Parents are obliged to help, to assist the pupil to learn and understand. Reformed education or parental education implies that the parent is with the child, helping him, encouraging him. That also implies that the parents remain informed, that they read about the school, read about Reformed education, and are not just concerned with the building or financial implications. They are involved and seek involvement in the education of the child. At school society meetings more members are present when a proposal for building, involving great sums of money, are discussed, than when the philosophical basis or program of the school is discussed. We know that Christian education does come with financial obligations, with hardship and sacrifice. Just think of the people in Ontario, where no subsidies for the schools are received. The situation is much better in Western Canada, yet Reformed education remains costly. Shortage of funds is evidenced in the type of school buildings, in the staffing, in the teacher salaries. Boards need to do more research, be more aware of the public market in planning for teacher salaries and benefits. Policies on teacher salaries and

benefits should show trust and confidence in the teaching staff. Special (and secret) sweetheart deals should no longer be practised. Total subsidies by the government would not bring about any improvement in the schools for the financial contributions of the parents do also foster interest in the school. And supporters of the schools should remember that the Lord does bless the cheerful giver.

Reformed education should show a relationship between what is taught in the home and in the school. There should be consistency, common standards and common goals. Actually, questions here should be unnecessary, but are they? The school does show a Reformed walk of life. Does the home? What is the atmosphere in the home? With some parents much is to be desired. Most is left up to the school and

the church. Parents are to be a real model to the children. Are they? Do they practise what they preach? Do they take the gospel seriously? Do they supplement Christian education of the school at home? What is strived for in school is so often undone in the home. What could I be referring to? I think of the television, the radio, the newspapers, etc. Does that mean that these have to be thrown out? Not necessarily, but at least understand the influences, for example, of T.V. — the violence, the language, the values, the role models oppose what the gospel stands for. When the students return home from school, they enter the home and have the time for watching the movies. But not time to eat, or to play or to study, and end up going to bed too late. T.V. dulls the mind, turns one into a zombie, brings the philosophy and stan-

dards of the world, for example, adultery become normalcy, thus breaking down moral values. Then think of the videos. Is the first thing that happens when father and mother leave the home, a beeline to the cornerstore? That type of home environment becomes rather self-defeating. The two forms of education are in conflict to each other. What then? Supervise T.V. use, provide wholesome alternatives. How many trips to the library have you made with your children? How much money have you spent in the last year on good books, Christian study books? It is necessary that there is consistency between the home education and that of the school.

We carry on with Christian education in true confidence. For God is there. Even if we are faithless, He remains faithful. He purifies. We have much to be thankful for.

C

PRESS RELEASES



PRESS RELEASE OF CLASSIS ONTARIO NORTH, AUGUST 10, 1990.

Opening:

On behalf of the convening church, the church at Fergus, br. J. Gansekoele opened the meeting. He asked the delegates to sing Ps. 133, read 1 Corinthians 13, and led in prayer. The delegates of the church at Elora, after having examined the credentials, reported that all the churches were duly represented. Classis was constituted. The Reverends G. Nederveen, J. Mulder and G.Ph. van Popta served as chairman, clerk, and vice-chairman respectively.

Memorabilia:

The chairman extended congratulations to the Rev. and Mrs. J. Mulder on account of the 35th anniversary of their wedding and of our brother's ordination as a minister of the divine Word. He recalled that the Rev. P.G. Feenstra of Guelph declined calls extended to him by the churches at London and Lynden. He welcomed the Rev. and Mrs. J. Huijgen to the assembly and wished him well in the colloquium which would soon follow. The chairman noted that there are a number of vacant churches in this classical resort and wished them the Lord's blessing in their endeavours to fill the vacancies. Finally, he congratulated the church at Orangeville with its 40th anniversary.

Agenda:

The agenda was adopted.

Reports:

- (a) From the church at Orangeville: a report that the books of the committee for the fund for needy churches have been audited and that all things were found to be in good order.
- (b) From the committee for the fund for needy churches: financial statements. The assessment for 1991 was set at \$10.80 per communicant member.
- (c) From Mr. J.J. Poort, the classical treasurer: An update on how much the various churches paid in 1989 and the assessment for 1990.
- (d) From the church at Burlington West: a report that the books of the classical treasurer have been audited and that all things were found to be in good order.
- (e) A report of the visitation held with the church at Lower Sackville.

The above reports were received with thankfulness.

Question period according to Article 44 C.O.:

The chairman asked each of the churches whether the ministry of the office-bearers is continued, the decisions of the major assemblies are honoured, and whether there was any matter in which the consistory needed the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church. Each church answered the first two questions in the affirmative and the last in the negative.

Colloquium with the Rev. J. Huijgen:

The church at Fergus requested the classical approbation of the call which it extended to the Rev. J. Huijgen of Harkstede, the Netherlands. The necessary documents were tabled and found to be in good order.

The Rev. J. Mulder spoke with the Rev. J. Huijgen for 20 minutes about the Reformed doctrine. The discussion centred on the following points:

- Modern views of how God reveals Himself versus the Reformed view of scripture.
- Doctrine of God, especially the immutability of God.
- Election and reprobation.
- Alternative theories of reconciliation versus the scriptural revelation of reconciliation through the work of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Infant baptism.

The other delegates were given 5 minutes to ask additional questions.

The Rev. Nederveen then led in a 10 minute discussion on Church polity. The discussion centred on the following points:

- Necessity for a minister arriving from another federation of churches to undergo a colloquium in Church polity.
- Purpose of classical approbation of a call.
- Connection between Church polity and "playing politics."
- Role and purpose of the Church Order, especially: how the Church Order will affect the ministry of the Rev. J. Huij-

gen in the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches.

- Difference between how the Acts of classes are adopted in the Canadian Reformed Churches and how they are adopted in the *Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland*.

The other delegates were given 5 minutes to ask additional questions.

In closed session classis decided to approve the call extended by the church at Fergus to the Rev. J. Huijgen.

In re-opened session the president informed the Rev. J. Huijgen of this fact. The chairman read the Form of Subscription which the Rev. J. Huijgen then signed.

The chairman congratulated the Rev. J. Huijgen and the church at Fergus. He wished them the blessing of the Lord. The assembly sang Ps. 134 and was then given an opportunity to congratulate the Rev. and Mrs. J. Huijgen as well as the delegates of the church at Fergus. The Rev. P.G. Feenstra was appointed to represent Classis Ontario North at the installation of the Rev. J. Huijgen on August 11.

Proposal:

The church at Guelph proposed that:

In order to conduct classis efficiently and to assure that the brother delegates will be able to understand what is said as much as possible:

1. the names of the delegates are announced at the beginning of the meeting and name tags are placed in front of the brothers for the duration of the proceedings.
2. the seating arrangement is either a circle or a square; the long narrow table should be avoided.

The proposal was defeated.

Instructions:

- a. The church at Elora requested pulpit supply one Sunday per month as of January, 1990. The following appointments were made:

January — Rev. Mulder
February — Rev. Feenstra
March — Rev. van Popta
April — Rev. Nederveen
May — Rev. Aasman
June — Rev. Gleason
July — Rev. den Hollander
August — Rev. Huijgen

- b. The church at Orangeville informed classis that a regional synod east will be convened, D.V., on Nov. 14, 1990, in Orangeville at 10:00 a.m.

Appointments:

- a. Next classis:
Convening church — the church at Grand Valley
Date and place — Dec. 14, 1990, 9:00 a.m., at Burlington West

Suggested officers: Chairman — Rev. G.Ph. van Popta

Vice-chairman — Rev. J. Mulder

- b. Examiners, committees, visitors and delegates:

1. Examiners — The Rev. J. Huijgen was appointed examiner OT in the vacancy created by the departure of the Rev. J. de Jong. All other examiners were reappointed.

2. The necessary committees, auditors and the classical treasurer were reappointed.

3. Church visitors — A proposal that all the ministers be appointed as church visitors carried.

Visitation schedule:

The church at: The Reverends:

Brampton

— Aasman and Mulder

Burlington East

— Gleason and Nederveen

Burlington West

— Feenstra and den Hollander

Burlington South

— Huijgen and Mulder

Elora

— Aasman and den Hollander

Fergus

— den Hollander and Mulder

Grand Valley

— Huijgen and Nederveen

Guelph

— van Popta and Gleason

Lower Sackville

— Nederveen and van Popta

Orangeville

— Feenstra and Mulder

Ottawa

— den Hollander and Gleason

Toronto

— Nederveen and Feenstra

4. Delegates to Regional Synod Orangeville, Nov. 14, 1990:

Ministers: the Reverends den Hollander, Feenstra, Mulder and Nederveen. Alternates (in this order): the Reverends van Popta, Aasman, Gleason and Huijgen.

Elders: the brothers G. Nordeman, J. Gansekoele, H. van Dooren and R. Oderkirk.

Alternates (in this order): the brothers H. Buist, L. Jagt, P. Broekema and J. Witten.

Question Period:

Several delegates made use of question period.

Censure ad Art. 44 C.O.:

No delegate needed to be censured.

Acts and press release:

The acts were read and adopted; the press release was read and approved.

Closing:

The chairman thanked the ladies for their good care and the church at Burlington West for hosting the assembly. We sang Ps. 138:1,3 after which the chairman led in prayer and closed the meeting.

G.Ph. van Popta
Vice-chairman, e.t.



THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE OF THE CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCHES

The Twenty-first Anniversary Meeting of the Theological College

will be held, D.V., on Friday, September 7, 1990 at 8:00 p.m. in the auditorium of Redeemer College, (Hwy. 53, Ancaster) with Dr. N. H. Gootjes as the featured speaker.

Dr. J. De Jong will be installed, D.V., as professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconiology.

An offering will be taken for the computerization of the College.

Open house will be held from 3 to 5 p.m.

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



By Aunt Betty

Dear Busy Beavers,

Can you imagine a school like this?

A school where all the pupils of all the grades are in one room. They sit on benches, the girls on one side, the boys on the other. The pupils write on slates on their laps.

Sometimes two pupils share a book. The younger one would read in the front and the older one in the back of the book.

Lessons are said aloud.

But there is to be no whispering and no fidgeting. Pupils must be very quiet and behave!

Can you imagine such a school?

Laura and Mary and Almanzo went to a school like this, you remember from reading "Farmer Boy" and "On the Banks of Plum Creek."

What a lot of differences with the schools you will go to Busy Beavers! Just think!

Something always stays the same, though.

No matter what the school is like.

Laura was so thrilled the morning she learned to read!

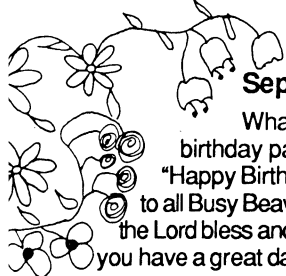
And no wonder she was thrilled.

She knew that now she could learn more and more.

We don't just learn by reading.

We watch videos and films. We go on field trips. We look things up. Whatever.

We learn in different ways from the way Laura and Almanzo did. Still, we must learn too, how to live in God's world to His glory.



September Birthday Wishes

What a way to start the school term — with a birthday party! You're sure to get off to a good start! "Happy Birthday" and "many happy returns of the day" to all Busy Beavers celebrating a September birthday. May the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead. Here's hoping you have a great day celebrating with your family and friends!

Jane Schulenberg	2	Mary Vandeburgt	11
Alisa Schouten	3	Cheryl Schouten	12
Chris Spoelstra	3	Teresa Oosterhoff	18
Jason Tenhage	4	Walter Bartels	19
Michael Hummel	6	Nellie Beukema	22
Karrie Eelhart	8	Deanna Vander Woerd	25
Emily Barendregt	10	Geraldine Feenstra	30

Decoration by Busy Beaver Michelle Peters

QUIZ TIME

SCHOOL SCRAMBLE!

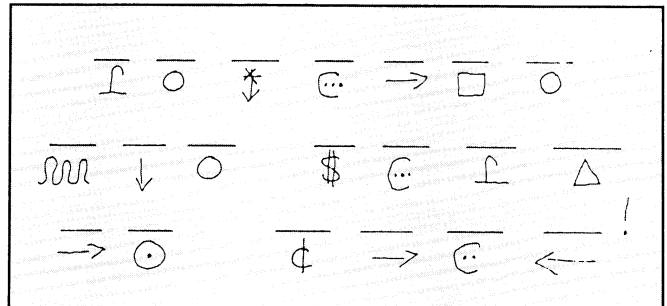
by Busy Beaver Netty Sikkema (See answers)

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1. cliepn _____ | 8. rsaree _____ |
| 2. ksde _____ | 9. lakrdbocba _____ |
| 3. eachret _____ | 10. rsbuh _____ |
| 4. sreecs _____ | 11. erlur _____ |
| 5. etsts _____ | 12. arpep _____ |
| 6. kemwohor _____ | 13. dinreb _____ |
| 7. kalhc _____ | 14. cipnlrapi _____ |

Picture Code

by Busy Beaver Jessica Dehaas

A *	H ↓	O ☺	V 🏰
B ♥	I →	P ☺	W 🌀
C □	J ↓	Q ~~~	X 🌀
D △	K ⚡	R ⚡	Y ✂
E ○	L \$	S ☺	Z 📊
F ↑	M ☺	T ~~~	
G ←	N ☺	U ☺	



ALPHAMAZE

by Busy Beaver Anna Devries

Instructions

Draw a continuous line from the letter A at the START position to the Z at the finish point. The line must pass through the alphabet from A to B, to C, to D etc. until Z is reached! The line can go in any direction, to any ADJACENT square (including diagonally) to the next letter in the alphabet. To get to the finish go through the alphabet several times!

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

Answers to School Scramble!

blackboard, brush, ruler, paper, binder, principal, pencil, desk, teacher, recess, tests, homework, chalk, eraser,

How do you feel about going back to school?

Let me know when you send in your answers to our Quiz Contest!

I'm looking forward to your letters!

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty