

Parion

THE CANADIAN REFORMER MAGAZINE

September 28, 1990



The Twenty-First College Evening

By J. Geertsema

The evening was preceded by an "Open House" in the afternoon. Quite a number of brothers and sisters from the West and from the Netherlands, together with Ontarians, made use of the opportunity to visit the College, to see the library, the lecture rooms, the offices of the professors, in short, to discover how nice and functional this new building is in comparison with the old mansion on Queen Street. Many of the visitors could make the comparison because they had also been in the old building. For us, as staff, it was a pleasure to receive the guests, to explain how we work at the College, and simply to chat with them, renewing old acquaintances or establishing new ones. Both because it was needed and for the occasion, the Finance and Property Committee had taken care of the beautification of the outside of the building with, among other things, fresh paint and new siding.

The evening itself was opened by the chairman of the Board of Governors, the Rev. Cl. Stam. The stanzas one and three of Psalm 29 were sung and the same Psalm was read. The Lord was given thanks for His blessings in the past year. He granted us that the teaching could continue unhindered and provided two new professors in Dr. N.H. Gootjes and Dr. J. DeJong, who succeeded the retired instructors, Dr. J. Faber and Dr. K. Deddens. The chairman welcomed all those present, especially the guests, and among them the relatives of the Gootjes and the DeJong families. Two "faxgrams" were read: one from Dr. and Mrs. J. Faber, visiting the Australian sister churches, and the other from the Deputies for the training in the Ministry of these Free Reformed Churches in Australia.

After the singing of Psalm 68:1,8, Dr. C. Van Dam read his Principal's Report. The reader can find this report elsewhere in the present issue. It was followed by the inaugural speech of Dr. Gootjes, of which the first installment is printed in this *Clarion* as well. It was a pleasure to listen to this biblical and clear presentation. The reader can judge for himself. We sang Psalm 7:1,2. The choir "Sursum Corda" ([Lift] up the hearts) then sang three pieces for us: "The Lord is my light," "Bless the Lord, O my soul," and "The Lord is my shepherd." It was a delight to observe the enthusiasm of the director, sr. Grace Smid. She aroused in the hearts of the choir members the same enthusiasm, which was evident in the manner in which they sang of faith in the Lord to His glory. It was clear that they enjoyed what they were doing. In conversation later on this was confirmed. One can wish that this and so many other choirs had more members, who find it a joy to sing as brothers and sisters together songs of faith and praise. It lifts up the heart in gladness and joy to God with words taken from His Word.

Next, the installation of Dr. J. DeJong as professor in Ecclesiology (Church History and Church Polity) and Diaconiology (the teaching about the different offices in the church) took place with the use of the Form which we have for such an oc-

casation. The new professor responded to the questions asked him at the end of the Form: "I do with all my heart." Singing Psalm 134:3, we prayed the Lord to bless Dr. J. DeJong and we praised the great Name of the Maker of heaven and earth. Since the Form is not very long, it follows here:

FORM OF SUBSCRIPTION for the Faculty of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches

The undersigned, a member of the faculty at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, does hereby, sincerely, and in good conscience before the Lord, declare by this subscription, that he heartily believes and is persuaded that all the articles and points of doctrine, contained in the doctrinal standards of the Canadian Reformed Churches: the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort, do fully agree with the Word of God.

I promise therefore diligently to teach and faithfully to defend the aforesaid doctrine, without either directly or indirectly, contradicting the same, by my public teaching or writing. I declare, moreover, that I not only reject all errors that militate against this doctrine, but that I am disposed to refute and contradict these and to exert myself in keeping the church free from such errors. If hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments should arise in my mind respecting the aforesaid doctrine, I promise that I will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach, or defend the same, either by teaching or by writing, until I have first revealed such sentiments to the Governors, or the Academic Committee appointed by them, and have had such sentiments examined by them. I declare myself ready always to submit to their judgment under the penalty, that in case of refusal, I am by that very fact suspended from office.

Furthermore, if at any time the Governors, upon sufficient grounds for suspicion and to preserve the uniformity and purity of doctrine, may deem it proper to require of me a further explanation of my sentiments respecting any particular article of the above mentioned doctrinal standards, I do hereby promise to be always willing and ready to comply with such requisition, under the penalty above mentioned. I reserve for myself, however, the right of appeal to Synod in case I should believe myself aggrieved by the sentence of the Governors, and until a decision is made upon such an appeal to Synod, I will acquiesce in the determination and judgment already passed.

The College Evening would not be complete without the presentation of the traditional cheque from the Women's Sav-

ing Action. The amount was again \$20,000.00 while the Action collected about \$18,000.00. Mrs E. Mulder, the wife of the previous chairman of the Board of Governors, Rev. J. Mulder, presented it in her function as president of the Women's Saving Action. The Principal received this proof of love of the church members, especially of so many sisters, for the College and its needs with great thankfulness. Again, what was said can be found elsewhere in this issue. The offering, this evening for the computerization of the College amounted to about \$2,300.00. Also this was received with gratitude. The computers in the offices of the professors are already used in-

tensively. Much of what you read in this issue of *Clarion* is prepared on these computers.

The official part of the evening was concluded with singing Psalm 35:1,4,11, thanksgiving by Rev. M. VanderWel, the secretary of the Board of Governors, and the concluding song, Hymn 20:4,5,6. The social part in which we could greet and meet each other added its own much enjoyed contribution to the evening. The comments which your reporter heard were, without exception, positive. He agrees. It was a nice evening through God's grace and in the communion of saints.

C

WOMEN'S SAVING ACTION

Presentation at the College Evening

of September 7, 1990

Redeemer College, Ancaster, ON

By Mrs. E. Mulder

Esteemed chairman of the Board of Governors, members of the board;

Mr. Principal and members of the Faculty, Students, Brothers and Sisters,

We are happy that once again as Women's Saving Action we are able to make a contribution to this College Evening. For also during the past year our Heavenly Father has blest our work.

First of all, we would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved for their continued support and cooperation. **THANK YOU** to all our representatives! **THANK YOU** to all who collected the money! **THANK YOU** to all who have contributed so faithfully!

Meanwhile, a number of new congregations has joined our team. A hearty **WELCOME** to all of you!

We also thankfully acknowledge a large cheque we just received from the Women's Societies of Albany in Australia. Initial steps have been taken to form a Women's Saving Action in Australia. I am sure that Dr. Faber will fervently promote our cause during his visit there.

Once again we have seen how many small amounts DO make a large sum. During the past fiscal year from June 1, 1989 till May 31, 1990 a total of \$18,665.74 has been collected. We like to remind you that our representatives are now in the

position to issue tax receipts for each donation of \$10.00 or more.

You wonder what we did with the money over the past year? Well, we had no problem spending it! The \$20,000.00 we pledged at last year's College Evening, was spent on books and periodicals. Further, an overhead projector was purchased, a valuable teaching aid, as any teacher can tell you. Last spring we paid for a new computer for the library, because the needs of the library outgrew that capacity of the present one. The "old" computer has still its use, as it replaced the expensive generation and filing of cards.

We also were able to offer the Finance and Property Committee of the College an interest-free loan, so that each of the professor's offices could be equipped with its own computer.

As has been announced, tonight a collection will be held for the repayment of this loan. We hope you all will contribute generously to this very worthwhile cause!

So you see that the money so faithfully given, collected and counted has been put to a very good use!

A library, to be of lasting value to the users, has to be kept constantly up to date.

And not only do we seek to equip the library to the best of our ability, but we also look ahead to a necessary expansion of its facilities in the near future.

We know that the College community greatly appreciates the work of the Women's Saving Action. And we consider it a privilege that we may make a contribution in this way to the beautiful task of training men for the ministry of preaching the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Although it has become my privilege to make this presentation, I would never have been able to do so without the capable assistance of my co-members in the Committee for the Women's Saving Action, Mrs. Joanne Van Dam, our secretary, and Mrs. Carla Zietsma, our treasurer. I thank both of you, Joanne and Carla, for your pleasant cooperation and for the enthusiasm with which you have taken on these new commitments.

And — finally — Mr. Principal, I now may present to you, on behalf of all the women of the Churches, this pledge for the amount of \$20,000.00 for the library of our College. We are sure you will spend it wisely and responsibly.

In closing we wish you, brothers, professors and students, the blessing of the LORD for the coming year.

C

Can God be Angry?₁

By N.H. Gootjes

Mr. President of the Board of Governors, Members of the Board of Governors,

Mr. Principal and Members of the Senate,

Brothers and Sisters,

On the festive occasion of this College Evening I would like to speak to you about the Wrath of God. This is not a very joyful topic, and it seems somewhat ill-fitting to discuss it on an occasion as this one. Yet I am not going to apologize for the choice of my topic for tonight. But from the outset I want to state my conviction that it is a very important topic, for the students of this College (and our work here is first of all for them!) as well as for all believers. And it may well be that a deeper understanding of the wrath of God will contribute to a deeper joy in God who sent his Son to "deliver us from the wrath to come," (1 Thess. 1:10).

The problem

It is not my intention to discuss the topic of the wrath of God completely. I would like to concentrate on one aspect of it, the aspect I have summarized in the title of my speech: Can God be angry? Probably some of you hearing this title, have thought that the answer to my question is obvious. Of course God can be angry. Does not the Bible often say that God is angry? To quote the first example where the word occurs in the Bible, when Moses is still hesitant to return to Egypt and to confront Pharaoh, the Bible says: "Then the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses," Ex. 4:14. Why then the question mark: "Can God be angry?"

But it is more complicated than that. It least it is more complicated in the dogmatic handbook we use at the College, L. Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (4 ed. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1949). In the part on the doctrine of God, you would not be able to find a section devoted to the wrath of God. It is just not there. Does not God have wrath then, according to L. Berkhof?

There is, however, one small reference to the wrath of God. It can be found

in the section discussing the justice of God. Berkhof says here that there are several parts in God's justice. One part of God's justice is that God inflicts penalties. And then he mentions God's wrath: "It is an expression of divine wrath" (p. 75). The fact that God punishes, that is according to Berkhof how God's wrath shows. God *acts* angrily, He punishes. So to return to our question, does Berkhof say that God is angry? No, he

of Niobe. That is what wrath does, according to Greek mythology. And that is only one example of many that show how the gods in Greek mythology are represented as acting viciously in their wrath.

Greek philosophy frowned upon this. There was a tendency to criticize the traditional stories about the gods. Representing the gods as having wrath, is portraying them like men. They thought the gods should be above base urges like

"If we want to know God, we have to listen to His Word, also His words about Himself. We cannot go by our impression whether it is fitting for God to be angry or not. Scripture tells us what is fitting for God. Or better, Scripture tells us how God is."

does not dare to say that. He only says that God acts angrily, in punishing sin.

The history

There is a very long history behind this traditional position of Berkhof. To understand it we have to go back all the way to the gods of the Greek. These gods could be angry! When someone incurred the wrath of a god, he was punished terribly, often out of all proportion. There is a story about a woman called Niobe. She was the proud mother of many sons and many daughters, and she boasted that she was a more successful mother than Leto, a woman who had two children by the Greek god Zeus. Then her children, who were gods, avenged their mother by shooting all the children

of wrath. This philosophical rejection of wrath in the gods was the prevalent opinion when Christianity went out into the Greek world. The Christians had a revelation, the Bible, in which the wrath of God is mentioned. In fact it is mentioned literally hundreds of times, especially in the Old Testament. What should they do with the biblical message in a world that disliked hearing about the wrath of God?

Someone who answered this problem, was the heretic Marcion. He had a very radical solution. He said: We find in the Bible not one God, but two gods. One is the god of the Old Testament. He is imperfect. And you can see that he is imperfect, for example in the fact that he is an angry god. When someone does wrong, he will punish them. He requires

sacrifices involving blood. But there is also another god in the Bible. He is the Father of Jesus Christ. He is perfect, he has no wrath. And in Jesus Christ He has shown the way to escape that other, angry God. In this way Marcion adapted the gospel to the thoughts of his time. He presented a god who was acceptable for the cultured people. A god who was not angry, but had given the means to escape from this world, filled with the wrath of that other god. But he could do so only at the expense of breaking the unity of Old and New Testament and giving up the whole of Old Testament (and of course he had to amend heavily the New Testament too!).

The Christian church rejected Marcion as a heretic. And they maintained the unity of Old and New Testament. Old as well as New Testament were believed to be revealed by God. And we just have to accept what is revealed there. But that meant that the 'problem' of God's wrath returned. When you accept the whole of Scripture, you have to accept God's wrath as a part of the message. That was a brave stand at that time.

Then they had to explain how God's wrath should be understood. Several solutions were presented. We cannot go into the details here, but the prevalent opinion was, that 'wrath' in Scripture means the punishment of God. So — they thought — it is not something God feels, but something God does. Over-against Marcion they maintained that God is a God who punishes when man sins.

And this was often connected with God's governing of the world. They used an example to show the necessity of God's wrath. Imagine that an enemy would kill someone's wife, kill his children, and put his house on fire, so that he is left with nothing. If that man would say: "My enemy need not be punished," that would be the pinnacle, not of generosity, but of heartlessness. A society needs revenge and punishment, everyone can know that. What then is against ascribing wrath to God? In order to govern the world, He has to punish the evildoers. Wrath then is necessary in a God who really governs the world.

But then wrath taken in the sense of punishment, not in the sense of a feeling in God. To say it in the words of our theme: God is not angry, but He acts angrily. He punishes. And we have to remember what they rejected when they thought that God could not be angry. It was the idea that God can be influenced, and especially that He can be influenced into doing wrong. For that is what wrath does to people: it often leads to sin. Does not Scripture warn us several times against being angry? Then God Himself

cannot be angry. He only punishes, acts in anger. But He is not angry.

This is the history behind that sentence of Berkhof, that punishing justice is the expression of divine wrath.

Back to Scripture

We are now faced with the question: What does Scripture say about the wrath of God? For we believe that Scripture is the Word of God. If we want to know God, we have to listen to His Word, also His words about Himself. We cannot go by our impression whether it is fitting for God to be angry or not. Scripture tells us what is fitting for God. Or better, Scripture tells us how God is. The easiest way to do this, is asking some questions to Scripture. But then we have to realize that Scripture may not answer all our questions.

Is 'wrath' punishment?

The first question we have to raise, is: Does the word 'wrath' in Scripture denote the action of punishment, or can it be something else? Our answer must first be: Indeed the word 'wrath' in Scripture often denotes no more than God's work of punishing. According to Num. 16:46 Moses said to Aaron: Make atonement for the Israelites, "for wrath has gone forth from the Lord." Here the word 'wrath' denotes punishment. This is very clear, for the whole part reads: "For wrath has gone forth from the Lord, the plague has begun." 'Wrath' is the plague, the deadly illness which struck Israel as a

punishment. This sense of 'wrath' also occurs in the New Testament. Paul says somewhere: "But for those who are factious and do not obey the truth, but obey wickedness, there will be wrath and fury," Rom. 2:8. "Wrath" here means punishment, as is clear from the parallel of the preceding verse, and the explanation in the following verse: "There will be tribulation and distress for every human being who does evil." In so far the early theologians who said that 'wrath' means the act of punishment, were right.

But it is not the whole truth. For 'wrath' is also used for something in God. Then it denotes something which is in God, preceding His action of punishment. We find this too in Numbers: "And the people complained in the hearing of the Lord about their misfortunes; and when the Lord heard it, His anger was kindled, and the fire of the Lord burned among them and consumed some outlying parts of the camp," Num. 11:1. Here the anger of God is prior to his act of punishment. First God is angry, then He reacts by sending heavenly fire. In the New Testament we find this sense of 'wrath' in the well-known text John 3:38: "He who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God rests upon him." He who does not believe in Jesus Christ whom God has sent, has to know that God is angry at him as long as he does not believe. In Scripture 'wrath' can indeed mean something in God.

— To be continued



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IN THIS ISSUE

The Twenty-First College Evening — J. Geertsema	418
Women's Saving Action — Presentation at the College Evening — Mrs. E. Mulder	419
Can God be Angry? — N.H. Gooftjes	420
Remember Your Creator — Lady Luck? Or the LORD God? — G.Ph. van Popta	422
Patrimony Profiles — W.W.J. VanOene	423
College Corner — Principal's Report 1990 — C. Van Dam	425
Church News	425
Press Review — News from the FRC, OPC and the RCUS — C. Van Dam	427
The Role of Parents in the Christian School — J. Visscher ...	428
Letters to the Editor	432
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty ...	434

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Lady Luck? Or the LORD God?

Lady Luck! Dame Fortune! Snake eyes! Box cars! Round and round the big wheel goes; where it stops, nobody knows! Pay your money; take your chances!

Wintario! Lottario! The Provincial! Super Lotto! Lotto 6/49! Scratch and win! Instant win! Five chances at a million!

You gotta' know when to hold 'em,
know when to fold 'em,
know when to walk away,
know when to run . . .

It comes at you from all sides, doesn't it? On the radio, you hear Kenny Rogers singing about the more or less romantic life of The Gambler. Travel agencies offer discount package tours to Reno and Las Vegas. Television commercials try to convince you that you had better not miss out on getting your ticket because your number just might come up this week.

A recent survey shows that 85 percent of Ontarians, coming from every age and income bracket, have played the lottery at some time. Approximately 50 percent of Ontario adults play the lottery on a regular basis, spending an average of \$8.50 per month. Undoubtedly these statistics hold true for Canadians in other provinces as well.

After prize monies have been distributed, the Ontario lotteries show a *net* profit of some 32 percent (about \$320 million annually). This will tell you that the lottery business, as controlled by the provincial government, is big business.

Perhaps you are tempted to buy lottery tickets once in awhile. After all, you just might be able to get a piece of the good life, right? Perhaps you *have* bought lottery tickets in the past hoping that Lady Luck would smile on you and that it would be your turn to win big and buy whatever your heart desires. Or maybe the idea of going south to one of the big American gambling casinos appeals to you. You just might strike it rich.

And why not? Why shouldn't we buy lottery tickets? Why shouldn't we gamble? Why shouldn't we try to get a piece of the action? One could even argue that to buy lottery tickets is a noble thing. After all, much of the money raised through

lotteries goes to good causes. Lotteries are used to raise money for sports, cultural and recreational activities as well as various health and environmental research projects. Much of the money goes to hospital projects and social service programs run by volunteers. Why should we not buy lottery tickets? Why should we not gamble — "just for the fun of it"?



We should not for several reasons. The odds at the casinos are rigged against the player so as to make winning almost impossible. All you are doing is pouring money into the coffers of people (usually associated with organized crime) who are already incredibly wealthy. And the odds of winning a lottery are also miniscule. The president of the Ontario Lottery Corporation, when pressed to state what the odds were against winning a prize in the Lotto 6/49, answered that they are 14 million to one. Tom Watson in *Don't Bet On It* says that a person is 3.5 times more likely to be killed by lightning than he is to win a state lottery jackpot. Lotteries are simply a perverted form of taxation. Many wealthy people buy tickets, but it is especially the poor who do so in the hopes of getting lucky. Our governments are taking advantage of the poor and exploiting the weaknesses of their citizens.

It's a rip-off. All they want is your money. That alone would be reason enough not to gamble. However, there is

another reason which is even more important. Gambling is a form of idolatry. It's a religious act. It's a sick kind of worship. When a person gambles, either at a casino or at the lotto ticket counter at the drug store, he or she is bowing down before the goddess Lady Luck. He is sacrificing his hard earned and God-given money on the altar of chance. That person is actually praying, "O Lady Luck! Please let me win big! Bless me and keep me; make your face to shine upon me and be gracious to me; lift up your countenance upon me, and give me luck! Amen."

That is the worst thing about gambling. A person gives his or her life to a god which is no god. The people of the LORD God in the time of the Old Testament fell into the trap of depending upon luck. That is what the LORD, at one point, said to Israel:

But you who forsake the LORD, who forget My holy mountain, who set a table for Fortune and fill cups of mixed wine for Destiny; I will destine you to the sword . . . because . . . you did what was evil in My eyes, and chose what I did not delight in (Isaiah 65:11,12).

Fortune and Destiny were heathen gods of luck and chance. These gods are still around today. Their temple is the casino; their altar is the ticket counter. They are gods which are no gods for, as the LORD said, "I am the LORD, and there is no other. . . Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:18,22).

There is no impersonal force called Lady Luck ruling the world and everything that happens. Instead, there is a personal God called the LORD who rules the world and everything that happens. There is no need to depend upon luck to give happiness and security to life. To have real happiness and security we must give our lives to Jesus Christ. Then we will have a treasure in heaven which is worth much more than any "treasure" we might "win" here on earth. Then we become heirs of God's treasure: eternal life with Christ in the heavenly promised land.



PATRIMONY PROFILE⁷⁵

By *W.W.J. VanOene*

Second Answer

It will be clear to the attentive reader that Dr. Geelkerken's reply was vague, non-committal, and that he refused to give a concrete answer to concrete questions. The point was not at all whether he believed that "also Gen. 1, 2, and 3, according to form and contents, in everything belonged to 'all the Scriptures... inspired by God,'" but whether he wholeheartedly and without restrictions believed that what the Lord describes as history did take place indeed in that manner. He obstinately refused to go into that basic question.

We are not surprised to learn that the Classis of June 17, 1925, did not accept the letter of June 16 as a satisfactory answer or even as an answer at all. It states that "although Dr. Geelkerken says that 'insofar as he is obligated to do so by the Subscription Form' he is willing to answer the questions put to him, but that he has failed to do so since what Dr. Geelkerken gives as his answer is in no way an answer to the questions which were put to him by the Classis." In reply to the classical reaction Dr. Geelkerken sent "A Second Answer given by me to the Classis Amsterdam of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, after it declared my first answer insufficient." It follows here.

To the Classis Amsterdam of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands

Reverend and Esteemed Gentlemen and Brothers

With great sorrow and indignation I noted your letter of June 17, 1925, from which it appeared, alas, that even now, after my unambiguous testimony contained in my letter of June 16 last, your assembly still abides by the suspicion which it uttered, an unfounded suspicion which hurts the heart of every brother. In reply to the above letter I inform you:

I. that my appeal to the forthcoming Particular Synod of North Holland will now also be directed against the decision regarding me of your assembly of June 17, 1925;

II. that I maintain my opposition to the use by your assembly of the term

"Declaration" to denote the copy which I provided of a part of my sermon on Lord's Day III Heidelberg Catechism.

1. because the meaning of the word "declaration" is not in any way on the same level as the word "summary" and the word "portion";

2. because use of the word "declaration" could give rise to the misconception that I had given something else than what is, as I already assured you repeatedly, the as faithfully as possible written-down rendition of what I said on Sunday, March 23, 1924;

III. that I maintain my previous letter of June 16 last, unabridged, and particularly remain convinced that as far as church polity is concerned the Subscription Form does not in any case obligate me to another answer than

the one which I already gave in the aforementioned letter. For this Subscription Form binds in its terminology not only the Ministers of the Word but also the ecclesiastical assemblies, in this case not only me but your classical meeting as well. This terminology determined objectively that a "Consistory, Classis, or Synod" may only "demand a further explanation of ... sentiment regarding any Articles of the ... Confession, of the Catechism or of the Canons of Dort" (*italics mine, G.*) Your assembly did and does ask me questions about my sentiment regarding Articles 4 and 5 of our Confession of Faith in connection with Gen. 1, 2, and 3; in so far it was justified as such and formally in doing so; it did, therefore, receive a complete answer from me to these questions, and it cannot prove what it poses without any ground in its letter of June 17, that I "failed to answer the questions put to me, insofar as (I) am obligated to do so according to the Subscription Form." Your assembly did ask me in addition to that various questions of a dogmatic and exegetical nature — for they concern the form of the revelation in the chapters 1-3 of the book of Genesis and the exegesis of all sorts of particulars which are communicated to us in the above chapters — but Articles 4 and 5 of our Confession of Faith do not refer with even one word to the exegesis of what these chapters contain.

IV. Formally I would therefore be completely justified if, on grounds of church polity, that is on the basis of the clear terminology of the Subscription Form itself which is not liable to be misunderstood, I refused to answer the questions put to me any further than I did already without being obligated to do so, until your assembly would at least have shown to me that these questions insofar as I left them unanswered have something to do with Articles 4 and 5 or possibly with any other Article or some other Articles of the Confession, the Catechism, or the Canons. However, mindful of the Word of the Saviour: "If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles," Mt. 5:41, while unabatedly maintaining my protest against both the activation of the Subscription Form in the present conflict, and the fact that I am asked questions which cannot at all be considered questions "just on the basis of the Subscription Form" and of "a further declaration regarding Article 4 and 5 of the Confession of Faith," and denying that "by virtue of the Subscription Form I am" supposed to be "bound to answer all these questions," I will as yet give a clear answer to each question put to me; before that, however, I want to state emphatically:

a. that, in my opinion, Gen. 1-3 contain so many difficulties of an exegetical nature that, for instance, no one less than Calvin mentioned them right away when, in his treatment of Gen. 3, he appears to have the same sentiment which I expressed when, in the passage of my sermon known to your assembly, I said: "that this part of the Holy Scripture places us before particular difficulties," and remarks (J. Calvini, *Commentarii in primum librum*

Mosis, vulgo Genesis ed. J.J. Schippers, p. 16): Verum hic multae emergunt et arduae questiones (Truly, here arise many and difficult questions), while not all that long ago one of the theologians of our Reformed Churches who is an authority in this field assured me that, if he were asked to give an explanation of specific "particulars which Gen. III tells us" — which have been put also before me by your assembly — he then would need several years before he would have an answer to at least some extent;

b. that I do not want to be understood as recognizing all concepts which apparently form the basis of the consideration of your decision of 5-22-'25" [... I assume that ... it should be 4-23-'25,G] and of the questions formulated by you by the decision of 5-27-'25. As for the above-mentioned consideration, I would rather not take the responsibility for your apodictic statement regarding the "symbolic form" of the revelation concerning the state of glory, nor as far as the questions are concerned, f.i. your loosely interjected characterization of the revelation of God NB! as "history in the common sense."

V. Further to the above my answers to your six questions read as follows.

Ad question 1: It will have to be repeated, in light of my signature under the Three Forms of Unity which I never retracted, and my signature under the Subscription Form for ministers of the Word which I never violated, and, besides this, after my letter to your assembly of the 16th inst., that I fully agree with what our Churches confess in Art. 4 and 5 of our Confession of Faith, and thus also as far as Gen. III as part of these Scriptures is concerned. It follows automatically from this that I also recognize all events which are described in that chapter as having taken place in that manner indeed.

Ad question II. It is not my fault that truly inexplicably your assembly appears not have had an eye for the "third of the comparison" in my parallel between the form of the revelation regarding the state of rectitude and the form of the revelation regarding the state of glory. This "third of the comparison" is clearly pointed out in the passage of my sermon. Be it far from me to consider the form of the revelation in which the Lord has told us the history of the state of rectitude to be the same as the form of the revelation about the state of glory.

Ad question III. It is not clear to me what your assembly means by "historically faithful record of what thus has happened in fact." I recognize what Gen. 1, 2, and 3 tell us, according to the contents and form, in everything to be the inspired, faithful and authoritative revelation of the Counsel of God, and accept these chapters fully such as they present themselves, and therefore not as a notarial record. For with Dr. A. Kuyper Sr. I am of the opinion that "the absolute lack of mechanical, notarial precision ... characterizes the whole Revelation." (Encycl. H. Godg., Vol. III, p. 68). Every method of the viewing and the use of Holy Scripture which debases the Bible to a "codex," a "concordance," a "register," I too, with this theologian, consider "utterly to be rejected," and I fully endorse what he then writes: "If this method were the correct one, the Holy Scripture would have to be a book that would be composed completely differently from what it really is. In that case it would have to offer, as far as the

facts are concerned, a precise, single record, made up in a notarial form ... This is no exaggeration. Nothing less is involved with the Holy Scripture than a Divine authority whereby it is imposed that the facts are believed. Your line of proof must be irreproachable here, and if you choose for this a method which applies only there where an authenticated record lies before you, this method is to be rejected as long as it has not been demonstrated by you that the Scripture from which you quote against me does show such a character. However, if this is not so, and if, on the other hand, it is certain that there is nothing to which the Holy Scripture is more unlike than an official record and codification, then we don't have to waste even one more word to show that this method is altogether unfit to be used and may not be applied." (o.c. Vol. II, p. 512 ff.)

Ad question IV. In the first place I state that the consequence which the word "therefore" in this question introduces is rash, for it is not logical. For if what God has revealed to us about the state of rectitude were not to be understood as history, "in the common sense of the word," it would still not follow from this as a necessary consequence that therefore when it comes to the point, the history of the state of rectitude is unknown to us. The Historical Mirror by Jacob van Maerlant undoubtedly does not give "history in the common sense of the word," but no one would want to assert for that reason that therefore he leaves us completely in the dark regarding the era about which he writes. Further, as I have already stated, I must raise a serious objection to your speaking about "what God has revealed to us about the state of rectitude." Even in the case of the Gospels, let alone with the first chapters of Genesis, this is impermissible. For Prof. Dr. F.W. Grosheide stated correctly even about the four Gospels (Schild en Pijl, issue 7, p. 13 ff): "It has already become clear that we are not dealing with chronicles; the evangelists certainly did not leave us a plain and arid catalogue of events. When it comes to the point, one cannot even speak of a description of history, since all description of history aims at making facts known in whatever manner. It does not relay the facts in the first place to instruct, but wants to tell about the facts. Now it is certainly true that a good description of history tells the facts from out of a certain viewpoint, tries to explain them and to bring them to a higher level. And yet, our Gospels do not do all that, for they want to move to faith, to convince, teach, they are writings with a purpose in the good sense of the word, they are there for propaganda purposes." In the third place I want to state that I did not mean anything else with the sentence which you quoted from my sermon passage than what it says, namely, that — apart from the revelation, of course — we only know of the history of mankind in this dispensation of sin, and that Gen. 3 gives us revelation regarding an era which preceded that, namely, the state of rectitude. And finally, it definitely is not my sentiment that "when it comes to the point, the history of the state of rectitude is therefore unknown to us"; for it is precisely about the history of this state of rectitude that God gives us revelation in the first chapters of Genesis, as I said explicitly in my sermon passage.

— *To be continued*

COLLEGE CORNER

By C. Van Dam

Principal's Report 1990

During the academic year 1989-1990, Dr. J. Faber served as principal during semester I and Dr. C. Van Dam during semester II. According to the wishes of the former, the latter has prepared this report which covers the entire academic year.

It is with great gratitude to God from whom are all good things that we can look back at the past year.

College Evening

On September 8, 1989, the Twentieth Anniversary Meeting of the College took place. This evening signalled the beginning of a time of change. Dr. J. Faber gave his final principal's report and Dr. K. Deddens delivered his farewell address on the "Sifting Effect of Preaching." The installation of Dr. N.H. Gootjes as the new professor of Dogmatics was the first stage of the transition of which we will see the second part, D.V., at this College evening in the installation of Dr. J. De Jong as professor of Ecclesiology and Diaconology.

In appreciation for the work of Dr. Faber, a Festschrift from his colleagues and others entitled *Unity in Diversity* was presented to him. We remember with gratitude the labour he was enabled to do for the College.

It was fitting that the musical interlude at this College Evening was provided by two daughters of the retiring professors, Dr. J. Faber and Dr. K. Deddens. It was the last College evening of Dr. Deddens as a member of the Senate and we also remember with thankfulness to the Lord his contribution to the College during the six years he was with us.

Students

Six new full-time students were enrolled in the past academic year: Archibald A. Allison, B.A., from the congregation of the Reformed Church in the United States in Eureka, South Dakota; Alfonso D'Amore, M.A., from the Reformed Church of Italy at Ischia; James Slaa, B.A., from the Canadian Reformed Church at Winnipeg; Clarence VanderVelde, M.A., of the Canadian Reformed Church at Hamilton; John L. Van Popta, B.A., from the Canadian Re-

formed Church at Langley, B.C.; and John Van Woudenberg, B.Sc., from the Canadian Reformed Church at Chilliwack, B.C. Mr. John Bosma of the Attercliffe Canadian Reformed Church joined us as an auditor of some courses.

All the freshmen successfully completed their first year. Johannes Boersma is the only graduate this year. He has received the Master of Divinity degree in a meeting of the Senate on June 5, 1990 because he is now continuing his studies at the University of Utrecht for the degree of Doctor of Theology.

In a laudable initiative, students J. Boersma and W. Wielenga edited, and oversaw the publication of a selection of essays by Dr. J. Faber under the title *Essays in Reformed Doctrine* (1990).

Lectures, Farewells, and Changes

The normal lectures could be given as planned. Some highlights in connection with the transition were the final lectures of the retiring professors.

On December 7, Dr. J. Faber officially terminated twenty-one years of service at the Theological College by delivering his final lecture entitled "The Doctrine of Holy Scripture in Contemporary Theology (1960-1980)." In the evening the Board of Governors hosted an appropriate evening of farewell in the circle of the College and the ministers.

Dr. N.H. Gootjes began his work at the College in January.

On May 4, 1990, Dr. K. Deddens de-

livered his final lecture on "Nicetas of Remesiana, Missionary, Liturge, Catechete." Again a farewell evening was given on May 18.

Dr. J. De Jong entered the service of the Theological College on May 1 and spent the summer preparing his lectures.

With the departure of our first principal, a new system of rotating the offices every three years was started. The offices and duties of vice-principal, registrar and corresponding secretary are now the responsibility of Prof. J. Geertsema, while those of Dean of Students and recording secretary are Dr. N.H. Gootjes'. The Principal, Librarian and Academic Dean is Dr. C. Van Dam.

During the last academic year, on February 6 and 7, two special lectures on "Reformed Prophetic Preaching with reference to the situation in South Africa" were delivered by Dr. P.J. Rossouw of the Universiteit van die Oranje-Vrystaat in South Africa.

Extra-Curricular Activities

Dr. J. Faber was in South Africa from 24 February - 16 March 1990 in order to deliver lectures at the University of Pretoria and Hammanskraal Theological School of the Reformed Churches in South Africa. He also visited Stellenbosch and Potchefstroom. In August 1990, he also participated in the International Congress on Calvin Research held in Grand Rapids. Articles by Dr. Faber were published under the title *Essays in Reformed Doctrine* (1990). Dr. and Mrs. Faber regret that they are unable to be present with us this evening since they are in Australia to enhance the bond between the College and the Australian sister churches. We hope to report further on this in a following principal's report.

Prof. L. Selles delivered an address entitled "The Church in the Last Judgment" by B. Holwerda: Forty Years Later" at the spring Office Bearer's Conference held in Burlington on April 7, 1990.

Dr. J. De Jong successfully defended his dissertation, *Accommodatio Dei. A Theme in K. Schilder's Theology of Revelation* (Kampen 1990), in Kampen on March 23. Dr. C. Van Dam represented the College at this important event.

CHURCH NEWS



NEW ADDRESS:

Rev. G.Ph. van Popta
General Delivery
Metcalf, ON
K0A 2P0
Phone: (613) 821-4434
(Effective 1st October, 1990)

Some of the highlights of work done by the members of the faculty outside their immediate task of teaching include the following.

Dr. K. Deddens participated in the Seventh Latin American Mission Conference held at Curacao, The Netherlands Antilles, from October 18 to 24, 1989. At the end of 1989, Dr. Deddens gave a lecture on church discipline at the Office Bearers Conference in the Fraser Valley in British Columbia. His volume entitled *Fulfil Your Ministry* is scheduled to come out later this year.

Professor J. Geertsema continued his studies for the Master of Theology degree at the Toronto School of Theology, University of Toronto. He hopes to finish these studies by September 1990.

Dr. N.H. Gootjes published an article entitled "General Revelation in its Relation to Special Revelation" in *The Westminster Theological Journal*, volume 51:2 (1989).

On April 30, 1990, Professor Geertsema and Dr. Gootjes attended a conference on archives and record keeping at the University of Toronto.

Dr. C. Van Dam gave four special lectures on God's Self-revelation, in October at the Theological College for the general public, three guest lectures in November on sacrifice at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Orange City, Iowa, an address on "How Do We Read Genesis 1" in Sioux Centre, Iowa, and in May a guest lecture on Levitical law at Redeemer College.

Library and Computerization

The Women's Savings Action have continued to do their much appreciated and vital work for the library. We received \$20,000 from them for books. Among the acquisitions of the past year, we can mention that we were able to purchase the first eighteen (of a projected thirty) volumes of the multi-language standard work *Theologische Realenzyklopädie* as well as the classic thirteen volume *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* edited by J. Hastings.

We also gratefully acknowledge that the Library was the recipient of many additional gifts in the form of books from the midst of the churches. These gifts are regularly acknowledged in *Clarion*. It was also most encouraging to receive the sum of \$750 from the Fraser Young People's League. The gifts show a love for the College that is most heartening.

We continue to value the labours of Miss Marian Van Til, our Associate Librarian, Miss Catherine Mechelse, our Library Technician and our volunteers, Mrs. Marsha Ostermeier and Mrs. Allison Schutten. We also wish to remember the

fact that the Lord called to Himself Mr. Dirk Ostermeier, the dear husband of Mrs. Ostermeier, on November 15, 1989. May He continue to comfort and enable our sister Ostermeier.

The Library is on a long-term program of computerization and conversion from the Dewey Decimal to the Library of Congress system. Computerization took a step forward when the decision was made to switch from card to computer catalogue. This decision saves us much money since it is expensive in terms of materials and labour to create and maintain a card catalogue. The decision to fur-

"In this context we also want to acknowledge the tremendous blessing of a church federation that supports the work at the College with their prayers and gifts."

ther computerize was relatively simple also because the data and the program for this was already on hand and it was made in conjunction with the necessity of upgrading our main office computer. Once again we express our great gratitude to the ladies in the churches who made all this possible.

Computerization, however, did not stop at the Library but has now also entered the offices of the professors. The Property and Finance Committee endorsed in principle the purchase of word processors if financial arrangements could be made. Because considerable savings would be realized if this were done in conjunction with the renewal of the computer system in the library office, the Women's Savings Action made available an interest free loan which will be repaid over a period of three or four years. The offering being taken tonight will be used for this very important project. As faculty we are most grateful with this development for it means that we will be able to work much more efficiently. We trust that the churches will in the long run benefit.

The College Building

This spring and summer has seen a flurry of activity for the maintaining or improving of the college building. Under the capable management of br. H. Buist, the necessary work was directed and coordinated. The lighting in the library was improved, the principal's office was painted and re-carpeted, and all the carpets were cleaned. On the outside much painting was done and the exterior was enhanced with new vinyl siding. Other improvements include a renewed walkway and reconditioned doors. We also note all these matters with great gratitude.

Looking Ahead

The Faber-Holwerda Bursary Fund which was announced last year is now in place. Students who have sudden or special financial needs can now apply at the College for some additional support from this fund.

The Publication Foundation has been in discussion for some time and is now being finalized. It is hoped that this Foundation will make possible the publication of the fruits of the professors which may not be attractive for a commercial publisher to finance entirely on its own.

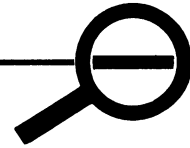
A new Handbook of the Theological College has been prepared. It has been designed to serve for three academic years. Because of the new computer equipment at the College, we were able to save a considerable amount of money in having our camera-ready copy printed.

A beginning has been made of reorganizing the senate archives of the Theological College. It is also hoped that in the near future we can collect and organize all the archival material which is found in our own library and which relates in some way to the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Conclusion

During the past academic year we again experienced the many mercies of God. In this context we also want to acknowledge the tremendous blessing of a church federation that supports the work at the College with their prayers and gifts. We also note with great gratitude the continuing support received from the Free Reformed Churches in Australia.

In response to these and many other benefits we continue to look to the Lord our God who forgives our sins and shortcomings and who enables us as His instruments for His service. May He be patient with us and continue to bless the work at the College to the glory of His name and for the benefit of His catholic church.



By C. Van Dam

News from the FRC, OPC and the RCUS

During the past months, different assemblies were held which are of interest to readers of *Clarion*. What follows is a selection of decisions made, as well as other matters that should attract our attention.

1990 FRC Synod

The 1990 Synod of the Free Reformed Churches which took place in June dealt with a number of Committee reports, among which was the Committee of External Relations. One of the items concerns a congregation in Edmonton. It appears that this is the congregation whose pastor is Rev. C. Tuininga. According to *The Messenger* (July/August 1990):

The Committee ... reported on a request from the Orthodox Reformed Church of Edmonton, Alberta to "have talks with a view to possible affiliation with the FRC". This is a congregation made up of about 30 families most of whom have recently left the Christian Reformed Church for doctrinal reasons and some have a Free Reformed or Netherlands Reformed background. Some discussions and contacts are planned in the near future. There are no concrete proposals at this time.

From the Theological Education Committee, we pass on the following from the same report in *The Messenger*:

Student K. Herfst is doing well in his studies at the Theological School of the Canadian Reformed Churches and will complete his studies, D.V., in May 1991.

A basic seminary curriculum was approved by the Synod and a minister appointed in each of three major divisions to begin the preparation of course material. The purpose of this is that when new students for the ministry are being trained they can receive adjunct training by our ministers from the beginning of their studies.

The OPC and Ecumenicity

During the course of the 1990 General assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) held in June, the decision was made to apply for membership

in the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). (*New Horizons*, August 1990, 0.17). The OPC had withdrawn from the Reformed Ecumenical Council because disciplinary action against the Reformed Church (GKN) was not taken. Last year OPC delegates visited the ICRC in Langley, MB. Their report was favourable and we can look forward to the reception of the OPC by the ICRC when it meets, D.V., in Seoul, Korea in September, 1993.

Nederland's Dagblad (August 1, 1990) reported that Rev. K. Hubenthal, who has been OPC minister in Philadelphia for fifteen years, will be sent as OPC missionary to Suriname in October. Our sister churches in the Netherlands had also conducted mission work there. The mission committee of the OPC has advised Rev. Hubenthal to seek official contact with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated). Hubenthal hopes that there will be possibilities for contact and cooperation between the OPC and the Reformed Churches. He also hopes to build on the work which Reformed missionaries have done in Suriname. It is of interest to note that Rev. Hubenthal studied under Dr. C. Trimp at the Theological University in Kampen from 1983-1984.

1990 RCUS Synod

Rev. R.E. Grossmann reported in the *Mid-America Messenger* of August 1990 on the Synod of the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) held in the first week of May. On the relationship with our sister churches we read:

For the past six years the RCUS has been doing mission work in Zaire, Africa, in cooperation with the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated), and this year after a number of informational and negotiating sessions, the RCUS Synod voted to adopt in principle the idea of "sister-church" relations with these Churches. It was the great privilege of the undersigned later to attend the General Synod meeting of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) and to witness that body's vote of approval for sister-church relations with the RCUS.

As noted in an earlier Press Review, the presence in North America of a sister church of our sister churches in the Netherlands makes all the more urgent the clarifying of our relationship with the RCUS.

Concerning foreign missions Grossmann reported that the RCUS was continuing its support of the Reformed Confessing Church of Zaire.

This action of the RCUS was followed by a major commitment of the Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) to send missionaries to Zaire for the purpose of training Zairian pastors for the churches there.

The RCUS is also involved in Mexico. The Synod of the RCUS decided "to follow up possibilities of contact with and help for the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico." A representative of that church was at the RCUS synod and it was decided that a delegation from the RCUS would visit Mexico to get more information on this church and its Juano Calvino Seminary.

Concerning mission activities of the RCUS in the United States we read:

The Synod of the RCUS continued its interest in promoting the beginning of new congregations within the United States. Two now congregations have been started in the past year, one in Sioux Falls, SD, and one in Rock Springs, WY, to join the 17 other congregations begun in the last 25 years. The church was, however saddened to learn of the closing of two other churches which had been struggling during the past several years.

As is generally the case in our circles, in the RCUS the entire Heidelberg Catechism is memorized in preparation for public profession of faith. An overture at this year's synod to drop this as a constitutional requirement in the RCUS was defeated. As Grossmann noted: "This practice of the RCUS, along with studies in biblical history and teaching, have very early roots in the life of the denomination and it was continued by a large vote against adoption of the overture in question." C

The Role of Parents in the Christian School

By Dr. J. Visscher

This article was originally presented as a speech for parents in Carman, Manitoba, and in the Fraser Valley of British Columbia, and has been revised for publication.

A simple topic?

The heading above this article may very well bring the response, "Oh, I could write on this subject. It's really not too hard at all, and it need not be too long either. The role of parents in the Christian school can be aptly summarized in the word 'pray and pay'."

Of course there is something to this, as there is to comment made by one wag that it is a matter of "pray, pay and procreate". But is that the sum total of parental involvement? Hardly! The relationship of parents to our Reformed schools can not be encapsulated in a few caustic words or in some glib phrases. The parental role is much more far reaching than that. It fulfills a vital function. If students and teachers are absolutely necessary to the educational enterprise, parents are no less so. They too deserve attention.

Indeed, it is striking that in many ways the place of parents in education is overlooked or minimized. In the public system parents are given token attention at the local level but almost all of the basic policy planning is done by bureaucrats and major decision making has been centralized to a sophisticated degree. In our Reformed school system there is greater participation in that parents elect boards, sit on boards and committees, hire teachers, etc., but not much attention has been paid to the matter of what a school can or may expect from the parents. As a matter of fact, does it have a right to expect anything, or is it purely at the mercy of the parents? We all know what the parents expect from the school, but what can the school expect from the parents? Have we simplified the matter perhaps to: we send our kids, we pay for their education, we attend the odd meeting and read the odd school bulletin, we make the odd complaint - that's it!

Surely, Reformed education must become more of a two-way street. It is not only the school which has a duty to produce and put out, but also parents have a duty to constantly relate to the school, and that in a variety of ways.

Parents create the school

The involvement of parents in the school is fundamental because it goes back to the very genesis of the school. A few months ago I heard someone remark that without teachers there would be no schools. That's true, but it is equally true that without parents there would be no schools. The Reformed school movement owes its beginnings to the fact that godly parents realized that educating their children at home and in the context of the family was not enough, that having them educated in a secular environment was not appropriate, that a need existed to show their children that every facet and aspect and area of life relates back to God.

There are some who say that Reformed education finds its roots in the baptismal promise that parents make. And there is truth in that, although I think that we would do well to distinguish between the direct and indirect consequences of baptism. When parents stand before the Lord and the congregation they make a direct promise to raise their child in the fear of the Lord. They promise to instruct the child themselves in the doctrine of salvation and to have the child instructed in that doctrine by those whom the church appoints. Notice that parental instruction and ecclesiastical instruction are not optional, they are commitments.

Can exactly the same be said of Reformed education? I do not believe so. What the Form for Baptism emphasizes is parental responsibility - the duty to teach at home and to be taught at church. This responsibility does not *ipso facto* demand a school. In the past covenant children did not always have access to Christian education because there were no schools and no teachers and

there was no money. In those first years of the immigration experience Reformed schools were scarce. Did that mean that parents were unfaithful to their baptismal vow? Some insist that they were, but I refuse to accept such a verdict. Such a condemnation of our parents entails a condemnation of how believers have acted throughout the centuries. The phenomenon of a Reformed day school is a relatively recent one.

What baptism demands of parents is a faithful confessional walk of life and a transmission of this life style to their children. When parents make a conscientious effort in this regard and when they have their children instructed in the doctrine taught by the church, they are not guilty of unfaithfulness or even partial faithfulness. No, the Bible stresses that the education of the covenant youth is and always must remain, first and foremost, a parental calling.

Now, if some believing parents, after giving due consideration to the changing world where children need more skills and are confronted with more complex occupations, decide to band together and start a school where their children will be more fully prepared, that is not a matter of finally becoming faithful to their baptismal vow, but of seeing that the consequences of such a vow can not always be limited to home and church, but may have further implications. Baptism demands parental education, and it lays the foundation for Reformed schooling.

Thus when that schooling becomes a reality, it is a **creation** of the parents. Schools come about when parents share a common vision and recognize a common need. In that context they pray and pay, build and sacrifice, organize and implement. Reformed schools are a creation of the parents and they are fueled by the **commitment** of the parents.

Parents present the school with its basic material

Yet the parents do more than initiate and organize, the parents also give the

school its most basic component, namely, children who must be taught further. Reformed education involves an act of **presentation**, the presentation of one's children to the school.

What does such a presentation entail? What are the motives involved? We have touched on some of them, but there are others that come to mind, both legitimate and illegitimate. Some say that children are actually shipped off to school in order to give mother a break or an opportunity to work. Such a motive is founded on selfishness. And while it is true that more than one mother can be heard to breathe a sigh of relief when the little blessed terrors go to school again, such a motive can hardly be taken seriously and held up as widespread.

Another motive for the presentation of one's children, at least in the case of the Christian school, is said to be the desire of parents to protect and insulate their children from the amoral or immoral influence of the public school. Now this can be a factor; however, it can hardly serve as an overriding one. It represents a purely negative rationale.

No, the proper reason for presentation relates to the recognition that one's children have been given to parents by the Lord in trust. As parents we do not own our children, God owns them. They are His. He is their Creator. He is the Bestower. He is their ultimate Father. Parents, on the other hand, are the receivers, the caretakers, the stewards. That means that parents always have to reckon with the matter of accountability. God will one day ask, "What did you do with my children? How did you raise them? What opportunities did you give them? What influences did or did you not expose them to?"

It is the realization that we are stewards, stewards not just of goods, but also of persons, that drives us to seek the best and the utmost for our children. When we look at the world we live in today with all of its demands, expectations, specializations, and temptations and when we look at our own abilities, then we are often led to conclude that the two do not match or balance each other out. Some parents, a few parents, are able to meet the full educational needs of their children, but most are not. The recognition of our own limits and today's needs leads us, even drives us, to seek better solutions.

So children are presented to the school by parents, in the expectation that there they will be more fully trained, trained for service in the church, in the kingdom and in the world.

But if presentation is a parental activity, it has to be said that a certain attitude must underlie that activity. Conscientious

Christian parents will not simply dispatch their children to just any school. No, they will send them there where they are confident that they will receive an education in harmony with the outlook of the home. In other words, presentation involves **trust**. You must have confidence in the educational institution, in its basis, in its educational philosophy, in its board, in its teachers, in its resources. Only then can your children be properly presented and you as parent-stewards be properly served.



Parents delegate their authority

Nevertheless, the involvement of parents is more than a matter of presentation. It also involves an act of **delegation**. When you surrender your children to the school you delegate some of your authority to the teacher. Notice that I say "some". It is not true that Reformed education and the Reformed home occupy two totally different and independent spheres. It is not true, as one scholar has put it, that "parents have authority over their children within the family; they do not have authority over the school."

To hold or to promote such a view violates the biblical concept of parenthood, as well as the very nature of the school as a parental institution. According to the Scriptures there is no way that parents are allowed to completely surrender their authority with respect to their children. They remain ultimately responsible and accountable for their children as long as they are under the age of maturity and wherever they may be during that time. For God gives authority in the family to the parents. In the church He gives it to the elders. In the state he gives it to the legislators. In the workplace He gives it to the owner-employer.

Does He then not give it in the school to the teachers? Yes, but their authority is never direct. It is always derived. It comes to them from the home, from the parents. In this life there is primary and secondary authority. The same applies in the state. A policeman does not have authority dispatched to him directly. No, it is delegated authority that he handles because it is the state which tells him what laws to enforce and what charges to lay.

Still, a word of caution is in order here too. For we must realize that even in those cases where authority is primary, it is never absolute. Only God's authority is absolute. Only He is accountable to no one. Only He makes the basic laws. Ultimately we are all accountable to Him - parents and teachers alike.

Hence there are distinctions that must be kept in mind when it comes to the flow of authority, but at the same time there must also be the realization that parents and teachers are handling a common component. What this means is that there must be mutual **support** here. It is not proper for teachers to undermine the primary authority of the parents, nor is it proper for parents to pooh-pooh the secondary and delegated authority of the teacher.

And yet, especially the latter is being done on an almost regular basis. In meetings with educators and board members it strikes me that there are enough incidents here to express concern and to see a disturbing trend emerging. A teacher disciplines a child for misbehaviour and the child goes home and complains. What do some parents do? Side with the teacher, as your father and my father did? Hardly, they automatically side with the child. They even criticize the teacher in front of the child. They phone up the teacher and without waiting for an explanation, they fire away with both guns blazing. How utterly, utterly inappropriate! What damage this does! The child's deceit is rewarded and his conceit is amplified. Meanwhile, the teacher becomes angry, frustrated and discouraged.

This is only one horror story and there are many more out there. There are cases where parents complain when students break clearly defined school rules and as a result have their privileges suspended. There are students who break into staffrooms and help themselves, who are suspended and whose parents don't want to hear about it and can't be bothered to meet with the school administration.

These are serious incidents and they underline that a problem exists with the parents of some students. These parents do not see that authority in the home and school must complement each other and

support each other. They fail to see that teachers are on their side and attempting to apply their standards and God's standards to children who often have more in common with the first Adam than with the second.

[Having spoken about authority of parents over their children, given by God, and about authority of teachers in school Dr. J. Visscher continues his article on "The Role of Parents in the Christian School" as follows:]

Parents should esteem their children's teachers

What should parents do when their children are disciplined by their teacher? They should back him or her up 100%. And if there are questions, reservations, disagreements about causes, offenses and penalties, then the parent has a duty to speak with the teacher personally, immediately, and respectfully. Hear him or her out, and you will discover that the vast majority of the time the problem is not with the educator but with the learner.

Such an approach is proper and Christian. And it also shows proper esteem and **estimation** for the teacher's person and task. Yes, and that too is a necessary, a very necessary, element. If one were to try to rate the very occupations and callings that people have in life, then there is little doubt that teaching ranks among the top ten. A teacher's responsibility is awesome. His or her task is stupendous. His or her aims are exalted. For what is a teacher? A teacher has to be an *instructor* who knows the subject matter that has to be taught fully. A teacher is a *guide* who has to show his students the way through the jungles of geography, the pitfalls of algebra, and the swamps of biology. A teacher has to be a *model* of true Christian piety in the eye and mind of his students. A teacher has to be a *catalyst* who can light a fire under students who otherwise show no interest or ability. A teacher has to be a classroom *manager* who can keep the ram-bunctious side of the covenant youth under control. In short, a teacher has to be so many things.

And we should **respect** them for it! But that raises the question whether the teaching art is still respected and whether the teacher is still esteemed. There are signs that this is slipping. It shows up for example in the jokes that people make about teaching and teachers. Now, jokes can be harmless and innocent, but they can also serve as indirect criticisms or barbs. There are also offhand comments that people make about teachers having cushy 9-to-3 jobs, about working nine months, about never getting their hands dirty or their brows sweaty. There are oc-

casions too where people get together for birthday parties, family gatherings or other events, where the tendency to deal with people more than topics is a natural one. And who are often on the receiving end? The teachers! (The minister too?)

By its very nature teaching is a rather public profession. Parents get to hear a lot about it from their children, rightly or wrongly, accurately or in tainted form. It all adds fuel to the fire. Besides, there is also the perception that teachers, like politicians and ministers, are fair game and public property. It's alright to cut them up because everyone does. It's alright to make negative comments about them;

"But does the home and do the parents stress the same thing? How do we see our role as parents and what is the atmosphere like in our homes?"

after all, we pay their wages or stipends; we own them and therefore we can zero in on them.

Yet the question must be asked whether or not such an approach really edifies. In our Reformed schools we have a real shortage of teachers, and the blame is often laid at the door of poor wages and benefits, but it could just as easily be laid at the door of public perception and criticism. Just ask yourself a few questions when it comes to teachers and teaching: Do you as parents speak about them in such a way that when your children hear it they are motivated to join their ranks? As fathers and mothers you have to deal with a few children a few hours in the morning and a few more at night; how would you like to handle 30 of them for 6-7 hours a day? How would you like to teach six hours a day and then go home to prepare assignments, mark tests and papers for another 4-6 hours?

Place yourself in the shoes of your children's teachers and you cannot help but esteem and honour them.

Parents should keep educating themselves

Still, stepping into someone else's shoes is not necessarily an easy exercise. If parents are going to do it properly they will have to educate and keep on

educating themselves. Perhaps that disappoints you. You had assumed that now that you send your children to a Reformed school you can leave all the education up to it. You can wash your hands of it and leave it up to the experts.

Nevertheless, that is not the way it goes in truly Reformed education, nor in the approach of the truly Reformed parent. **Education** involves delegation but not abdication. As parents we have a responsibility to keep tabs on our children's education, knowing what is being taught and how it is being taught. We have an obligation to help them learn and understand. We have a duty to provide them with a stable home environment which is conducive to learning and development. Truly, there are many things that we must know and there are many things that we must assist in.

Taken together what this speaks of is **involvement**. If Reformed education is at bottom parental education then the parents must always be with it. They should make it a point to attend parent-teacher interviews, school society meetings, open houses. They should make an effort to read the school bulletin on a regular basis. They should purchase and read books that broaden and deepen their educational vision and understanding.

In other words, what I am pleading for is more educational involvement, and not just building involvement or financial involvement. Is it a true measure of our priorities and interests when school society meetings that deal with large building projects or with budgets generate an excellent attendance; whereas, meetings devoted to educational philosophy or curriculum matters attract a meager few? The ingredients for a great Reformed school rest as much on the participation of the parents as on the ability of the teachers.

Parents must supply the financial means

All of this is not to suggest that education and finances have little to do with each other. Such a view represents pie-in-the-sky idealism. As long as we are in this dispensation money will remain a potent force either for good or for evil. And the same applies to our schools. They will continue to exist only as long as parents are willing to make their **donations** and, in many cases, to sacrifice.

Indeed, there is little doubt that for many parents Christian education is equated with financial hardship and sacrifice. Especially in the Province of Ontario, where no financial support of any kind is given by the government, and where schools exist totally on donations, the going is often tough and the burden is

onerous. In the West the picture brightens due to various degrees of provincial funding, yet even here the situation is such that for many families education remains a costly item.

The consequences of insufficient funding are felt in more than our families, they are also evident in our school buildings, in our level of staffing, and in our salaries for teachers. It is especially the latter that continues to raise the most concern. Parents, board members, and teachers alike are wrestling with the issue of teacher salaries, and in the process progress is being made, at least, if my sources are correct.

Yet in some cases there is plainly more that could be done. For example, there are many Boards that could do with an added dose of professionalism. By that I mean better research on what the public system and the general Christian school system pays its teachers in terms of salaries and benefits. It does not have to be a case of dollar matching dollar or of keeping up with the educational Joneses, but there must be some awareness of what is happening out there. Long range planning is another area that deserves some attention. Too many boards stumble from year end to year end, with never a look into the fiscal future. Secret sweetheart deals too should have some extra scrutiny. It has come to my attention over the years that there are School Boards out there that make special deals with teachers. In spite of what the salary grid calls for, there are extras being offered. Now in some cases that may be warranted and necessary, but it should be open and above board.

Also, Boards would do well to look at some of the regulations floating around that touch on salaries and benefits. Some time ago I came across a document that specified in minute detail all kinds of things like sick leave, maternity leave, death in the family leave. You name it and it was in there. Honestly, I question the need for that kind of approach and minute detail. Of course, some rules and guidelines are always necessary, but the zeal for organization can get the better of us. You get the most out of a teacher not by nickle and diming her or him, not by crossing every "t" and dotting every "i", but by showing trust and confidence in a teacher.

That financial **sacrifice** is an integral part of Christian education is a reality. Will it ever go away? That appears doubtful and, from the parental side of things, perhaps even undesirable. I am no seer but there is little doubt in my mind that if tomorrow the government of Manitoba or BC or Ontario stated its intention to give your school 100% funding, it would suf-

fer. Oh, the affects might not be felt immediately. In the short run, they might even prove impressive in terms of new facilities, expanded libraries, additional staffing (if you can find it). But in the long run you would be faced with a different picture. The interest level in Reformed education would drop and the cause of Reformed education would suffer.

At the same time, it is extremely doubtful whether that type of largess would improve either our standard of living or our general attitude. Financially, some of us have far more than we need, some of us have what we need, but none of us live in need. It may sound trite to some of your ears but the Lord really does bless givers, and cheerful givers at that. He blesses them in various ways. In spite of what our community pays for the support of church and kingdom, it is still one of the most affluent communities in all the world. Let us be thankful. Let us always consider our financial obligations in the light of our material blessings.

Parents must buttress Reformed education at home

Having looked at their relationship to the school, to its program, its teachers and its finances, parents should also take some time to examine the relationship between what is being taught at school and what is being taught at home. Is the striving of the school with respect to the covenant youth in harmony with the striving of the home? Is there consistency here? Are there common goals, common aims, common standards?

Perhaps you find these questions unnecessary; after all, do school and home not form two corners of the same triangle of church-home-school? Indeed there is a sense in which they should be unnecessary, but are they? The school has the task of training the youth to become knowledgeable, discerning, and dedicated. The school has the task of showing them that Christ really is Lord of all of life. The school develops their world view. The school stresses what it means to live as a regenerated and holy person in every walk of life.

But does the home and do the parents stress the same thing? How do we see our role as parents and what is the atmosphere like in our homes? Thankfully there are many parents who take their parenting seriously and who are constantly trying to improve on it. But there are also parents who leave a lot to be desired. They have surrendered the educational process to the school and to the church, and largely washed their hands of it. It represents too great an effort and a bother. They major in keeping their children fed, clothed, and orderly.

They insist that their children do as they are told, not as they themselves do. In other words, they have a rather authoritarian view of parenting and make little attempt to be models for their children.

Should they later on wonder why their child rearing has proven a disaster, they might well look at themselves. Children are astute observers and they soon see whether or not mother and father practise what they preach, whether they cultivate the fruits of the Spirit in their own lives, whether they take the message of the Gospel seriously. A hypocrite may live long in the church without being found out, but it's an entirely different story in the home, where the scrutiny is intense and the quarters are close.

As parents, however, we must not only take a close look at ourselves and whether we personally supplement our children's education at home, we must also examine the quality of our home life. What is the environment like? What sets the tone? What determines the pace? I ask these questions because it comes so often to my attention as I go about my own congregation that what we strive to achieve at school is so often undone after school. There are really two educational enterprises going on every day, and the two could not be more at odds with each other. What am I referring to? To the television.

Now understand me well, I am not telling you to trash it. I am not saying that it is un-Reformed to have one. I am only questioning whether we realize the great power and the almost totally negative influence this invention has. This year my wife and I spent a few days in Seattle on a Spring Break, and seeing that we do not have a TV at home, we decided to give it a go. For three nights we scanned the air waves of Seattle and the Pacific Northwest. What a terrible disappointment. The language, the mindless violence, the role models, the values presented, the commercials, they were almost all directly opposed to what the Gospel stands for.

Yes, and there are children who come home from the Christian school enter the house, plunk themselves down and turn on the tube, and watch it hour after hour, night after night, program after program. They have no time to play outside or to eat decently, because their favourite show is on. They have no time to converse because it interrupts their program. They feud about who is allowed to watch what. They race to the washroom during commercials. They go to bed at night having spoiled the time.

As a medium, television tends to dull the mind. It turns the watcher into a consumer. It so easily stifles creativity and interferes with play. As an influence it

brings us the philosophies, the trends, the standards of the world. It undermines the demarcation line between good and evil. If you watch program after program featuring adultery, living together and all the rest, it cannot but break down your moral barriers.

And then there is an extension to all this called the video. In and of itself, the video camera and screen is a marvellous invention which has many positive applications in connection with education and with the home. But let us not be so naive as to overlook the dark side, namely, the violent, blasphemous, and pornographic video movies that can be rented almost everywhere. It is not at all unusual for father and mother to go out for the evening and for some younger member of the family to sneak out to the local corner store and rent videos that violate all Christian standards of decency and morality. It is also not unusual for young people to hold a party and to use some very questionable videos as their chief source of entertainment.

In short, there is a form of media education that acts as an antithesis to Christian schooling. Whatever you seek to build up with the one, is broken down by the other. How self-defeating! How

wasteful! If we truly want to buttress the education of our children, then we will have to address the matter of these two educations. If you feel that you must have that evil eye, along with its henchman, the video, in the corner of your living room, make sure that you keep a proper rein on it. Supervise its use and evaluate its output. Place the garbage off-limits and select proper programs and videos. Teach your children to discern and discriminate between what is holy and what is profane.

And do not neglect to provide some wholesome substitutes for your family in the form of games, recreational activities, family outings and books. By the way, how many trips to the library do you make in a year and how much do you spend during the same time on good books? They are out there, you know. They are there for young and old alike — books that expand your horizons, strengthen your vision, sharpen your perceptions.

What is required is **consistency** between home and school. Let us strive for it and see to it.

Parents may educate them with hope

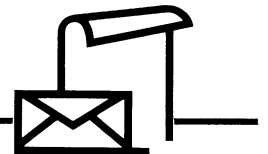
Thankfully, our last word can be an

upbeat one. Why, if we look at ourselves long enough and at our homes close enough, there is always reason for concern and disillusionment. We are such imperfect specimens and our homes are so far from ideal. Even our schools can stand so many improvements. Nevertheless, we have a duty to remind ourselves that the enterprise in which we are involved is not a solely human one. Christian education is not done alone - without God, blindly - without the Word, weakly - without the Spirit. No, it can be done in hope and with confidence, because God is there. Even if we are faithless, He remains faithful. Mercifully, He turns our failures around and makes something of them. He invigorates our imperfect Reformed schools. He blesses our parental bumbblings. He fights to protect our homes. Through His Son He redeems the humanly unredeemable. Through His Spirit He makes the unholy holy.

We have so much to be **thankful** for, and let us be that - always. Indeed let us go on in thankful obedience and in quiet resolve, leaning on our precious covenant God and looking to Him to make the rougher places plain.



L E T T E R S T O T H E E D I T O R



Re: *Press Review* by C. Van Dam, *Clarion* no, 15, 16, Aug. 3, '90 on "Synod, Statistics, and Questions."

Rev. Van Dam asked in his review where the many people go who wander about looking for a faithful church or who have difficulties with the direction of their own "denomination." He asked *why we as Canadian Reformed Churches are not receiving more growth from outside*. You, Rev. Geertsema, have given the answer in your editorial in the same issue of *Clarion* about the opening of all offices to women in the CRC. You wrote: "Let us watch out that not the spirit of the age overpower us via a modern self-centred life style and lead us to the modern manner of thinking."

I realize that you were writing about different things, but the above words are also applicable to this question. I am

afraid that this is what has already happened with us, that the spirit of the age has overpowered us. We as parents have not always, seven days a week, shown by our life style what is the way we should go, nor by our talk that we are altogether different from the world we live in, nor by our dress whom we aim to please. Nor did we show in our spiritual life that there is to be a continuing struggle to gain more insight in what it means to live a godly life, and to progress in such a life. And most of all, a godly sorrow for sin and a hungering and thirsting after righteousness is missing.

We have been taught from our pulpit that sound doctrine goes hand in hand with a sound life style. If now we and our children show to others a walk of life which is not in accordance with what we as members of Christ's church officially believe, this brings only harm and others

stay away. In fact, we are the very reason why they do not come. We profess the Lord, but do we live this confession? Can our neighbor see and hear this?

We, as parents, may not have shown our children today's worldly life in our life style, but we did not always guide them firmly, prayerfully, and steadfastly either, as we promised we would. And if we do not have time or energy to read *Clarion* and other upbuilding magazines, e.g. *Reformed Perspective*, how can we expect our children to do it? They are not excused, but let us look at ourselves first.

In closing, may we and our young people continue to profess and pray "that we may so direct our whole life, our thoughts, words, and actions, that Thy Name is not blasphemed because of us but always honoured and praised."

MRS. HERMAN KOBES

"Are We Not Attractive?"

In *Clarion* of August 3, 1990, Dr. C. Van Dam tells us about "great searching of hearts" (Judges 5:15,16) among the brother- and sisterhood in the Netherlands.

Where do the thousands go who leave the so-called national Reformed Church or the (Synodical) Reformed Church? Are we not attractive to them? Have we done everything we could to show to those thousands that they are welcome?

Then our professor continues (and his words bear repeating!),

Should these questions not also be ours? Also the Canadian Reformed Churches enjoy stability and small but regular growth from within. However, in view of the many who wander about looking for a faithful church or who have difficulties with the direction of their own 'denomination', questions arise. Why are we not receiving more of them? Are we not attractive? . . . Do we do our best to see to it that others know that they are welcome? Do they also feel welcome in our midst? . . . Why are we not, apparently for many, an obvious rallying point and address to go to?

These are urgent questions, and they are put to us in an urgent manner. They call for 'much searching of heart.' They should move us to self-examination, not only necessary for individual members (Form for Holy Supper) but also for the whole membership.

We (I speak for the older generation) had always hoped that with us there would be a wide-open door for all truly-Reformed believers who, as Dr. Van Dam puts it, are "looking for a faithful church."

But now that there are "many who wander about," this does not happen. It is a cause of great disappointment and grief.

Are we not attractive? Obviously, for many we are not. When we start such necessary self-examination, we need not take certain criticism against 'us' for 100% gospel-truth. Yet, if we ask such a question, we have to listen to what 'others' say about 'us,' Canadian Reformed Churches, Canadian Reformed people. I am sure that no one among us is happy, when on both sides of the Atlantic there is reason to ask, "Where do the thousands go?" We do not "attract" them, we are not "attract-ive" to them.

I wish others would come forward to help our professor answer these urgent questions.

Permit me to repeat certain things that all or most of you must have heard

sometimes. They come from the lips of "other Reformed believers." (Note the following quotation marks.)

"You Canadian Reformed people are always talking about the Church, and then you mean only yourselves!"

"You talk more about the Church than about Christ our Saviour."

"There are ministers in your churches who always preach about the church, the church, the church, and even do not hesitate to fulminate against other denominations and believers, although they have only their own congregation in front of them."

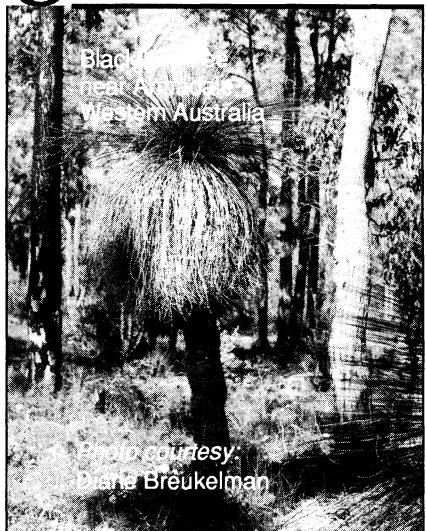
From talks with "others" everyone, who is willing to listen, can know that such critical remarks really mean, that for many "out there," "we" think we are the only ones; that we judge and condemn everyone else.

Although I know that many of the readers will strongly deny that Synod '86 formulated a "confessional statement," we would, however, be fools to deny that the 'explication' of Art. 28 by this Synod has been misused in our midst. You may wonder what I am talking about! I am talking about the popular understanding of Synod '86's doctrinal deliberations. That popular understanding is: "only when a believer joins a true church, he becomes a member of the body of Christ."

Thus the impression is created that those "thousands . . . etcetera" must join "us" in order to become a member of Christ.

Not so! As I already wrote in my 1963 thesis on the concept of the invisible church for Knox College, on page 296 (everyone can now check that in the library of our College) about Art. 28 of our Confession:

OUR COVER



The words '*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*' are quoted, not as an *exclusive ban*, but as an *inclusive pastoral call*.

For many, Synod 1986 is interpreted as suggesting an exclusive ban. That is one of the reasons that we are not attractive.

These lines have been written in the hope and with the prayer that the Canadian Reformed Churches are enabled and willing to work our "public relations," our 'face' to others, in such a way that all misunderstanding be removed and that the "exclusive ban" be replaced by the "inclusive pastoral call." That is how Guido de Bres wrote Article 28, and that is why the Reformed Churches adopted his Confession as their own.

Many, probably most people in "our" churches wait for such a result of self-examination. This is not to say that "we" should go along with liberalizing trends of the day, taking liberties with Scripture and Confession. On the contrary! The "thousands," mentioned above, are looking for full faithfulness to the Scriptures, and solid backing of the Reformed Creeds. But they are looking for people, for churches who are humble and happy. In other words: people who are attractive because they want to share their God-given riches with others. That would lead to the 'aspect' of "reaching out," home-mission, evangelizing or whatever you want to call it. But that is another chapter. Let someone else tackle that.

REV. G. VAN DOOREN

Response

Asked to give a brief response to these letters, I note two things:

1. I agree with the great concerns voiced by both writers. I agree that these factors are both involved in varying forms.

2. Further, with respect to Rev. Van Dooren's letter, I am convinced that a reading of the Acts will show that the so-called popular understanding of the doctrinal decisions of Synod 1986 is incorrect. Synod dealt with a specific situation and made a decision for a specific audience (the appellant). The wording and approach used in its decision was coloured by these factors. Since the intent of this decision was to ward off certain misunderstandings, it cannot be used as a general yardstick to measure orthodoxy. We are only bound by the Scriptures and the Confessions we have adopted together as churches.

C. VAN DAM

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



By Aunt Betty

Dear Busy Beavers

One day the Lord Jesus healed ten lepers of their terrible disease.

Only *one*, just *one* of these lepers came back to give thanks to the Saviour for His goodness and might.

The Lord Jesus was sad. All those lepers should have come back. They all should have given *thanks* to the Lord!

We, too, must give thanks to the Lord for all His blessings.

Yes, for the bountiful harvest after rain and sun.

Also for our comfortable homes.

For work and play.

For loved ones, too.

For all these and many more blessings we owe thanks to God.

Also for our greatest blessing — that we may be children of our heavenly Father.

That lovely Thanksgiving dinner will help us remember all God's good gifts.

We will be happy and give the Lord thanks for His wonderful goodness.

And not just on *Thanksgiving Day* but every day of our lives!



OCTOBER



Agnes Timmerman	1	Anne Van Laar	18
Robert Van Middelkoop	1	Jenny Stroop	20
Laura Harsevoort	2	Will VanOene	20
Alyssa Lodder	2	Laura Aasman	21
Arlene Winkelaar	3	Cheryl Vande Burgt	21
Gerard Van Woudenberg	5	Mary-Lynn Lof	23
Karissa Veldman	5	Sharon DeVries	26
Vanessa DeJong	6	Bryan Eelhart	28
Kim Vis	7	Henry Moesker	29
Erin Siebenga	17	Tonya Beintema	30
Yvonne Van Egmond	17	Denise Elliott	31

Happy Birthday to you all!
 May the Lord bless and keep you in the year ahead.
 Here's hoping you have a great day with your family and friends!

❖ Fall ❖

*When the leaves start to fall,
 And when the trees stand tall,
 The leaves turn colours,
 Unpredictable weather;
 The birds stop chirping,
 The hogs stop leaping,
 When it's time for
 hibernating.*

by Busy Beaver *Tonya Beintema*



From the Mailbox

Yes, *Carolyn Van Leeuwen*, you are very welcome to join the Busy Beaver Club! Please write and tell me your birthday, so that we can put your name on the birthday list. What do you do in your spare time to keep busy, Carolyn?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Alyssa Lodder*. We are happy to have you join us. You are a real Busy Beaver already, sending us a story! Thank you very much. Keep up the good work!

Welcome to the Club, *Gerald Bartels*. Are you busy helping to look after all those animals? Let me know when you get a pen pal, all right, Gerald?

And a big welcome to you too, *Benjamin Bartels*. I'm glad you enjoy our puzzles. Maybe you could send one in for the other Busy Beavers, Benjamin? I hope you soon get a pen pal. Will you let me know?

Thank you for the puzzles, *Rebecca Hovius*. Don't worry you are still on the birthday list. Are you all settled in your new home, Rebecca? Is it different? Will you write and let me know your new address?

I see you've been very busy, *Janine Vander Hoeven*! I'm glad you had a good holiday. Do you have a new teacher this year, Janine? Bye for now. Write again soon.

Congratulations on your new nephews, *Michelle Peters*. Do you get to help look after them? So what do you listen to on your cassette, Michelle? Thank you for the puzzles, and the recipe, too!

Hello, *Margaret Nijenhuis*. I see you were doing responsible work this summer! I hope Josh was co-operative? What a good birthday you had, Margaret! How do you feel about being in school again?

Thank you for the picture, *Esther Hordyk*! I see you are a good puzzler, too! How was your summer, Esther? And how do you really feel about being in school again?

Have your goats arrived yet, *Gerard Van Woudenberg*? Weren't you afraid of those snapping turtles, Gerard? Or weren't you close. Do you see the names of the boys who want pen pals, Gerard? Go for it!

I'm glad you have a good pen pal, *Francine Van Woudenberg*. Is it her turn to write or yours? Do you still have your turtle? I'm glad you had such a nice Bible club. How is school, Francine?

How did your swimming lessons go, *Sarah Vanderzwaag*? And how is your puppy? Sounds as if you had a good summer, Sarah. And how do you feel about being back in school?

Busy Beavers we need pen pals for three boys this time! Who will write to:

Gerald Bartels (age 7)
 RR 1
 Dunnville, Ontario
 N1A 2W1

Benjamin Bartels (age 9)
 RR 1
 Dunnville, Ontario
 N1A 2W1

Gerard Van Woudenberg (age 8)
 RR 4
 Osgoode, Ontario
 K0A 2W0