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Does the Belgic Confession Teach “Not the Bible Alone?”

By N.H. Gootjes

The Bible alone

One of the catchwords of the Reformation of the 16th Century was the expression “Scripture alone.” Two other expressions belong to it: “by grace alone” and “by faith alone.” Together they were used to characterize the central motives of the Reformation movement. They are so well-known that today even the Latin translations are still used: *sola gratia*: “by grace alone,” *sola fide*: “by faith alone,” *sola scriptura*: “Scripture alone.”

In these expressions the difference between the Reformation and the Roman Catholic Church was summarized. How do we know what God has revealed to us, and where can we find this revelation? The Roman Catholic Church answered: In Scripture and in the tradition of the church. There is revelation not only in the Bible, but also in the Apocrypha and in the oral traditions which have been preserved within the church. To prove a point of faith one need not just look in Scripture, one can also use what tradition teaches.

Over against this the Reformation maintained its “Scripture alone.” This means negatively: No tradition, no apocrypha, no teaching of the apostles preserved in oral tradition, no quotations from the orthodox church fathers. All of this cannot be used to prove the doctrine of the church. However, there is also a positive side to it: God’s revelation as far as we need to know it, has been recorded in Scripture. The church has to prove the totality of its doctrine from Scripture alone. And what cannot be based on Scripture should not be a part of the faith.

This has been expressed in the confessions of the Reformation. We can think of the Heidelberg Catechism. In answer to the question: “What is true faith?” the Catechism teaches: “True faith is a sure knowledge whereby I accept as true all that God has revealed to us in His Word . . .” (L.D.7, 21). Here, by the way, we see two other implications of “Scripture alone.” It does not only exclude (*Scripture alone*), it also includes all of Scripture (*all that God has revealed in His Word*). The second implication is the connection between “Scripture alone” and “by faith alone” (true faith . . . I accept as true all that God has revealed in His Word; this faith the Holy Spirit works in my heart by the *gospel*) and “by grace alone” (out of *mere grace*, only for the sake of Christ’s merits).

In this way “Scripture alone” is in connection with “by grace alone” and with “by faith alone” firmly rooted in the Reformation.

Not the Bible alone

After this it will come as a surprise that there is a confession from the time of the Reformation which expresses a different opinion: the *Belgic Confession*. This, at least, is the opinion of Mr. Robert VanderVennen, who wrote an article in *Calvinist Contact* (Sept. 14, 1990) under the challenging title: “Not the Bible alone.”

This article is directed against the “concerned members of the Christian Reformed Church.” Those concerned members are angry because other members of this church do not decide matters from “the Bible alone.” However, according to VanderVennen, they are themselves wrong. The concerned members do not maintain their confession, for they neglect Art. 2 of the *Belgic Confession*. In it the Reformed Churches confess that “we know God and His ways by two means, not one.” VanderVennen says: “We can trust God’s revelation to us by both means. That’s why Reformed Churches affirm both “general revelation” and “special revelation.”

The “concerned members” are reproached because they only refer to Art. 3-7 of the *Belgic Confession*. They neglect Art. 2. When they send overtures to the synod they ask the Christian Reformed Church to reaffirm Art. 3-7. Why do they not mention Art. 2? VanderVennen says: “I have the impression they didn’t want to reaffirm *all* of what the confession says about Scripture.”

So we were mistaken when we thought that “Scripture alone” was one of the basic convictions of the Reformation, it seems. The Reformation taught something different, as can be seen in the *Belgic Confession*. Who then gave us the idea that the Reformation taught “*Sola Scriptura*,” one wonders.

But this point is of more than historical interest. When we read an article like that of VanderVennen we cannot but feel ourselves involved. In the first place, we sympathize with the struggle of the concerned. In the issues that cause their “concern” we stand behind them. And we have been hoping and praying that their struggle for the purity of doctrine may, — under the blessing of the Lord —, have success.

And in the second place, we too have been taught, and have taught, that we have to derive the content of our faith from Scripture. If it is true that this view is not that of the Reformation, because Art. 2 or our *Belgic Confession* speaks about two means for knowing God, then it is time for us to investigate whether we should not change our conviction on many issues.

Changes

This view on the meaning of Art. 2 of the *Belgic Confession* will have a great impact on our faith. The opening sentence of VanderVennen’s article is: “Many ‘concerned members of the Christian Reformed Church’ are angry and sad that other CRC members do not use the ‘Bible alone’ as their means to decide sensitive issues like the role of women in the church, creation and evolution, and homosexuality.” But the concerned members are wrong, the “other members” are right. We cannot decide such matters from “Scripture alone.”

How should the church decide such matters? On the basis of Scripture and our modern knowledge. “Authoritarian people want the Bible to stand ‘over’ knowledge we get from other sources.” “But neither the Bible nor the *Belgic Confession* places one over the other. Both ‘books’ need to be read to-

gether and discussed communally." So there should be a kind of interaction between Scripture and today's (often scientific) knowledge. What does this mean? The article does not show the result of this approach for the "sensitive issues," but we can easily guess the result from recent discussions.

The question of women in office can be decided on the basis of Scripture alone. To mention only one text: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submissiveness. I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent," 1 Tim. 2:11, 12. But when the book of nature can be invoked, the situation changes. Nature teaches us that women are equal to men in intellectual abilities. They can be excellent and efficient teachers. They have received gifts from the Lord, as can be seen by everyone. On the basis of this fact the church should allow women in whom the gifts have been recognized, to teach in the church, be it as an elder or as a minister. What then about 1 Tim. 2:11,12? The solution is that Paul here gives a practical instruction based on the insights of his time into the position of women. At that time a teaching woman in the church would have been repellent in the eyes of the people. But a new understanding of the nature of women will lead to opening the offices in the church for them.

Then the issue of creation and evolution. What are the consequences of the conviction "not the Bible alone," for this. It will mean that the data from geology and biology should be taken seriously, because they belong to "general revelation." God has revealed them. Therefore the church may not push aside this content of the book of nature. It should read both in the book of Scripture and in the book of nature, and take both seriously. The net result will be that the record of Genesis 1 must be understood in such a way that there is room for evolution as the way in which God created.

Of course here we think of the discussions at Synod 1988 of the Christian Reformed Church. Synod had to decide whether three professors at Calvin College were doing justice to Scripture in their teaching. One of the outcomes of the discussion was the decision to appoint a study committee with the following mandate: "To address the relationship between special and general revelation as found in the Belgic Confession Article 2 . . ." (Art. 101, G 6, *Acts of Synod* 88, p. 598).

The third "sensitive issue" is that of homosexuality. The reasoning here can be much similar to that in the case of women in office. In our century the whole view on homosexuality has been changed. This new view is then taken as a result of God's revelation in nature. Therefore we now have to read the book of Scripture and the book of nature together. The new content of the book of nature brings us to a new look at the biblical passages. They do not give a general condemnation of homosexuality, but reject only a number of excesses. Next the scientific data will be the basis for a different approach to homosexuality.

All this is involved in the question "the Bible alone" or "not the Bible alone." Of course the list is not exhaustive. What is more, the list can never be exhaustive. Science will continue to discover new things. That will mean that other beliefs based on biblical data, will continue to be challenged from the side of science. When a teaching from science has been established by science as a real fact, the interpretation of the Bible has to be changed. For established facts have to be treated as revelation in the book of nature.

The result of this opinion concerning the teaching of the church in Art. 2 of the *Belgic Confession* would be a faith which (not develops, but) changes according to the progress of science.

Calvin

Well may one wonder whether this opinion is in agreement with the original intention of the Reformation, summarized in the catchword "Scripture alone." We will therefore do a little

exploring in Calvin's *Institutes*. (The quotations from the *Institutes* are taken from the edition of John T. McNeill, translated by Ford Lewis Battles).

Calvin discusses general revelation and special revelation in book I, which is called: The knowledge of God the Creator. It is important (even though it is not the focus of our present discussion) that for Calvin general revelation is particularly connected with the knowledge of God the Creator. In the following books of his *Institutes* Calvin discusses the knowledge of God the Redeemer (II), the way we receive the grace of Christ (in which he develops his doctrine of the Holy Spirit, III) and the external means of grace (IV). But these doctrines are no longer discussed in connection with general revelation (see especially I,vi,1).

But back to our problem, whether Calvin teaches "Scripture alone" or not. He begins by investigating the knowledge of his divine majesty which God has implanted in all men (I,iii,1). But does this implanted knowledge bring about knowledge of God? No, says Calvin. He compares it with a seed. God has given this seed in the heart of all man, but not even one man out of a hundred fosters it. And in no one does it ripen. It therefore does not produce any fruit (I,iv,1). In other words, the first means of revelation does not result in true knowledge of God.

But God does more than just giving the "seed." He reveals Himself and daily discloses Himself in the whole workmanship of the universe. "As a consequence, men cannot open their eyes without being compelled to see Him" (I,v,1). Calvin mentions here God's glory (I,v,1), and His power, goodness and wisdom (I,v,3). Does this then lead to true knowledge of God? Not at all. "Such is our stupidity that we grow increasingly dull toward so manifest testimonies, and they flow away without profiting us" (I,v,11).

It is therefore necessary that another and better help was added to direct us toward God the Creator. This help is Scripture. "For by His Word, God rendered faith unambiguous forever, a faith that should be superior to all opinion" (I,vi,2). Calvin does not reject looking at creation: "However fitting it may be for man seriously to turn his eyes to contemplate God's works, since he has been placed in this most glorious theater to be a spectator of them. . . ." But Scripture comes first: "Now, in order that true religion may shine upon us, we ought to hold that it must take its beginning from heavenly doctrine and that no one can get even the slightest taste of right and sound doctrine unless he be a pupil of Scripture" (I,vi,3).

Where does Calvin stand? We may summarize his view in this way:

1. Calvin is very pessimistic about the use man makes of God's general revelation. The whole tenor of his discussion is, that man rejects it. Calvin uses the discussion of general revelation not to emphasize how much man knows, but how necessary Scripture is. His emphasis on the depravity of man would make him wary to include the results of science as revelation in the book of nature.
2. The content of general revelation as discussed by Calvin is the knowledge of God, His glory, and His power. There is no indication here that Calvin would view data about the earth and about man derived from nature, as general revelation.
3. For Calvin Scripture and the book of nature are not laying side by side as revelation. Scripture has precedence. True religion takes its beginning from Scripture. In this way we can understand Calvin's famous description of Scripture as "spectacles" (I,vi,1). Only when our mind is provided with the doctrine of Scripture can we see clearly what God reveals about Himself in nature.

The reason for including a discussion of Calvin's view here, is the hope that this may have some influence on people who want to call themselves after Calvin. But VanderVennen appealed not to Calvin, but to the *Belgic Confession*. We hope to continue this discussion in the next issue.

— To be continued

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Fetal Transplants

From time to time one can read or hear about the extent of scientific research being done with human fetal tissues obtained from induced abortions. Doctors and scientists speak with excitement about new possibilities in treating debilitating and often fatal diseases and conditions such as Parkinson's, Huntington's, Alzheimer's, spinal cord injuries, diabetes, and leukemia. Some evidence indicates that the devastating effects of such illnesses might be alleviated and that the patient's condition might be improved by the transplanting of fetal tissue.

At Victoria General Hospital in Halifax, NS, a research team is trying to cure Parkinson's disease by injecting brain cells of aborted fetuses into the patient. Recently the president of this hospital said, "Abortions are legally sanctioned. End of issue. New issue: What to do with fetal tissue?" Lars Olson, a Swedish Parkinson's researcher, has said that it would actually be UNethical not to have fetal tissue available to help those who are desperately ill (*Globe and Mail*, 15/9/88).

Such doctors and scientists claim to be enhancing the life of an ill person with material which, in their opinion, is nothing but medical waste. The American pediatrician, Thomas Shepherd, of the University of Washington in Seattle, has shipped over 10,000 fetuses to 60 Canadian scientists over the past 26 years (*Western Report*, 19/3/90). Half of these are from spontaneous miscarriages; half are from induced abortions.

Different and more time-consuming techniques are being developed in an attempt to avoid as much as possible damaging the fetal tissue. Every year Canadian researchers receive about 50 intact fetuses acquired at about 20 weeks of age through the injection of prostaglandin, a hormone which causes labour to begin. Understandably, such a procedure often enough results in the birth of a live child who is then allowed to die outside of his/her mother's womb.

Tissue obtained from induced abortions as opposed to spontaneous miscarriages is much more useful to research since it has very good regenerative pow-

ers and does not require the administration of anti-rejection drugs to the patient receiving the tissue.

Perhaps you are thinking, "Why write about such an unpleasant topic?" I agree that it is an unpleasant topic to read about, think about, and write about. I would imagine that you are as revolted as I am at the thought of abortions induced for whatever purpose. And yet we should be aware of the fact that fetal tissue is being harvested and stored for the purposes of experimentation and treatment. It is good to think about this for a few moments so that we can arm our-

"...fetal tissue is being harvested and stored for the purposes of experimentation and treatment."

selves against the nice sounding but evil arguments put forth in defense of such practices.

The various arguments put forth can be boiled down to two. The first goes something like this: In order to improve the quality of life of society at large it is necessary to put a *relative* value on human life rather than an *absolute* value. The life of an adult with some debilitating disease has greater value than that of a fetus. If tissue from the fetus can help to alleviate the suffering of the adult it is morally right, even necessary, to terminate the life of the fetus in order to harvest its tissue for the needed medical application.

The second argument is the old "but isn't it great that something good can come out of something evil" argument. I heard this one on a radio talk show. The

caller said that in his opinion abortion was wrong; however, the fact remains that abortions happen anyway. We cannot stop them. And now if a sick person could be helped — well, wouldn't that be great?

The first argument is not acceptable since we have no right to place such relative value on human life. God is the Creator and Giver of life. It is our business to love our neighbour as ourselves, to show peace, gentleness, mercy and friendliness to him, and to protect him from harm as much as we can (Lord's day 40 on the sixth commandment). Our weakest neighbour, and therefore one to whom we had better be intent on showing mercy, is our neighbour in his/her mother's womb.

The second argument says that it is good to bring something beautiful out of something rotten. It tries to justify the (bad) means by the (good) end result. If the quality of life of a person who has, say, a spinal cord injury can be improved by transplanting the cells of the central nervous system of an aborted fetus into the patient, then the improvement justifies the abortion.

We recognize that such reasoning is unacceptable. As Job asked, admittedly in a different context, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one" (14:4).

There are many things which we can and must do in order to help and give comfort to the ill and handicapped in our midst — in our communities, and especially those within the household of faith. But we must not be led astray by secular arguments which place a relative value on God-given life and which justify the evil of abortion by the good effects fetal transplants can possibly have.

You are reminded that the Rev. R. Schouten and I will entertain any questions or suggestions for topics. You may write to:

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Do We Have to Have A Guilt Complex ?

By W.W.J. VanOene

Recently the question "Are we not attractive to others?" has received some attention in the columns of Clarion. In the issue of September 28, the Rev. G. VanDooren expressed the wish that "others would come forward to help... answer these urgent questions," namely whether we have done everything to show the thousands that they are welcome, why we are not receiving more of those who look for thoroughly Scriptural preaching, and "why are we not, apparently for many, an obvious rallying point and address to go to?"

Accepting the invitation to come forward and contribute to an answer, I submit the following lines.

I wish to stress that I do not have the answer. All I can do is point to what may be contributing factors. But first of all I want to make clear that I do not have a guilt complex in this respect nor am I willing to let myself be burdened with one by all sorts of questions which, for a large part, are rhetorical. Most certainly, I could have done more and undoubtedly I made serious mistakes both in my attitude and behaviour towards church members and towards those that are without, but I refuse to accept the veiled accusation that together with thousands of my brothers and sisters I am the cause why only relatively few from other religious communities came to join us.

Soul-searching is necessary, and there are factors which, as I see it, may enter the picture. I will mention a few right away. Hereby we are to differentiate between those who have a common (ethnic and ecclesiastical) background with us and those who have not. About the former I'll speak later on. First about the latter.

No common background

We could indeed show some more attention to strangers who wander into our services. This showing attention is different, of course, from staring at them or whispering about them.

We do not have to act in an exaggerated manner such as we experienced once. Attending a choir presentation in a Mennonite church building on a Saturday evening, I was startled when all of a sudden a choir member while entering reached in front of my wife to shake my hand and say "Welcome!" He did not know me at all, neither did he know whether I regularly attended services there or was just a stranger who had come in to have a nice, warm and dry place for the evening, but he assured me that I was welcome. It did make a difference as we were in completely unfamiliar surroundings.

As I said, we do not have to imitate such gestures, but we should make peo-

ple feel welcome and also approach them after the service to see whether they want any further information or perhaps want to come over to talk with us. There is indeed a lack of this among us.

A second point to be mentioned in this connection is the sad sight of seeing several members, both male and female, standing outside before or after the services smoking away. During the past few months we were in Ontario and Manitoba, and found that this practice is much stronger there than in B.C., at least in the Fraser Valley. When entering one particular church building I saw that the gravel in front of the entrance was coloured white by the countless cigarette butts. It shocked me.



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It is a well-known fact that very many Christians around us consider smoking a serious sin. When they see several church members standing there smoking, this may turn them off. When we are serious in our desire to make those visitors feel welcome and to show them that we want to serve the Lord in everything, we should do our best to remove this obstacle so that they have no excuse for not coming or for turning away.

Several consistories have published the request not to smoke around the church building. There are still older and younger members who act as if no such request was ever made. This should change.

Another point is that we should use the English language. This summer we experienced it that as soon as we talked with members, they started to talk in Dutch and continued in that language, even though we answered in English. Someone who has a different background would feel excluded when hearing a "strange" language. What we do in the home is different. We should never forget that when we talk on the church parking lot others may hear us. We should take care that they do not feel excluded.

As for the rest I would not know what else we could do to make them feel welcome. Our ushers are usually very alert and take care that visitors have a Bible and a Book of Praise, if the latter have not all disappeared because the members have taken unauthorized possession of them! If anyone knows anything that could be done besides the above, let him say so! I, for one, shall then do my best to amend my ways.

Common background

Now about those who have a common background with us.

It is from them that we hear such sounds as Rev. VanDooren mentioned: "You...are always talking about the church," "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 do not even hesitate to fulminate against other denominations and believers."

Boy, isn't that something! You would almost be floored by such criticism. Shouldn't we bow our heads in shame? That is really something: to preach the church and not Christ our Saviour, and doing this always! Meanwhile, we are to be aware of it that when one speaks of the church, he speaks of the body of Christ and cannot speak correctly about it without speaking about the Saviour. What does the apostle Paul say? "For

just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ." 1 Cor. 12:12. Note: the apostle does not say "so it is with the church," but "so it is with Christ," although he is speaking of the church and the place and duties of its members.

But let us say, for the sake of argument, that there are ministers in our midst who mention the church frequently in their sermons, that they are "one-issue" preachers, and let us admit that there are anabaptist, isolationist tendencies in our midst, does this determine and qualify the over-all preaching and attitude in the churches?

I served one congregation here in Canada for seventeen years, another one for fifteen, besides conducting services in almost all churches in our federation. Can anyone testify that I preached the church but not Christ? Since my alleged retirement started five years ago I have heard quite a few sermons, but in none of them I experienced anything in the line of "the church but not our Saviour." I even heard "the church" being mentioned rarely, and when it was done, this was very appropriate. I am convinced that this is the general experience of the membership in general. If anyone has a different experience, let him say so.

What "bugs" me most of all is that these accusations are unsubstantiated. You never see a direct quotation, a quotation accompanied by the context.

If someone should say: "You preach the church and not our Saviour," the first reaction should be: "How many services did you attend in any American or Canadian Reformed Church? How many ser-

mons did you hear of ministers of these churches? What exactly did they say?" I am certain that they can only answer: "That's what I was told and that's what everybody says." And then I am supposed to get a guilt complex because of that? Those remarks come from the slander that has been spread about the churches for many, many years.

It started right after the Second World War, when some peddlers were sent by the Synodical Churches in the Netherlands to give the Christian Reformed Church "information" (read: to spread all kinds of rumours) about the "Schilder churches," and to prevent that the Reformation of 1944 should spread to the North American continent. These rumours and the stigma they created were transferred to the Canadian Reformed Churches and were believed only too readily. They still are.

Further, there are the renegades who need an excuse for their desertion and now fan these rumours of which they know that they are false. Not seeing the church and what it is themselves, they paint a false picture of what the church really confesses concerning Christ's work of gathering her in the unity of the true faith. There may be some among our membership who foster a false concept and have an inadequate understanding of the church's confession, but it is completely incorrect and totally unjustifiable to ascribe these wrong concepts to the churches as such or to claim that the wrong ideas of a few are the doctrine of the church, or that all members adhere to them.

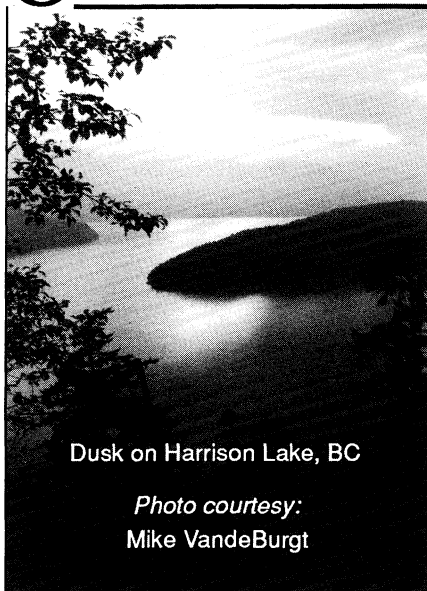
Synod 1986

This brings us to another point.

Time and again we see that certain decisions of Synod 1986 are being paraded as an indication of the correctness of the above-quoted slander. You know which decisions I am referring to. They are the ones which were taken in reply to some "appeals." Insofar as these "appeals" did not come from the persons involved, synod should have declared them inadmissible, since those persons poked their noses into something by which they were neither bound nor wronged.

The reminder of Dr. VanDam in *Clarion* of September 28 bears repeating: "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

OUR COVER



Dusk on Harrison Lake, BC

Photo courtesy:
Mike VandeBurgt

Confessions we have adopted together as Churches."

I am not too happy with the relevant decision of Synod 1986 and wrote about it, but it does not bother me, for I am not bound by it, as Dr. VanDam correctly pointed out.

Besides, however, this decision was made just a little over four years ago. Could it justly be quoted as a reason why for all the years the Canadian Reformed Churches have been instituted people refused to join these churches? Quoting this decision to make such claim shows that one is looking for an acceptable-sounding excuse.

Moreover, how many or rather how few of those who allegedly refuse to join because of the above-mentioned decision will have read it, studied the matter, and come to the conclusion that they were thereby bound beyond Scripture? Name me any if you can, and I am prepared to enter into a discussion with him to prove him wrong. I am convinced that any who mention it as an excuse for not

joining do not know what they are talking about and are only parroting what they heard from others, who heard it from others, who heard it from others, etcetera.

And then I should get a guilt complex because of that? You know what the children say to each other: "You must be kidding!"

All in all, I am not impressed by any excuse which those who have a common background with us bring to the fore, for by and large, they have never investigated the matter in person, while those who did come and joined one of the churches can easily refute the false accusations mentioned by the Rev. VanDooren in his submission.

Itchy ears

In partial answer to the question posed there is one place in Scripture that particularly comes to mind. It is what we read in 2 Tim. 4:3, 4: "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itchy ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit

their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander into myths." Over against this the apostle exhorts Timothy: "As for you, always be steady, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil your ministry." verse 5.

The above does not constitute a definite answer to the questions raised. There is no glib answer to them. Continued self-examination is necessary. We should be constantly endeavouring to improve our attitude, behaviour, and practices.

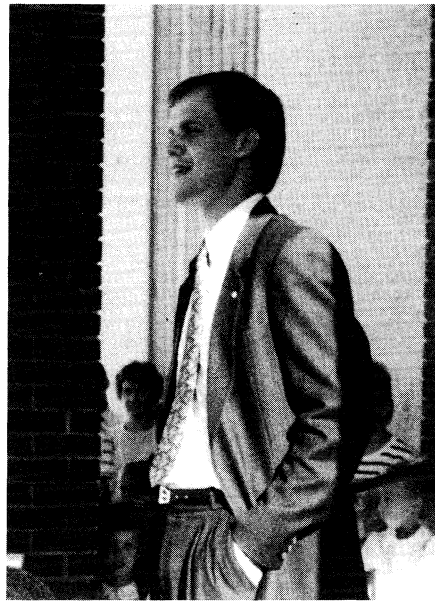
On the other hand, we should not be impressed by baseless accusations from people who look for an excuse for their own disobedience and now invent something or take a little point, blow it up, and present it as the whole thing, without knowing what they are talking about.

I, for one, have no guilt complex nor am I of the opinion that the membership in general need have one. Better, and then substantiated, arguments than I have heard thus far have to be presented for that. C

Official Opening: Immanuel Christian School Winnipeg, Manitoba

What a beautiful day! September 4, 1990 — the first day of school — dawned bright and crisp. The parking lot behind the church filled rapidly as 9:00 a.m. approached. Teachers and students, parents and children, friends and relatives gathered in the church auditorium for the official opening of both the new school year and the enlarged and renovated school. The steady buzz of excited children's voices was stilled when the principal, Mr. Arthur Kingma, strode to the podium.

We blended our voices in song, then Mr. Kingma read a portion of Colossians dealing with the centre of Christian life. He led us in prayer then welcomed everyone to witness the beginning of the 15th year of operation of Immanuel Christian School. Mr. Kingma noted that the student body had swelled to an all-time high of 103, with 8 full-time teachers, in a newly enlarged, well-equipped school building. He reminded us that we



The principal, Mr. A. Kingma, addresses staff, students, parents, and visitors

have much reason for gladness. These material blessings must not make us proud, but rather we must search for ways to be of service and thus show our thankfulness to our heavenly Father.

Mr. Bill Gortemaker, chairman of the School Board, spoke next. He told of the Lord's great faithfulness in allowing this school to grow and prosper. We were exhorted to be faithful in providing covenantal education for our children. Mr. Gortemaker expressed appreciation for all those who played a part in renovating and enlarging the school building: the Building Committee, the Decorating Committee, the Maintenance Committee, and cleaning crew, the many volunteers, the Flower Stand Committee and the Ladies Aid whose financial contributions were generous, but above all he gave thanks to our Father who allowed the work to be done in good harmony.

Mr. Gortemaker also addressed the students, urging them to treat both their

fellow students and teachers, and the school building with respect, and in this way show their appreciation for these rich blessings from the Lord. He expressed the wish and prayer that the students grow not only in knowledge but also in love and dedication to the Lord.

We concluded this part of the opening ceremonies with an enthusiastic rendition of our national anthem, then walked across the parking lot to the front entrance of Immanuel Christian School for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. Under the bright sun, Mr. Gortemaker provided us with some details about the early years of I.C.S. In September 1976 the school, consisting of Grades 4-7, was opened in the church basement. Three years later the school was moved to the then new building. Over the years, the number of students, as well as the number of grades taught, increased to such an extent that more room was needed. I.C.S. now houses Grades Kindergarten through 12. The expansion was (mostly) completed before school began and allows for future expansion as well. Mr. Gortemaker dedicated this building to the glory of God and the promotion of the coming of His Kingdom.

Mr. Gerry Kuik was requested to come forward, in view of his long-standing involvement, both past and present, with the school society. Flanked by the school principal and the Student Council President, Mr. Derek DeWitt, Mr. Kuik cut the ribbon marking the official opening of the "new" building. He too, had a few remarks. Rather than this being the end, he told us, it was the end of a beginning. He



The official ribbon cutting ceremony. From l to r: Mr. Arthur Kingma, Mr. Gerry Kuik, student Derek DeWitt, Mr. Bill Gortemaker

traced the history of the school society, begun in the 1950s, revived after the difficulties of the 1960s, to the first school in the 1970s. The school society was begun in a small way and faced many difficulties, yet the members were united in the common cause of Christian education. I.C.S. gradually evolved into the school it is today. But, Mr. Kuik asked,

have we arrived? He emphatically answered "No!" We may one day see a high school separate from the elementary school. Our task is never-ending. He ended his remarks with the words of 1 Corinthians 1:31 "Let him who boasts, boast of the Lord." This is not our doing, but the Lord's.

The assembled crowd was invited inside the school to admire the changes and have a cup of coffee. Children, parents-in-hand, checked out their classrooms, excitedly viewing the colourful displays, finding their desks, chatting with classmates. Parents all-but-forgotten, they seemed eager to begin — most of them. The kindergarten students eyed the teacher, the activities, and the classroom with curiosity and more than a touch of apprehension.

The adults wandered from room to room, admiring the large staff room and new office. The addition, with 3 classrooms, a beautifully appointed library, and a large open space suitable for gym activities, was approved of by all. The woodworking talent of one of the members was evident throughout the school. The dedication and commitment to Christian education was felt.

Slowly, the crowd thinned. Soon the building was empty of all but staff and students. The new school year had begun!



Immanuel Christian School — expanded facilities



NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene

The other time we started with the Australian churches. This time we begin again with news from these churches. In the first place I would like to mention the Acts of their latest synod. It is a respectable book of four hundred pages and gives evidence of hard work. It rivals the size of our Acts or even succeeds it. I have not been able as yet to read much of it, but what I did read impressed me. The brothers worked very hard both before this assembly and during it. Now the result of their labours has to be studied and evaluated. There is one thing I certainly do not like about these Acts. We now have become the CanRC.

The Armadale consistory report contained an interesting item. It follows here.

"Report about the position of Deacons in the Consistory is presented. The report reviews the current practice of excluding the Deacons from all consistory matters that do not pertain to their office, and to include them only where the Church Order specifically requires their presence.

"Extensive discussion takes place on the nature of the respective offices and what the Church Order has to say about this matter. It is decided to further investigate this matter whether the involvement in consistory work by the deacons should be widened and whether such is permitted under the Church Order. If such proposals are not permitted, to propose amendments to the Church Order for consideration by the consistory."

I am convinced that the deacons belong to the consistory, as we state in our Belgic Confession, and that the proper procedure would be to acknowledge this. I shall not elaborate on this point at the moment. Recently I made a few remarks about it in a news medley and I have stated my conviction clearly elsewhere. It is too bad that Synod 1983 did not go for the changes in our Church Order which would have acknowledged this position of the deacons. Questions will remain until we return to the situation in 1571, when it was stipulated that the consistory is composed of the minister of the Word, the elders, and the deacons.

The Bedfordale Church has come back on its decision to purchase a GEM Digital Organ. "The consistory recently resolved to purchase the GEM Digital Organ for \$12,900, subject to the silent approbation of the congregation. In the meantime a letter was received from a brother drawing attention to the availability of a MONARKE organ for approximately the same price. While this information was previously contained in the Organ Committee's submission, prices and specifications were sketchy and incomplete. Since that time a firm quotation has been received complete with detailed specifications.

"After considerable discussion the consistory decided that the supplier of the GEM organ be contacted and informed that we would like more time before coming to a definite decision." See what they come up with next time.

There is good news for the VanDelden family. "The congregation is advised that a manse has been purchased for \$130,500. It is a modern three bedroom house located on the corner of Derry and Henrietta avenues — yes, it's within our boundaries. While some renovations will have to be made to accommodate the VanDelden family, the size of the block (1/2 acre) and the layout of the house lend themselves admirably to the proposed extensions. However, a congregational meet-



ing will be convened in the near future where further details and plans will be discussed."

What must be extremely comforting for the brothers and take away much concern is that the house is located within the boundaries of the Bedfordale church. Imagine!

For the information of our readers it be added that a "block" in Australia is not a city block but is what we here would call a "property."

The Kelmscott consistory — and not they alone — paid attention to "mixed courtships." Whether it is more wide-spread in Australia than among us is something I cannot judge. It is a fact that also our consistories are aware of the dangers involved in this phenomenon. For our instruction as well I quote here the relevant decision of the Kelmscott consistory. In the same breath I mention that also Rev. Huizinga wrote an article about it in *Una Sancta*. Here comes Kelmscott's decision.

"1. The consistory is of the strong conviction that mixed courtships are contrary to God's revealed will and should be terminated. This has been clearly and amply spelled out in several recent sermons. Before a commitment is made between two people there must be unity in faith, according to Scriptures. In practical terms, especially in terms of mixed courtship situation, this generally means that public profession of faith in our church(es) by both parties must come before courtship. Where an engagement is planned, this situation is even more serious since such an occasion is a pledge for holy marriage. In these matters we are seriously called upon to be holy and obedient. 1 Peter 2:9 and Deut. 7 & 8, for example, call us unto holiness in our walk of life. Not only is the holiness of the individual at stake here but also that of the whole congregation.

"2. Parents must, on the basis of their baptismal vows, take a leading role and counsel their children accordingly. 2 Cor. 6 and Eph. 4 are instructive in this respect. Without parental guidance and commitment any pastoral work by the consistory becomes very difficult.

"3. In the case of mixed courtships the consistory will make contact with the parents in an effort to ensure that the parents and the consistory are consistent in their approach.

"4. Consistory will make contact with the member concerned as soon as there is a suggestion of mixed courtship. Parents are urged to contact elders as soon as necessary.

"5. Elders will give attention to this matter at home visits where there are teenagers in the family.

"6. Where a person, not a member of the church, is desirous of attending church and wants to come to faith, the consistory will welcome that person into the church. Where it is truthfully desired such a person will be considered for catechism instruction. This should, however, not be seen as taking anything away from the above points.

"7. The office-bearers (e.g. through preaching and homevisits) must be careful not to single out the sin of mixed courtship as there are also other sins in terms of which there should be admonition.

"8. Where the consistory has admonished a brother or sister regarding a mixed courtship (or other sin), there may be a rejection of such admonition. In such circumstances further church discipline may result, depending on the circumstances."

There is much in the above which may be of help to our consistories in Canada, too.

Coming to Canada now, we first want to draw your attention to an amazing thing. Writing about a sister who has to rest awaiting the birth of her expected baby, her minister expressed the following wish: "Hopefully the baby will wait until its birthday to be born." Isn't that amazing? Most children are, of course, born long before their birthday, aren't they? Or am I wrong?

Above we spoke of organs. Carman gives us the opportunity to continue with this topic for a little while.

"Organ committee report. The committee recommends the consistory purchase the Allan MDS 45. The consistory decides that brother A. and brother B. will consult with the Committee of Administration regarding the financing of the proposed organ and the impact this would have on future budget. A decision will be made after receiving their report on this aspect of purchasing an organ." We'll contain our curiosity.

Rev. DeBoer also wrote about the decision of the Dutch sister churches to establish a sister church relationship with the Reformed Church in the U.S. After having expressed his regret that the Netherlands churches did not come to this decision after consultation with the Canadian Reformed Churches, he wrote "We hope to continue our local contacts with the RCUS and the discussions on various important doctrinal and church political questions which we began. We know that it has taken some time already and will likely take more time yet, but why should we rush things. It is certainly much better to talk all these questions out first as preliminary steps toward possible recognition."

The Neerlandia bulletin is the last one we pay attention to this time. The number of bulletins I received since the previous medley was written at the place where we spent several weeks is not all that large but rather than wait till we are at home I use what I have so as not to let our readers wait too long for our column.

Rev. Wieske wrote: "You may remember that when our new cover was introduced, I gave a description of the symbolism which the picture conveyed. Mentioning that the dove represented the Holy Spirit who ultimately sows the Word in the hearts of men... I would like to withdraw that statement, though it remains true of course. But because of the danger involved in 'making an image' of God the Holy Spirit, it is better to explain the dove with a bible in its beak as the gospel which proclaims peace to all who surrender to it. After all, the dove is well-known as the symbol of peace." Rev. Wieske also wrote some kind words about the questions I raised in connection with this point.

I am afraid, however, that he did not get my point. My objection was not to *his explanation* of the symbolism but to *the symbolism itself*. I am convinced that he was completely cor-

rect in his explanation, and giving a different interpretation does not take away my serious questions about the drawing itself. Besides, if his new explanation were correct, it would have to be a Bible holding a dove.... However, enough about this.

Another item in the Neerlandia bulletin gave me much joy. "Discussion is held in regards to the collection for the church which is held in each church service. The consistory decides to discontinue the church collection as of Oct. 7, 1990."

Rev. Wieske passed on some of the reasons the consistory had for its decision.

"The main reason for the decision comes from the conviction that the maintenance of the 'ministry of the gospel' is an obligation of the believers.... But the question begs: How?

"The consistory is of the opinion that this is to be done by means of voluntary contributions and not by means of collections. Collections by their very nature are unpredictable." The budget is made known and every one knows what is expected of him. "As a side benefit it will also help the brothers elders to admonish those who are not faithful in giving to the Lord of their blessings." Indeed, also our faithfulness (or unfaithfulness) in contributing for the maintenance of the ministry of the Gospel is subject to the scrutiny by the office-bearers.

This will have to be it for this time. Next time things will have returned to normal, we expect, and, quoting a well-known broadcaster, I wish you all a fond afternoon. C



55th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. H. Vanlperen married on November 21st, 1935 in Vianen. They operated a grocery store. After eighteen years of serving customers in the store and pedaling a "bak fiets," they decided to immigrate to Canada. They left Utrecht, Holland with 5 children in 1953, and settled in the Woodstock, Ontario area. There Mr. Vanlperen worked for a farmer for two years. Then they moved to Hamilton for there was a Canadian Reformed Church. Mr. Vanlperen worked for 2 1/2 years in greenhouses. The Lord had also blessed their marriage with 2 more sons.

In 1957 they moved to their farm in Beamsville. The Lord in His infinite wisdom took the youngest son home in 1977. They are now retired and in relatively good health.

We pray that the Lord may bless them and that they may be a blessing to all those who love them and to His church.

News from the Women's Saving Action

In order to keep all of you who so faithfully support this worthwhile cause informed, we would like to share the following with you.

College evening

Once again the College evening is behind us and Mrs. J. Mulder on behalf of all of us was able to hand over a pledge for \$20,000 for the purchase of books and periodicals for the library.

What we did

This past June we agreed to fund the purchase of a new computer for the library; the needs of the library necessitated a computer with a larger capacity. The old computer now serves as a read only terminal in the library and is replacing the card catalogue which is very expensive to generate and maintain. At the same time we also offered the Finance and Property Committee of the College (which has been burdened with a number of extra expenses over the past year) an interest-free loan (to be repaid over a four year period) so that each of the professors' offices could be equipped with a computer. By buying all the computers at once a considerable saving was realized. Thus you can see that the money collected has once again been put to good use.

Last year's collection

From June 1, 1989 to May 31, 1990 a total of \$18,665.74 was collected, about \$1300 more than last year (but still not quite the \$20,000 which we have pledged). We welcome a number of new congregations which have indicated their desire to join "our team." The women's societies of Albany have just sent in a large contribution. Thank you very much, ladies! Initial steps have also been taken to form a women's saving action in Australia.

Why continue?

As you are most certainly aware, the College community is very appreciative of our continuing efforts to provide financial support for the library. These efforts have to be continued not only because the library has to be kept constantly updated but also because eventually expansion will have to take place. This year for the first time volumes are systematically being stored outside of the library proper for lack of space. We would certainly like to be prepared when expansion does become a necessity. Remember when we were ready in 1984 and could make a substantial contribution towards the purchase of the new College building! Many of you, I am sure, have seen the plaque in the foyer of the College commemorating this fact.

Tax receipts

In order to be more efficient each of the representatives is now able to make out tax receipts for gifts of \$10.00 or more. An organization as small as ours has to set a minimum limit because of the costs involved in the printing and mailing of receipts.

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE WOMEN'S SAVINGS ACTION

Contributions June 1, 1989 to May 31, 1990

Abbotsford	\$1994.85
Ancaster	415.00
Attercliffe	854.15
Barrhead	378.00
Brampton	
Burlington East	994.10
Burlington South	777.10
Burlington West	1,370.00
Calgary	200.00
Chatham	370.00
Chilliwack	496.00
Cloverdale	

Coaldale	\$1,727.20
Edmonton, Imm.	187.84
Edmonton, Prov.	836.75
Elora	65.90
Fergus	145.12
Grand Rapids	214.87
Grand Valley	81.50
Guelph	70.25
Hamilton	1,669.20
Houston	97.74
Langley	2,173.00
Lincoln	135.80
London	104.68
Neerlandia	709.00
Orangeville	105.00
Ottawa	60.00
Smithers	589.21
Smithville	1,009.85
Surrey	475.00
Toronto	75.00
Winnipeg	
Alberta League Day leftovers	118.88
Misc. to treasurer	70.00
Misc. to College	95.00
TOTAL	\$18,665.74

Please note: Our fiscal year runs from June 1 to May 31. A number of contributions came in after May 31, 1990 and will not appear on the financial statement until the following book year.

May our heavenly Father continue to bless all our efforts for the furtherance of His kingdom.

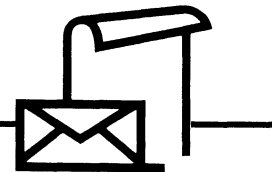
Chairman
Mrs. J. Mulder
1225 Hwy 5 RR 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

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

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



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Re: "Are We Not Attractive?" letter of Rev. G. van Dooren, *Clarion*, September 28, 1990.

With great interest I read the letter of Rev. G. van Dooren in *Clarion* (September 29, 1990) in which he seeks to provide some answers to the question why we, as Canadian Reformed Churches, are not "attractive" to many searching believers.

In doing so, Rev. van Dooren gives (anonymous) "quotes" from various sources outside of our churches. It's the old story: we think we're the only ones....

Frankly speaking, I have heard this kind of criticism more often from some of our own members than from those of other churches. Our churches have never given any reason for others to speak in such a way about the Canadian Reformed Churches. I am not speaking about individual views of some church members but concerned with official statements made by our ecclesiastical assemblies.

Synod Winnipeg 1989 clearly rejected what Rev. van Dooren calls "the popular understanding of Synod 1986's decisions" (Acts, Article 130, especially sub 4). I am sure that most of our members have never interpreted Synod 1986's decisions in the manner as suggested by Rev. van Dooren. His own interpretation is not as "popular" as he thinks.

I am grateful for Dr. van Dam's accurate reminder that Synod 1986 did not formulate some independent doctrinal statement on "the church" but had to deal with an *appeal* which came up out of a local situation. The 1986 decisions must indeed be understood in their specific context. No Synod would otherwise have ever dealt with such a doctrinal issue.

Our churches have from the beginning of their existence in Canada tried to fulfill their ecumenical calling, be it imperfectly and with many shortcomings. I think of the contacts with the Christian Reformed Church which led to our "appeal" of 1977. There have been local contacts with Free Reformed Churches. There has been intensive contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and now with the Free Church of Scotland. The underlying suggestion that we see only ourselves as "the Church" is false, to say the least.

The suggestion that our ministers "talk more about the church than about Christ, our Saviour" is one which Rev. van Dooren should have no problem refuting as being false, for he himself has been the lecturer of homiletics at our Col-

lege for many years. I find this so-called quotation an unproven and unworthy allegation against the ministers of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Churches which is not worth repeating.

Instead of perpetuating the myth about our churches as being "exclusive" and even giving credibility to this myth, Rev. van Dooren would have done better to make clear that such statements are a caricature of what really lives in our churches. And if there are any wrong ideas in our churches about these matters, is that not also in part because of the teaching of the "older generation" whom Rev. van Dooren proudly presents as being so gracious. Was it not the "older generation" who taught us that we must speak about the church of Christ not in a speculative manner but in a normative manner? Was it not the older generation who insisted that "numbers" are not decisive but that faithfulness is required?

Let us beware of the church-growth movement idea which measures the faithfulness of a church mostly by its "attractiveness" demonstrated in statistical data. Let us not panic immediately when other "searching" Reformed believers do not come to us right away in droves; time is needed (from both sides) to become re-acquainted with one another after years of separation. What we must do now is diligently work on getting re-acquainted.

What we definitely do not need are letters which oppose against alleged viewpoints but in reality only serve to put our churches in a bad light. Let us dispel the myth instead of perpetuating it.

There may be various reasons for many concerned Reformed believers not joining our churches. One of them may be precisely that after the Liberation in 1944, the Reformed Churches (Liberated) took quite a strong stand with respect to ecclesiastical faithfulness and Reformed organizations, such as school societies. This stand was not appreciated by others, especially in the Christian Reformed Church, as Rev. van Dooren knows very well.

The positive leadership given by the "older generation" has been misinterpreted by many outsiders, but please do not fault the present Canadian Reformed generation for this sad misinterpretation. Instead be grateful that the leadership was followed in obedience to God's Word. For is this not one of the reasons why we by God's grace may still be faithful?

I am not so worried about our church-

es being "attractive." I am not sure what is meant by the rather subjective concept of "attractiveness." We can use more kindness, friendliness, and gentleness, I'm sure. I agree that we may never be judgmental when it comes to persons. But let our churches simply remain *faithful* to the Word of God and the Reformed confession, and in this time of "searching" show more and more in word and deed that we desire unity with all who serve the Lord according to His Word.

With due respect to all,
Cl. Stam

Dear Editor,

In the August 31, 1990 issue of *Clarion*, is a Press Release of Classis Ontario North, held on August 10, 1990.

Under the heading PROPOSAL we read the following:

The church at Guelph proposed that:

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

1. the names of the delegates are announced at the beginning of the meeting and name tags are placed in front of the brothers for the duration of the proceedings.

2. the seating arrangement is either a circular or a square; the long narrow table should be avoided.

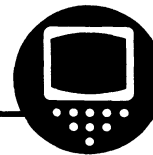
The proposal was defeated.

I had to rub my eyes a few times after reading this and my first reaction was: "Now I have seen it all!" I have always tried to have some understanding for those brothers who are resisting change in important matters in our church life. But here is a proposal from within the ranks to have a basis for a better meeting, and this gets thrown out!

It is understandable that not every church facility may have a meeting room suitable for a classical gathering. But for the few meetings a year, I am quite sure a proper meeting room can be found anywhere. The business of the church is important enough to elevate the physical aspect out of the middle ages, and I would like to suggest that the senior members of our "clergy" show more leadership. There is not much point for an elder to take valuable time out of his work or business to attend a meeting where he cannot properly participate. Please, let us get with it.

Arie J. Hordyk





Classis Ontario-South, September 12 and 26, 1990

Opening: On behalf of the convening church at London, elder D. Bergsma greeted the brothers and expressed the thankfulness of the church at London for the services of Rev. W. Boessenkool, retired minister of the sister church at Johannesburg, South Africa. He then asked Rev. Boessenkool to open the meeting of the delegates for the convening church. Rev. Boessenkool asked the brothers to sing Psalm 84:6. He then read 1 Peter 1:13-25 and led in prayer.

Examination of Credentials: The church at London examined the credentials and reported that all the churches were properly represented.

Constitution of Classis: Classis was constituted. The moderamen were:

Chairman: Rev. J. Van Rietschoten

Clerk: Rev. D. Moes

Vice-Chairman: Rev. K.A. Kok

The chairman thanked the convening church for its work and welcomed Rev. Boessenkool. He also noted the following memorabilia:

The church at Lincoln comes to this classis concerning the institution of a new congregation and has also extended a call to the Rev. J.J. Schreuder.

Rev. K.A. Kok declined the call extended by the church at Port Kells.

A parental American Reformed elementary school has begun operation in Blue Bell, PA.

The church at Ancaster is without a minister since the departure of Rev. R. Aasman to the Providence Church in Edmonton.

The chairman also remembers the other congregations without ministers and expresses the hope that these churches might soon have ministers of the Word to serve them.

The chairman welcomes Brother R. Dean Anderson who had requested examination ad Art. 21 C.O.

Adoption of the Agenda: After certain items had been added, the agenda was adopted.

Examination ad Art. 21 C.O.: Classis decided not to grant Brother Anderson's request to be examined with a view to speaking an edifying word.

Grounds: The purpose of Art. 21 C.O.

is to provide the churches with able ministers. The preaching consent is not part of the curriculum of the Theological College. The preaching consent, rather, is to aid the student in his training for service within the churches and not to enhance his training in general.

Since Brother Anderson cannot assure classis that his training is directed to service in the churches, classis cannot accede to his request.

Correspondence: A letter is received from four former members of the church at Grand Rapids and an answer to be sent to them is formulated.

Two separate appeals are received from two different members of the church at Watford. Classis declares these appeals to be admissible and appoints a committee to study them. This committee is to report to this classis when it reconvenes at 10:00 a.m., September 26, 1990 in Lincoln (D.V.).

Question Period ad Art. 44 C.O.: The question period is held. The church at Lincoln asks for, and is given, pulp supply.

Request ad Art. 40 C.O.: The church at Lincoln asks advice concerning the institution of a church in the eastern Niagara peninsula. Classis concurs with the decision of the consistory of the church at Lincoln to institute this church.

Reports: The church at Chatham, as the church responsible for the fund ad Art. 20 C.O., recommends an assessment of \$10.00 per communicant member. This is accepted. The audit of this fund found its books in good order.

The church at Ancaster, as the church responsible for the fund for Needy Churches, recommended an assessment of \$18.00 per communicant member. This is accepted. An audit of the period January 1 - December 31, 1989 found the books in good order.

The Church Visitation Report of the visit to the church at Smithville is read.

Appointments: Next classis:

Convening church:

church at Smithville

Place: London

Date: December 12, 1990

Proposed moderamen:

Rev. Cl. Stam - chairman

Rev. J. Van Rietschoten - clerk

Rev. D. Moes - vice-chairman

The church at Ancaster is re-appointed as the church responsible for the fund for Needy Churches.

The delegates for Regional Synod, November 14, 1990:

a. Elder delegates: Wm. Bartels, G. Hart, R. Jager, H.J. Wildeboer; alternates: H. Kuntz, D. Lof, H. Reinink, R.J. Oosterhoff (in that order)

b. Minister delegates: D.G.J. Agema, B.R. Hofford, P. Kingma, Cl. Stam; alternates: J. Van Rietschoten, K.A. Kok, D. Moes (in that order)

Personal Question Period: This period is held. The chairman gives Rev. W. Boessenkool the opportunity to address classis. Rev. Boessenkool expresses his thankfulness for the unity of the faith between the churches in South Africa and in North America; he also informs the classis about the church situation in South Africa.

The ladies who had served classis throughout the day with refreshments and meals are thanked.

Adjournment: Rev. Van Rietschoten asks the brothers to sing Psalm 99:4,5,6 and closes in prayer.

Reconvening: Classis is reconvened at 10:00 a.m. on September 26, 1990. The chairman asks the brothers to sing Psalm 34:1,2,6 and opens with prayer. He then reads 2 Corinthians 7:2-16 and makes some remarks concerning the passage. The roll is called and note is taken of the alternate delegates now taking their place at classis.

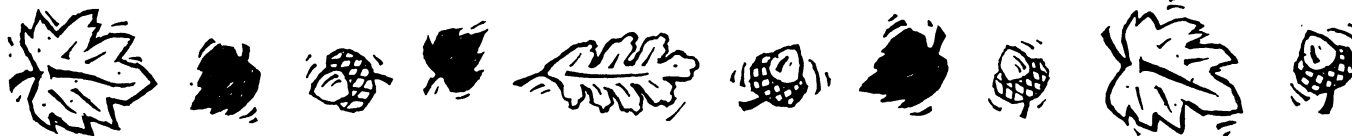
Report of the Committee re Appeals: Discussion of the reports concerning the two appeals takes place in closed session.

Decisions are adopted and will be sent to the appellants and the consistory of the church at Watford.

Personal Question Period: Use is made of this period. The chairman also concludes, with thankfulness, that mutual censure ad Article 44 C.O. is not necessary.

Closing: The chairman asks Rev. K.A. Kok if he would close the meeting. Rev. Kok asks the brothers to sing Psalm 131:1,2,3 and closes in prayer.

Submitted for the classis,
K.A. Kok,
Vice-chairman, e.t.



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



By Aunt Betty

Hello Busy Beavers,

REFORMATION DAY

"Reformation Day? What's that!? some people will say.

Well, the story started long ago.

It was October 31, 1517. Yes, long ago.

Martin Luther was a young monk, then, living in Germany.

On that important (but he didn't know it then!) day, he walked to the chapel door in Wittenberg, and, hammer in hand, he nailed a piece of paper to that door.

On that paper Luther had written 95 questions to be talked about by all the people coming to the chapel on that busy day.

Today we would hand out sheets of paper to all the comers.

But because they had no copiers, *one* sheet was posted on the church door for *everyone* to see.

Everyone *did* see. And when they *read* what Luther wrote, they were really excited.

Some people said "Luther asks *good* questions!"

Others said, "How does he *dare* ask such questions?"

But everyone was *talking* about Luther's questions.

Copies were made on the printing presses invented not long before.

Then even more people read Luther's questions.

And what was it Luther said?

He just asked questions about the bad things that had crept into the church.

He asked 95 such questions.

Soon many people agreed with Luther that many things in the church must change.

It was time for *Reformation*.

Time to let the Bible speak!

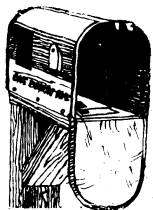
Luther did not know it that day, but later people realized that Oct. 31, 1517 was the start of the great *Reformation*.

Later, there were other *Reformations*, too.

Time and again, the Lord gave men like Luther to make people listen to the Bible again.

That's why we, too, remember *Reformation Day*.

Because we, too, must listen to what the *Bible* tells us!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Alanna Jager*. Did you think moving was exciting? Will you write and tell us about it? And about your family? Bye for now, Alanna.

Yes, I think you did have an exciting summer, *Michelle Peters*. What do you think you'll remember longest about the summer of 1990? And what makes school exciting now, Michelle?

You had a good summer, too, right, *Theresa Bredenhof*? Thank you for your puzzles and riddles, too. I know the Busy Beavers will enjoy them! Write again soon, Theresa.

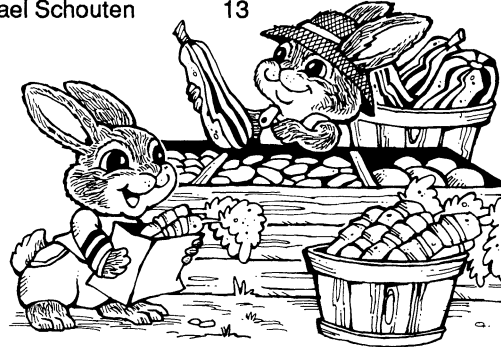
Congratulations on your baby sister, *John Witten*. But she's quite big already, right? Maybe she even likes to watch you play Nintendo! Thanks for writing, John. Bye for now.

Birthday Wishes!

Here's hoping all the Busy Beavers who have a *November* birthday have a really great day celebrating with family and friends. May the Lord, our heavenly Father, guide and bless you all in the year ahead!

November

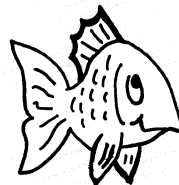
Carin Meliefste	1	David De Bruin	14
Jennifer Stam	2	Kerri-Anne Wierenga	14
Michelle Medemblik	5	Sheryl Linde	15
Robbie Blanken	6	Peter John Sikkema	15
Randy Dijkstra	7	Karen Heres	16
Peter Vanderzwaag	8	Shawn Veenendaal	16
Josh Rosa	10	Margaret de Witt	17
Theresa Bredenhof	11	Jaclyn Hulst	20
Alex Meerstra	11	Gredina Jaspers	20
Julia Jonker	12	Karen Vandergaag	21
Ken Stam	12	Rachel Pruijm	24
Juanita Wildeboer	12	Christie Bultje	25
Aimee Jagt	13	Joni Schulenberg	30
Michael Schouten	13		



Quiz Time!

Riddles

By Busy Beaver *Theresa Bredenhof*



Why did the mouse cross the road?

Why did the students give Becky a bag of bones for her birthday?

What fish goes well with peanut butter?

What do little girl fish like to play with?

What did the traffic light say to the car?

(See answers)

Fall

By Busy Beaver Anna Devries



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

colours
brown
red
Halloween
witches
cloudy
yellow
beautiful
pumpkins
fog
rainy
harvest
Thanksgiving Day

squash
orange
gourds
fall
leaves
rakes
trees
season
leaf
games
treat
nuts
wind



Busy Beavers: there is a secret message from the leftover letters, starting at the top, going left to right.

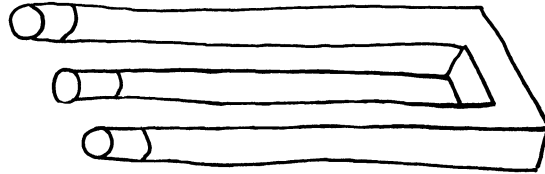
LEADERS

Martin Luther and John Calvin were leaders during the *Great Reformation*. Can you match these Bible time leaders with the right activity?

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Peter (Acts 2:1,14) | a. led by a cloud |
| 2. Aaron (Ex. 32:2-4) | b. led the Nineveh revival |
| 3. Aquila & Priscilla (Acts 18:24-27) | c. preached at Pentecost |
| 4. God (Ex. 13:21) | d. led the battle of Jericho |
| 5. Jonah (Jonah 3:4-5) | e. taught Apollos the things of the Lord |
| 6. Absalom (2 Sam. 15:4) | f. led a conspiracy against his father |
| 7. Saul (1 Sam. 10:24) | g. led in the storing of grain for a world-wide famine |
| 8. Paul (Acts 17:22,24) | h. led the construction of a golden calf |
| 9. Joseph (Gen. 41:45-48) | i. led the Jews to plot against Jesus |
| 10. Caiaphas (John 18:14) | j. led as first king of Israel |
| 11. Joshua (Josh 6:2,6,7) | k. led some Athenians to believe in Christ |

PICTURE PUZZLE

From Busy Beaver *Janine Vanderhoeven*
Can you see where the middle bar starts?



Answers:

Last time's picture puzzles: 1. earwig 2. butterfly 3. fire fly 4. caterpillar

Riddle Fun: 1. It was the chicken's day off 2. She was teacher's pet 3. jellyfish 4. "Close your eyes, I'm changing."

Leaders: 1.c 2.h 3.e 4.a 5.b 6.f 7.j 8.k 9.g 10.i 11.d

Bye for now, Busy Beavers
I'm looking forward to your letters.

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

