



Clarion

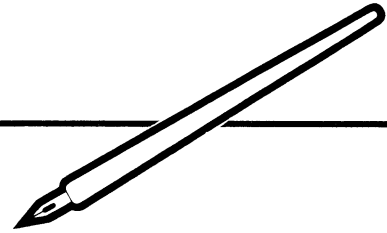
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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By J. Geertsema



The offense of a closed Lord's Supper Table

Does it hinder others to join a Canadian Reformed Church?

A letter

In our magazine we had recently a discussion about the attractiveness of the Canadian Reformed Churches for other (Reformed) Christians. It began with a Letter to the Editor from Rev. G. Van Dooren. In this context the following Letter to the Editor of br. Tony Van Hengel of Surrey, B.C. was received:

In his recent article "Do we have to have a guilt complex" in the *Clarion* of Oct. 26 the Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene seems to take very personal the matter raised by the Rev. Van Dooren and as a result his article is – in my humble opinion – unnecessarily sharp. In an earlier issue Rev. Van Dooren speculated as to the reasons why "the thousands" leaving the Dutch synodical Reformed Church and the CRC elect not to join 'our' churches. Rev. Van Dooren quoted some comments made about our church by outsiders.

Nobody is directing 'veiled accusations' at the person of the esteemed author of the article. Rev. Van Dooren is asking questions to which we can respond without bias.

The notion that we in the Canadian Reformed Church pay far too much attention to 'the Church' and what it means to be a member thereof, is indeed widespread among members of other Reformed denominations. While many 'critics' only repeat what others have opined earlier, some and locally I can say 'many,' have seriously considered joining our churches, but were 'turned off' by certain practices.

Chief among those practices is the way in which we fence the Lord's Table. Only members may attend, and members of other congregations need an attestation before they are allowed to partake.

While we may be used to this practice, for an outsider this is very difficult to understand. For the welcome they have received has by and large been warm and enthusiastic. They have enjoyed the true Reformed preaching and have gotten to know the congregation. Members of the consistories have acquainted themselves with the visitors.

But whenever the first celebration of the Lord's death came, they found themselves excluded. Yes, their testimony of knowing Christ Jesus as their Lord and Saviour was accepted, but as long as there was no membership, there would be no participation in the Lord's Supper.

For people to whom the idea of a fenced Lord's Table is as foreign as snow to Nomads in the Sahara desert this was and continues to be an issue that hurts. They feel personally rejected. They feel that we declare to them that they have no part in the Kingdom of God.

And suddenly there is proof that everything they have always heard about the Canadian Reformed Church, is true. The evidence is here for all to see.

As often happens when one feels personally attacked or even condemned (with emphasis on 'feels'), the reactions which follow tend to be rather sharp and rather negative. There is no point to attempt to explain why we fence the Lord's Table as we do. The damage has already been done.

Let us be kind and understanding to those that have difficulty with certain aspects of our worship and our redemptive theology. They may need a lot of time to come to appreciate what we have.

In the meantime we should have the courage to consider some of the issues raised and make sure that our understanding to the fencing of the Lord's Table etc. is in accordance with the Scriptures as well as with the Reformed Creeds. If we are of an open mind we might learn something from such 'outsiders,' and in the process enrich ourselves as well as provide a safe haven on spiritually stormy seas.

Since the main example in this letter deals with the closed table, I take the freedom to respond to it. The matter is important. We have here a concrete point by which some are "turned off." Br. Hengel asks for kindness and understanding with respect to those who find our way of fencing the table of the Lord difficult to grasp. He also would like us to have the courage to consider this and other matters in the light of God's Word and the Reformed Creeds.

In what follows here, I will try to do what br. Hengel asks. I can quite well understand that Christians from other churches have difficulties with this matter. I remember, for instance, that Rev. McLeod of the Free Church of Scotland had difficulties with our practice. He wrote after the meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) that "even when we are accepted as a 'true church' this does not mean that a Free Church member is welcome at a 'Reformed' Communion or a Free Church minister welcome in a 'Reformed' pulpit" (*The Monthly Record*, Sept. 1989, p. 187).

Since we are not in a concrete situation here, in which "feelings of being offended" dominate, it might help to make an effort to explain why we have this practice. I shall deal here with two questions. The first one is: what can be the reason that this fencing of the Lord's table is so difficult to accept? The second is: Why do we fence the table as we do?

Why is the fencing of the table of the Lord so hard to accept?

Let me try to place myself into the shoes of such a guest and fellow-believer. Together we agree that the Lord's Sup-

per is for believers, for those who "are grafted into Christ" by a true faith (Heid. Cat., L.D.7, Q.A. 20), and "who are truly displeased with themselves because of their sins and yet trust that these are forgiven them . . . and who desire more and more to strengthen their faith and amend their life" (Heid. Cat., L.D.30, Q.A.81). They believe to be members of Christ's invisible, true church as this is spread over and can be found in all the different churches. So, as members of Christ and of His invisible church they feel the need to be accepted as brothers and to receive the strengthening of their faith.

In my opinion, we have here two main arguments: first, that of placing emphasis on the individual believer with his or her need for the strengthening of faith and for recognition as believers by other brothers and sisters, and, second, there is the conviction that one is a member of the invisible church of Christ, the church of the elect, of all true Christian believers, as it is gathered universally over the whole earth and can be found in all the different churches.

The concept of the invisible church

I deal first with the second point. Most Christians, also in Reformed churches, have been brought up with a view regarding the church that is dominated by the invisible church concept. For them the true church of Christ consists of all true believers or all the elect. To this church they belong. For that reason it is not so important of which visible church one is a member.

Connected with this concept of the invisible church in the different denominations is another concept regarding the church: that of the pluriformity of the church: the one invisible church of Christ manifests itself in many different forms, that is, in many different denominations. We can compare it with flowers. There is the common, general concept of the flower, which (invisible) concept is concretely manifested in the many different shapes and colours of the many specific flowers. All these different flowers show an aspect of "the flower." So, the different churches, each in its own way, are visible manifestations of "the church." When they do not deviate from the truth too much, they show and stress each their own different aspects of the truth of the gospel. All are seeking for the truth, while no one should boast of possessing the truth exclusively.

Within this pattern of thinking about and acting with regard to the church and church membership, it is fully understandable that the table of the Lord is (to be) an open table. In this framework, all those who believe, and through faith are grafted into Christ should have access to the table of the Lord. In this approach a closed table is an awful thing. It comes across as exclusivistic, as denying Christ and salvation to other Christians, as sectarian, as telling others that they are not good or good enough as believers, and so on.

The emphasis on the individual believer

A consequence of this thinking about the church as first and foremost invisible and pluriform is individualism and subjectivism. With individualism I mean that the local church with its office-bearers as an "autonomous," complete body of Christ disappears into the background, while the believing, the born-again individual is placed in the center. It is an ellipse with two focal points. In the ellipse of this thinking about the church, the total number of the elect, the invisible church, is the one focal point and the other is the individual born-again believer. The rest is entourage.

The result of thinking with these two foci is that the criterion for one's acting becomes the subjective faith in the heart of the individual believer. Does a person believe? The criterion becomes: is there faith in the heart of the believer, the human subject? The result is that the norm for our acting is no longer; what does the Word of God say about how we have to live and act in

our life, also with regard to the church and church membership? What is God's revealed will? When one is concentrating on the foci of invisible church (election) and subjective faith in the heart, the danger is great of losing sight of concrete, covenantal obedience to God's will, also as this is confessed, e.g., in Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession: the obligation regarding the concrete, true, local church of Christ, "to join it and unite with it, maintaining the unity of the church" in this way. Here we confess that the believers "must submit themselves to its instruction and discipline, bend their necks under the yoke of Jesus Christ, and serve the edification of the brothers and sisters, according to the talents which God has given them as members of the same body." Herewith we have come to our second question.

Why do we fence the table of the Lord as we do?

A different approach regarding the church is to begin with the local congregation as body of Christ, in line with, e.g., 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul addresses the Corinthian congregation as body of Christ: "Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it" (v.27). This beginning with the local church as by itself a complete body of Christ was the confessional and



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church political foundation on which the organization of church life was based in the days of the Reformation, and again in the days of the Secession and the Doleantie.

First we deal with the framework

In the sixteenth century the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands [not church(!)] "under the cross" (of persecution) came together and organized themselves as local churches in a bond, a federation. Together they made and adopted a church order for their living together in this federation. They promised each other to abide by the mutually accepted agreements of this Church Order in order to help each other to abide by God's Word. It was a true mark of reformation, of return to God's Word, that these Reformed Churches, having left the hierarchy of the false Roman Catholic Church, did not fall into the opposite evil of independentism and "dominocracy" [minister's rule, churches set up and dominated by and bound to a minister]. They wanted to be churches bound only to the Lord as their Head and therefore to His Word. For this reason these churches adopted confessional standards and an ecclesiastical "order" or regulations based on God's Word and in agreement with these standards.

The churches of the Secession (after some struggling) and of the Doleantie, in which Dr. F.L. Rutgers, "the man of Reformed Church Polity," played such an important role, returned to this Reformed principle. Still today we must be very thankful that in Secession and Doleantie these restored Reformed Churches were not guided by a negative, independentistic and conservatistic, reactionary attitude. Freeing themselves from the "second" hierarchical system of a church that showed the marks of being a false church, did not mean the rejection of a church life that was regulated by the old Reformed Church Order. In Secession and Doleantie, as well as in the Liberation, the Reformed churches not only returned to God's Word and the Reformed Confessions, but also to the Reformed Church Order of Dordrecht for a Reformed orderly church life.

The Lord's Supper is placed within this framework

It was within this Reformed church political framework that attention was given also to the regulation of the celebration of the Lord's Supper. At the Convent of Wesel in 1568, where the foundations were laid for an organized Reformed church life, the following article was adopted regarding the Lord's Supper (VI,7): "No one shall be admitted to the holy supper of the Lord unless he has first made public profession of faith and submits himself to the discipline of the church."

The admission to the table was further regulated in the following articles 9-11 (cf *Kerkelijk Handboekje*, Kampen: Zalsman, 1897, pp.61f; and *Bij Brood en Bekker* [With Bread and Cup], by Dr. W. van 't Spijker a.o., eds., Goudriaan: De Groot, 1980, pp.369ff): Those who are examined sufficiently . . . shall present themselves to the congregation. They must declare their agreement with the most important parts of the faith. They shall also submit to the discipline of the church and their names shall be written in the membership book. And when this has been made known to the congregation, and no legitimate objections have been brought forward, they shall be permitted to the holy supper of the Lord.

Dr. van 't Spijker, author of the article referred to here, tells us that the (provincial) synod of Dordrecht in 1574 "organizes, with good reason, the congregation around the Lord's supper." ["groepeert heel zinvol de gemeente rondom het avondmaal"]. "Having part in the congregation manifests itself at the supper of the Lord. Coming to the congregation means in fact the same as: coming to the table. . . . Further, it belongs to the task of the ministers and of the consistory to watch diligently who are members of the congregation and also whether they participate every time in the celebration of the Lord's supper." We are further in-

formed that the national synod of Dordrecht in 1578 spoke in the same line: "This receiving into the congregation takes place through admitting them to the Lord's supper."

In these regulations we can notice a very strong bond between the celebration of the Lord's supper and membership in the congregation. In the thinking of our Reformed fathers in the days of the Reformation the two are closely linked together.

F.L. Rutgers, called "the father of Reformed Church Polity" in the days of the Doleantie, is completely in line with this classic Reformed thinking and led the churches back to it. In his book *Kerkelijke Adviezen* ([Advising the Churches], vol II, Kampen: Kok, 1922, p.109), he writes that the words about admitting people to the church and to the Lord's table certainly do not mean to say that such a person "has become a member of the church in general, but only that he has joined this or that specific, local church or congregation."

On p. 156 Rutgers deals with the question, "Is it correct to admit members of different churches in the same place to the Holy Supper?" The situation is that of someone who still is officially a member of a different church (denomination), but disagrees with what is taught and done there, and so regularly attends the local Reformed church, and wishes to celebrate the Lord's supper there. Rutgers says:

In my opinion, a "Dutch-Reformed" ["Hervormde"] person can and may not be admitted to the Holy Supper in the place where he dwells, when he objects (for whatever reason) to place himself under the oversight and discipline of that consistory [of a Reformed Church, J.G.], which, of course, can be done only by joining the Reformed Church as a member. If one acts differently, the admission to the Holy Supper is given over to arbitrariness and disorder, and a line of action is followed by which the only means to keep the Lord's Supper holy is taken away from the consistory.

This Reformed way of acting with regard to "guests" from other churches and the admission to the Lord's Supper is part of the oversight and discipline of the church. It belongs to Reformed church polity, in which the aim is the obedience of faith to what God says in His Word. It is the Reformed church polity of the Reformation, of Secession and Doleantie, as well as of the Liberation. The consistory has to be able to exercise its Christ-given duty of oversight and discipline, while it has no jurisdiction over those who are not members and have not placed themselves under its supervision by joining the congregation. An open table is un-Reformed. It is our Reformed calling to maintain this.

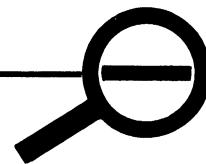
Conclusion

I hope that this helps others to understand where we come from with our closed table. I hope that it is evident that a closed table as we have it has nothing to do with sectarianism or the idea that Canadian Reformed people think that they are the only true Christian believers and that salvation is only for them, and more of this nonsense. I hope that it helps guests in our churches to understand that the closed table does not mean at all that they are judged and rejected, but that it means that we seek to do things orderly whereby first things are done first. With the closed table we simply seek to be and remain Reformed and obedient to God's Word that tells us that "all things should be done decently and in good order" (1 Cor. 14:40) since "God is not a God of confusion [or: disorder, unruliness] but of peace" (1 Cor. 14:33).

It is in this respect gladdening to here from Rev. Cl. Stam, reporting in a private conversation, that in Scotland appreciation is growing for this Reformed line of thinking and acting regarding the church and the Lord's Supper. I express the wish that this article may help that also here in North America such appreciation will grow with those who seek to be truly Reformed in thinking and acting, and that it may so serve the unity of the church of Christ according to Art. 28 of the Belgic Confession.



By C. Van Dam



New Religious Freedom in Russia

With the passage of a new law guaranteeing freedom of worship and religion, Soviet Christians are entering a new era of liberty not experienced since the imposition of state atheism some seventy years ago. According to Lenin the duty of the Communist party was to stamp out religion. After many years of often very vigorous persecution of Christians, the battle has clearly been lost by those who hate God. The work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers cannot be crushed by an atheistic ideology.

Key provisions of the new law

The new legislation was approved by the Supreme Soviet on October 1, 1990 with a vote of 341 to 2. It provides legal guarantees for Christians and "formalizes many of the changes that have already taken place under President Mikhail Gorbachev's program of human-rights reforms" (*Globe and Mail*, Oct. 2, 1990). There is now to be a separation of church and state. All religions are to be equal before the law and the state is forbidden to finance atheistic propaganda. Discriminatory taxes levied on clergy have been eliminated and military commanders may no longer forbid soldiers to attend religious services. It will also be legal to conduct religious training of children. Prior to the bill's passage, this was illegal, in some cases, even in the home.

However, not all is well. The new law apparently does not give complete religious freedom. Article 22.2 gives religious organizations the right to publish and distribute material, but private citizens are not mentioned as having these rights. That means that religious organizations which are not registered with the government (such as non-registered baptists and Pentecostals) do not officially exist and hence cannot enjoy this protection of the law. Furthermore, although churches and religious organizations no longer have to register with the central government, they do still have to

do this with the local one. According to one group ("Kruistocht") which is monitoring developments in Russia true freedom of religion will only become a fact in the Soviet Union if the Council for Religious Affairs, the KGB, the conservative bureaucracy, and the religious leadership that has compromised itself with the old communist regime disappear.

The fact that random and indiscriminate attacks against religious freedom and individual rights still take place underlines that the old guard, locally and on top, needs to be completely dismantled.

On the other hand, in some republics, such as Lithuania and the Russian Federation, more religious freedom will probably be granted than the central authority is willing to concede at this time. Religious activists are the ones who are often putting together new laws in the republics. A case in point was mentioned by *World* (Oct. 6, 1990):

the vice-chairman of the parliamentary commission working on religious liberty issues in the Russian Federation was no less than Gleb Yakunin, who was once banished as a Russian Orthodox priest and imprisoned for his contacts with Western Christians and the media. As far back as 1975 Yakunin embarrassed the communist authorities and the Orthodox hierarchy, as well as the World Council of Churches, by his appeal to the WCC Nairobi assembly to improve the lot of U.S.S.R. believers.

Spreading the Word

The relaxing of repression and the more open climate in the U.S.S.R. means that there are more possibilities than ever before to print and spread Bibles. Major problems however need to be overcome. Although the United Bible Societies wants to print hundreds of thousands copies of the Scriptures, the "printing facilities in the country...are in

an 'incredibly poor state.' Moreover, the paper supply is erratic" (*World*). New translations are planned for all the major languages spoken in the U.S.S.R., but here too similar obstacles stand in the way. It is clear that much assistance from outside the country in the form of capital and equipment will be necessary.

The religious climate in Russia is changing drastically and hunger for knowledge of God seems insatiable. Illustrative of this is an article that was brought to my attention from the *Trinitarian Bible Society Newsletter*. It reached me via *The Gospel Witness* (Oct. 11, 1990) and was entitled: "Unbelievers Cry For Bibles."

Russian pastors have told me that every believer in the Soviet Union has a Bible. The cry for Bibles is coming from the unbeliever.

A letter recently received from an atheist school teacher tells the following story with an urgent request for Bibles. A teacher of 12 and 13 year olds had finished the lesson. She then asked her class what they would like to discuss in the free time they had left in the class period. One hand went up, and the voice of the student said, "Could you tell us something about God?" The teacher said, "I don't know anything about God. Does anyone here know anything about God?" The class was quiet for a minute or so with some eyes on a young boy named Freddy. "Teacher," one boy called out, "I think Freddy can tell us something about God." The teacher then asked Freddy, "Do you know something about God?" Freddy answered, "Yes, I know something about God." "Well, Freddy, you come up and tell us something about God." Freddy proceeded to the front of the class and shared with the teacher and students what he knew about God. What he

told about God had a profound effect on the teacher and class. When news of what happened at Freddy's school reached the ears of some teachers in another school, they invited Freddy to their school to tell what he knew about God. The result was that Freddy's teacher wrote our co-workers here in Canada requesting Bibles for both schools.

Isn't it amazing, that in North America the drive is on to get the Bible out of the secular school system? In Russia, the drive is on to get the Bible into the school system.

By the way, the reason Freddy could tell about God to people who once rejected any notion about God, is that Freddy had loving Christian parents who brought him up in the

nurture and admonition of the Lord even though it meant persecution. Thank God for Freddy's faithful parents who taught him by precept and example.

Based on reports in *The Globe and Mail*, Oct. 1, 1990, *Nederlands Dagblad*, 19 Oct., 1990 *World*, Oct. 6, 1990.



REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Keep your way pure

It's time for the annual home visit. The old elder with the Dutch accent has asked mom and dad some questions. Then he turns to you and asks, "And how about you, young man, young woman – how are you keeping your way pure?"

You think to yourself, "Gimme a break! What does he mean – keeping my way pure?"

Hang on a sec'. Give the old elder with the Dutch accent a break! He has asked a very good question. It was a good question because it comes from the Bible.

The question comes from Psalm 119:9. It asks, "How can a young man (and we could add, "young woman") keep his (or her) way pure?" How can young people keep their ways pure?

What does "pure" mean? Something is pure if it is not mixed with something else. E.g., the oil for the golden lampstand in the tabernacle had to be pure. Nothing else could be mixed in with it. One of the ingredients of the incense which was to be offered on the altar of incense was pure frankincense. Today we talk about pure oxygen – oxygen with no other chemical components. If you get your water from a well and it's got impurities in it – if a high sulphur content gives it that lovely rotten egg smell or if it is so overly rich in minerals that it destroys your automatic coffee maker – then you can buy "Pure Spring Water" by the jug at the grocery store.

This world in which we live, and even we ourselves, suffer from impurities. Sin has made the pure world God created impure. The unholy trinity of defilers, the devil, the world and our own flesh, make

us impure. These three attack us from all sides and from inside. The world is like an army which surrounds us with its panzer units. The devil attacks us from the air by sending out his fleet of demonic MiG-29 fighters. Our own flesh, that is our own selfish, sinful desires, wears down our defenses from within like a traitor.

How can a young person keep his or her way pure in the face of this three-pronged attack? How can you keep your way pure? You know the impurities that you face every day. Are you strong enough to face them, and live?

When I was your age our parents, ministers and elders warned us about the movie theatre. They were taboo for young Christians – and rightfully so! Why support an industry which promotes impure things such as sex outside of marriage, violence, and the blasphemous use of the LORD's Name, to mention just a few? I can't think of a good reason. But the VCR revolution and cable networking has made warning against going to movie theatres a quaint relic of the past. We don't have to sneak off to the theatre anymore and hope no one from the church sees us standing in line. We can watch some rather hair-raising stuff on cable networks. We can pick up what we want at the local video mart and watch whatever our flesh desires behind the locked door of our bedroom.

We could think of many more examples of ways in which we can bring impurities into our lives. Music? Drugs? Alcohol? But we don't have space. I've singled out the admittedly rather extreme example of the abuse of video and ca-

ble "entertainment" because of how easy it has made it for the unholy trinity to pour their rotting impurities into our lives.

How, in the face of the impurities which the devil, the world and our own flesh are peddling as great stuff, are you going to keep your way pure? The answer is almost ridiculously simple: by guarding it according to the Word of God. That's the answer Psalm 119:9 gives.

What is the Word of God? The Word is promises and demands. The Word is gospel and law. The Word is the Lord Jesus Christ claiming us and then claiming our lives. Surrender yourself to the Word. Give yourself to the Lord Jesus Christ. Follow the way marked out by the Word.

Your passage through life is like travelling along a way, a road. How are you going to keep yourself pure as you walk along that way? By staying on the way which has the hedge of God's Word safely on either side. That hedge guards the way. As long as you stay on the way marked out by the hedge of the Word, you will be travelling along the pure way. Go beyond the hedge of the Word which guards the edge of the way, and you have left the pure way.

The early church called the Christian religion "the Way" (Acts 9:2; 19:9,23; 24:14,22). What a beautiful name for our religion! It is the Way. It is the only Way. It is the Way of salvation. It is the Way of God. It is the Way of the law and the prophets fulfilled by the Lord Jesus Christ.

How can young people keep their ways pure? By walking along the Way. By believing the promises of the Word. By conforming their lives not to the impure ways of the world but to the pure way of the Word.



B. Holwerda's

The Church in the Last Judgment

Forty years later₂

The Church in the Last Judgment, by B. Holwerda, 40 years later
(Original title *DE KERK IN HET EINDGERICHT*. Translated by Dr. P.Y. De Jong.)

Address delivered to The Conference of Officebearers in Ontario of April 7, 1990, by L. Selles.

[In the previous article this study of Prof. B. Holwerda was introduced. It deals with the interpretation of the "great harlot of Rev. 17 and 18. In this second article the identity of the harlot is discussed.]

The dragon and the beasts

To get the data concerning the harlot in the right perspective it may be good to go back for a moment to chapter 12. It told us that the child of the woman "was caught up to God and His throne." Pursuant of this we read of war in heaven, apparently waged by the dragon to keep open the access to the judgment seat at which he used to accuse the brethren. He fails. The war ends with the casting down of the dragon to the earth, along with his angels.

But the dragon would not be devil and Satan if he had left it at that. He first goes after the woman who bore the child and when he fails to seize her, he makes war on the rest of her offspring.

Standing on the sand of the sea two beasts are called by the dragon to help him. The first one rises out of the sea. It is a fierce monster with ten horns and seven heads, marked with blasphemous names. They portray him as a servant of the dragon and an enemy of God and His people (ch. 13:1-8).

Another beast rises out of the earth, looking innocent enough with its two horns as a lamb, but betraying itself by its speech which is like that of a dragon. In it not only another enemy of the church of God appears, but also a very

dangerous one, being minister of propaganda of the first beast, institutor of the worship for it, and persecutor of those who refuse to wear the beast's mark on their forehead or hand (13:11-17).

It is clear from the description that this beast represents false prophecy in whatever form it shows up in these last days.

It is also clear that, though the first beast and the prostitute have a lot in common, they are, nevertheless, different powers. As it is shown and described repeatedly it is not hard to identify this first beast. In chapter 13:7 the authority given to it over every tribe and people and tongue and nation is already mentioned and the worship which it receives from every one whose name is not written in the book of life at the instigation of the second beast, tells the rest. It cannot be anything else but the deified state or world power. This is confirmed by chapter 17:9 and 10, which speak of the seven heads of the beast as seven mountains and seven kings.

The seven heads, one of which was mortally wounded

Two things are strongly emphasized by Holwerda; in the first place the character of the seven heads. They are not just kings but *kingdoms*; not only empires but world empires, totalitarian in nature.

To quote, "Thus Daniel beheld four distinct beasts (Dan. 7). He saw the world power in its several manifestations, each with its own pattern and character.... But John says, If you distinguish well, you will discover in all these kingdoms one and the same satanic power which incorporates itself in a unified state, a world government and as such always speaks blasphemy and brings death and destruction upon mankind" (p.5).

The second thing, strongly stressed by Holwerda, is that the seemingly deadly wound with which the beast was struck in one of its heads and which incapacitated it for a time so that "it was but *is not*," refers to the era since the fall of the Roman empire, the sixth head.

To quote Holwerda again, "the Roman world power is not succeeded by another which takes its place. Rather, this kingdom is repeatedly broken up into a large number of great and small nations. This paves the way for the modern period in history, wherein every people proclaims its national independence and pursues a policy of neutrality, a period of countless clashes. Throughout this period all attempts to resurrect the ancient world power of Babel are unsuccessful" (p.6). "Louis XIV, Napoleon and Hitler failed. The struggle for a worldwide empire which has always inspired the devil and wherein he seeks his strength seems to be frustrated" (p.7).

"But," Holwerda continues, "that which no one deems possible...will finally take place.... At last this spirit of unification will again embody itself in a world empire.... At that time the church once again, even as Israel in the days of our Lord Jesus, will be confronted with the monster of sin.... At that time everyone will worship that beast in the form of its *seventh* head" (p.7). "We are," Holwerda states, "beginning to see that seventh head today" (referring to the time around the nineteen fifties). In this context Holwerda refers to the Atlantic Charter, the Benelux (a trading-block between Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxemburg), the establishment of the United Nations and the Security Council. "Would," Holwerda exclaims, "that we stopped talking about economic problems and soberly assessed the spirit of the age, that with full speed we are steering in the direction of the seventh head...."

the seventh manifestation of Babel, a totally godless world wherein we shall stand all alone" (p.10).

If this applies to the seventh king, it must hold even more for an *eighth* who is mentioned in 17:11.

It is not another head of the beast but the beast *itself*.

As beast and heads are inseparable from each other, it may be said that the beast is an eighth but belongs to the seven (v.11).

It is, as is generally accepted, no one else but the Antichrist, "the man of lawlessness," according to 2 Thessalonians 2:3, who opposes and exalts himself against every so-called god or object of worship and thus claims divine worship for himself.

Thus far about the beast and its heads.

However, the great harlot, the woman of chapter 17, is still not accounted for in context.

One of the angels who administer the seven last plagues approaches John to show him the judgment which will be brought over this woman. In the spirit, i.e., in a state of ecstasy, John is carried into the wilderness. It reminds one of the wilderness to which the woman of chapter 12, who brought forth the male child, fled when the dragon went after her. That wilderness offered her protection and safety. God took care of her. For the prostitute of chapter 17 the wilderness speaks not only of desolation, but also of doom which will come over her. This doom, to be brought over her by the ten horns of the beast, which represent ten kings, is described in the words of verse 16, "They will make her desolate and naked and devour her flesh and burn her up with fire."

This implies total destruction, but when the angel brings John to the wilderness, the prostitute is still in full control. She is portrayed as seated on many waters, which, according to the explanation in verse 15, are "peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues." To be seated on them indicates her prominent position. How prominent appears from the fact that she is also pictured in verse 9 as "seated on seven mountains which are also seven kings. Rome, indicating both the city of that name and the Roman empire, was built on seven hills. To be seated on them points, consequently, to the headquarters from which the harlot operates.

The identification of the mountains with seven kings makes clear that these operations of the woman are not restricted to that one city and empire.

Verse 18 summarizes it all in this way, "And the woman that you saw is

the great city which has dominion over the kings of the earth."

It is not surprising that she is described in verse 4 as arrayed in royal attire. "A queen I sit, I am no widow, mourning I shall never see," she herself says according to chapter 18:7. This sitting as a queen is confirmed by chapter 17:6. But she is a special kind of queen, as indicated by the scarlet colour of the beast which connects her directly with the dragon, as do the blasphemous names by which she is marked.

We already mentioned this and her fornication as well, accompanied by her persecution of the saints.

It is again not surprising to read in chapter 18:9ff. that the kings of the earth will weep and wail over her when her judgment comes and that they are joined by merchants, shipmasters and sailors who in one way or another profited from her and who will cry their "Alas, Alas!" (Cf. 18:9-19).

It is neither surprising to hear the great multitude in heaven exclaim, according to chapter 19:1ff., their "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God for his judgments are true and just; he has judged the great harlot who corrupted the earth with her fornication and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants."

The exultation of the great multitude is so abundant that it cannot but add another "Hallelujah" to the first one. They are joined by the twenty four elders and the four living creatures who, in turn, say, "Amen, Hallelujah." This again is followed by a fourth "Hallelujah" from "what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters and like the sound of mighty thunderpeals, crying 'Hallelujah! For the Lord, our God the Almighty reigns'...."

The identity of the harlot

When we read all this from the chapters 17-19, the only conclusion possible seems to be that the woman, associating herself with political powers and, as these powers, herself hostile to God and the Lamb and, in addition to it, persecuting the church of God, must be a political power as well or, more general, a worldly power.

The passage is usually taken this way. Indeed, Dr. H.N. Ridderbos might have been wrong when, in his article against Prof. Holwerda, he suggested that no exegete in his right mind took it differently, since there are and were interpreters who do and did. However, Ridderbos was right in stating that the *political* interpretation which takes the harlot as a world power is the one which was and is almost generally accepted. Going

over the marginal notes of the Dutch "Staten Vertaling" it again struck me that these notes not only apply what is said about the harlot to Rome as world power, as was done by most Reformed theologians (including Dr. S. Greijdanus in both his brief and extensive commentaries and Dr. K. Schilder in his *Christ and Culture*), but that the marginal notes add, "This [i.e., that Rome is meant] is so clear that not only the most prominent ancient exegetes and Reformed teachers agreed on it, but even many exegetes of the popish tradition." Dr. J.C. de Moor, in his book *De Hemel Geopend* (Heaven Opened) was one of the not too recent exceptions. So was Dr. C. Van der Waal in his *Openbaring van Jezus Christus I. Inleiding en Vertaling* (De Vuurbaak, Groningen, 1971) and in his *Openbaring van Jezus Christus II. Verklaring* (De Nijverheid, Oudkarspel, 1981).

Another dissident was, of course, Prof. Holwerda in his address to the Youth Congress. There is a difference between the last two.

Van der Waal saw the vision of the prostitute fulfilled in the apostate Jewish nation of the days of the apostles which is also a warning example for the New Testament Christian Church. Holwerda saw the apostate church of both the old and the new dispensation symbolized in this great harlot.

When working on the first edition of my *Outlines on Revelation* I chose, after much hesitation, what seemed to me the least unsatisfactory interpretation. It was a modified version of the political exegesis of the great harlot, called the *cultural* interpretation. I call this interpretation modified because, as Prof. Holwerda rightly observed, it still speaks of the world but the world in its cultural manifestation or aspect.

What led me and many others to this interpretation was in particular what is said in chapter 18 about all the treasures and riches of the woman, leading to the lament of kings, merchants, seafarers and all who make their living of the sea, because the source of their pleasures, their trade and their income, is gone with the fall of Babylon, 18:9-19. These data seemed hard to harmonize with the idea of an apostate church.

The great objection against the political as well as the cultural interpretation, however, is this: if the prostitute, in whatever form that may be, is the world then, according to verse 3, the *world* is sitting on the *world*, and, according to the verses 2 and 4, the *world* commits fornication with the *world*, and finally, according to verse 16, the *world* destroys the *world*, i.e., itself. There is further that intriguing passage of chapter 17, starting at verse

12, regarding the ten horns. These horns are kings, associates of antichrist, who are *unable* to conquer the Lamb and those with Him, the called and faithful, v.13. About these kings it says that they not only hate the harlot, but also make her desolate and naked and devour her flesh and burn her with fire, v.16. *Self-vindication* of the antichrist has been mentioned as cause for this sudden

change from a close relationship with the beast into extreme hostility. Or, as also has been done, the *self-destructiveness* of evil which ultimately leads to its ruin has been mentioned. The passage itself does not mention one of these solutions but points to God, who, as verse 17 reads, "has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose...." In other words, whatever may be undertaken by the

prostitute and, by the eighth head which belongs to the seven, the antichrist and his associates, the LORD God remains in charge and governs everything according to His will and for the cause of Christ and His church. What a comfort!

When we so have seen what the harlot cannot be, according to Holwerda, in our next and last article the true identity will have our attention.



SCHOOL CROSSING

By A. Witten



Expectations for Students

With the beginning of school many bulletins highlight tried and true statements about the need for students to behave. General rules for students are presented and the Christian qualities of love, respect and courtesy are stressed as expectations for students.

In Ontario the Ministry of Education, in OS:IS a regulation for the Intermediate and Senior divisions (grades 7-12) requires that each school established a "Code of Student Behaviour." Many Canadian Reformed school societies already have some expectations for students in the form of usually very precise "bus rules and regulations." A "Code of Student Behaviour" would set expectations and standards for the in school activities. The following introductory comments for a "Code of Student Behaviour" (from the Guido de Brès High School, Course Calendar, 1990-1991, p. 2) highlight the rationale for such a code in a Reformed School:

1. Introduction:

In our school, expectations for student behaviour are built upon God's Word. All of mankind is prone to sin. Therefore within the school improper student behaviour will occur. However, what must make our school unique is that all our students are called to submit themselves to Christ. This calling has the following implications.

a. Obedience to Authority:

Children must obey their parents and the teachers that instruct the children on behalf of the parents (Ephesians 6:1). Lord's Day 39 of the Heidelberg Catechism also addresses this issue by emphasizing that it is God's will that they be governed by those whom He has placed in authority.

b. Discipline and Instruction:

Ephesians 6:4 and again Lord's Day 39 show the necessity of proper discipline and instruction.

The purpose of proper discipline is to give direction and guidance and to redirect the child back to what he should be doing. Discipline is to teach children that they are not their own, but belong to their faithful Father. Freedom can then be understood as a complete submission to God. The goal of this discipline is self-discipline based on the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Proper discipline allows for the primary objective of our school to be met: that of *education* or instruction. The foundation of both the discipline and the instruction is that "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge..." (Proverbs 1:7).

c. Fruits of the Spirit:

Proper student behaviour should allow students to show by their actions that they are "readable letters"

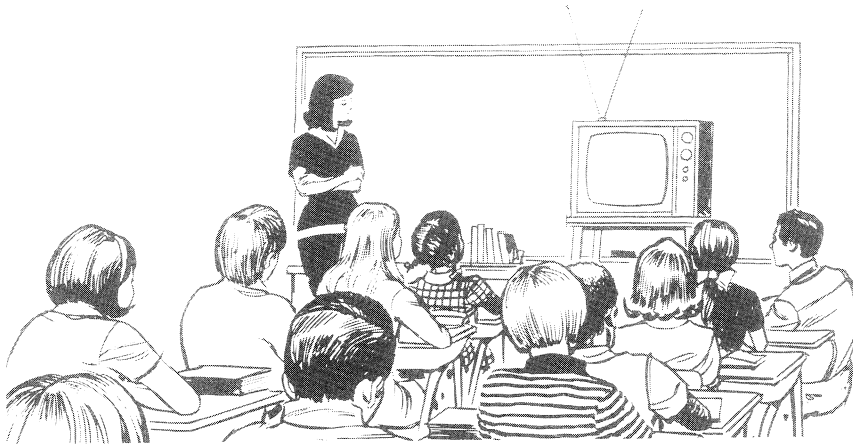
from Christ (2 Cor. 3:3). Micah 6:8 reminds us to "...act justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with (our) God."

Galatians 5:22 and 23 also point out what should be the true fruits of the Spirit. These include love, joy, peace, faithfulness, and self-control.

d. Daily Renewal:

Every day members of our school are to acknowledge to the Lord how great their sins and misery are, recognize how they are to be delivered, and show thankfulness to God for the deliverance that was made possible through the death of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Stating the expectations for student general behaviour and conduct in a positive manner may at first, to some, have the appearance of taking an approach which is different from "thou shalt not." However, as we well know God's laws also have a positive side to them. With the Heidelberg Catechism we may stress from the first to the tenth commandment the negative and the positive command. One is to flee superstition and expect all good from Him. God may not be visibly portrayed but must be taught by the living preaching. We are not to abuse the Name but instead praise Him in all our works. We are not to rebel and instead submit, have patience and show honour. We are not to hate in words of ges-



“The foundation of both the discipline and the instruction is that ‘The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge....’ ”

ture but show friendliness, and protect others from harm. God forbids unchaste words, thoughts and wants us to live disciplined lives. He forbids greed, the squandering of His gifts and wants us to give to those in need. We are not to gossip or slander but instead to promote the neighbours reputation. We are to hate sin and seek forgiveness of sin.

Some may suggest that a listing of expectations for students cannot be complete and is somewhat artificial. However, many school jurisdictions have made a practice of publicly stating expectations for students mandatory. This good practice promotes knowledgeable co-operation between parents and school staffs. The school board's and teacher's responsibility for supervision and care for children is recognized in writing strict "school bus rules." Similarly, greater accountability as well as the duty to discipline students is acknowledged, when expectations for student behaviour are clearly articulated.

Discipline, however, also includes punishment therefore a general description of appropriate punishment practices is often included in expectations for students.

Especially because concern for the appropriateness of a punishment can lead to differences of opinion it may be helpful to outline, in general terms, the consequences for students who do not meet the expectations given.

The general and specific school and classroom expectations for student behaviour when made publicly available is anticipated to develop a more harmo-

nious common commitment among everyone involved. Discipline defined by the dictionary as "a state of order and obedience by training and control," will then more knowledgeably involve participants, students, teachers, principals, school boards and parents.

The following excerpts also from the "Course Calendar" for Guido de Brès High School of "Expectations for Students" are shared as an example:

A) General Expectations for Student Behaviour.

1. show honour and respect to all staff members and be obedient to their instructions.
2. show due respect and care for school property and the property of all members of the school.
3. cooperate with and address your peers in a positive manner.
4. enter classrooms at the correct time in a proper manner and be properly prepared for each class.
5. work diligently to complete your required courses to the maximum of your potential.
6. confine yourself to the designated areas and demonstrate acceptable and courteous behaviour at all times.

B) Specific Expectations for Student Behaviour. (A selection, A.W.)

We anticipate students to be able to follow both the general and specific expectations. Failure to do so may result in teacher or office detentions, or suspension from school.

1. Regular and punctual attendance is very important in the process of learning. Skipping of classes will warrant office detentions. Fifteen missed days per semester could result in a loss of credits.
2. Food can be eaten in the classrooms *only* during the lunch homeroom. All students have to be in their lunch homeroom from 12:00 to the end of lunch devotions after the announcements. (about 12:15 p.m.)
3. It is the student's responsibility to keep the locker locked with an approved combination lock. You are expected to keep your locker neat, and free from pictures that are sexually suggestive or feature rock groups.
4. Textbooks are owned by the student. However, if you would like to sell the books back to the school at the end of the year, make sure you take good care of your books.
5. Students who wish to bring visitors to school must receive permission from the office at least one day in advance.
6. Our dress code is listed below. In addition, boys will not be allowed to wear earrings.

Students are expected to reflect a Christian lifestyle in dress and appearance. They should be well-groomed and wear neat, modest, and clean clothing. Since clothes are a reflection of the person wearing them, students will not be allowed to wear shirts advertising rock music groups, beer commercials or offensive statements. During warm weather, students are allowed to wear shorts. The shorts must have pockets and be lower-thigh in length. Ragged jean cut-offs are not permissible, shirts, blouses, and T-shirts are to cover the shoulders.
7. Display of affection inappropriate for a public place must be avoided in and around school property and in the buses.
8. Smoking is not allowed anywhere on school property or in the school building.
9. To ensure the safety of others, do not throw snowballs, do not get involved in fist fights, do not bring knives, firecrackers and similar materials to school, and avoid running and pushing in the halls.
10. Students are not to use radios or portable cassette recorders in the school unless required to do so by a teacher. ©

PATRIMONY PROFILE⁷⁶

By *W.W.J. VanOene*

Ad question V I do not understand why you ask me this question and then even with quotation marks around the word "wording," as if this was used by me, but it was not! This question betrays very clearly that it was inspired by suspicion, a suspicion to which my sermon passage does not give your assembly even the slightest reason. Needless to say that I listen with reverence also to that part of Holy Scripture which is called Genesis 3, try to understand the meaning of it with an open mind, and not presume to impose upon its terminology even a single, self-invented "wording," neither a typical, nor a symbolical, nor a mythological, but not a modern-historical either, for which last-mentioned "deviating sentiment" your question happens to "leave too much room." As for the rest, I may refer your assembly at this point to what Prof. Dr. H. Bavinck says — since this voices also my view in this matter — "there can be a difference of opinion whether and in how far with Job, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, we have to think of history or an historical presentation. This is even clearer with the prophets... Even in the historical books there is sometimes a difference between the fact that took place and the form in which it is presented. With Genesis 3 the Translation by Order of the States General places the annotation that God's speaking is His will, His command and deed, and with Gen. 11:5, that here we find that Scripture speaks humanly about the infinite and omniscient God. This last remark actually applies to the whole Holy Scripture. It always speaks in a human way of the highest and holiest, of the eternal and invisible things."

Ad question VI. Further to the above, it will be clear to your assembly what my stand is with respect to the particulars in Gen. 1-3, of which your question mentions a few by name but which could be augmented by a large number of other particulars, already from Gen. 3 alone, i.e., with the information about the "hearing" of "the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of day," and the one about that the Lord God "made for Adam and for his wife garments of skins, and clothed them." Herewith, according to your method, one would be able to raise questions such as: "was this a real voice, a real sound, a real walking? Were these real skins and real garments and was it a real clothing?" This could lead to a profanation of the holy Scripture-truth of God in a very questionable way. It appears to me that in all these particulars — and therefore also in the "test-commandment," both trees of Paradise, the serpent and its speaking — we have the divine communication of reality, even of the highest conceivable reality, but then also a reality which in its fulness exceeds our intellectual "comprehension" altogether. Of course, with my remark: "This much is certain that in Gen. 3 we have the divine revelation of an historical fact, the fact of our fall into sin," I did not mean that only the fact of the fall into sin is certain. Nor does

it enter my mind to deny what is mentioned by you sub 1-4 of your question. But I do consider it my obligation to refer you again expressly to what I already remarked above about the truly Reformed concept of the divine revelation, and to state at the same time that instead of fixing one or another popular or traditional, but not confessionally fixed "explanation" or "concept" as the only possible one full freedom has to remain for scholarly exegesis which acknowledges that it is bound by the Word and is permeated by believing reverence for the Word, to try to grasp ever more purely the meaning of the above-mentioned communications. Briefly, also here applies what our Confession of Faith states in its 7th Article: "We may not consider any writings of men, however holy these men may have been, as of equal value with the divine Scriptures; nor ought we to consider custom, or the great multitude, or antiquity, as of equal value with the truth of God, since the truth is above all." Or, if you wish, (here applies) what Augustine already wrote about this matter in his Confessions... "But I cannot clearly see which of these interpretations Moses meant to express in these verses. However, whether it was one of the interpretations which I have mentioned or another that I have not mentioned that this great man saw in his mind when he used these words I do not doubt but that he saw it truly and expressed it properly. Now let no one attack me, saying, 'Moses did not mean what you say but what I say.' If he says, 'How do you know that Moses intended your interpretation when he wrote these words?' then I can take this in a calm way, and answer him in the way that I have already answered this question, or, if he were obstinate, I would explain my position more fully. But, if they say that Moses did not intend my interpretation of his word but their interpretation, then, my God, O life of the poor, in whose bosom there is no contradiction, rain down into my heart soothing drops so that I may patiently endure such men. They do not say this because they have a divine spirit, and have seen in the heart of Thy servant Moses meaning, but they love their own meaning, not because it is true, but because it is theirs.... See then how foolish it is... to rashly affirm that Moses especially intended only one of these interpretations. If we say this, we will, with destructive contention, violate love itself, the principle on which he said all things that we are trying to explain."

With fraternal greetings and God-speed

Amsterdam, June 22, 1925 w.s. J.G. Geelkerken

The Classis of July 8, 1925

The letter of Dr. Geelkerken was dealt with at the Classis of July 8, 1925. The conclusion was that the answer to the first question, however good it might be, yet could not be taken separately from the last two questions. Even

though Dr. Geelkerken left undecided what he meant by that comparison, his answer to question # 2 could be accepted as satisfactory. Concerning the answer to question # 4, Classis took appreciative note of Dr. Geelkerken's statement that he was not of the opinion that, when it comes to the point, the history of the state of rectitude is unknown to us.

It was the answer to questions 3, 4, and 6 which gave Classis difficulties. It was decided as a result of these answers to ask Dr. Geelkerken some more questions. This was also according to the advice given by the theological professors of the Theological College in Kampen and of the Free University in Amsterdam. Classis had decided, namely, to ask these professors for advice as to how to proceed in the given situation. Their unanimous advice read as follows.

"1. that the passage from his sermon on Lord's Day III of the Catechism, viewed particularly in light of his refusal to declare that he neither meant nor said what brother Marinus charged him with did give occasion to Classis indeed to ask of him a further explanation of his sentiment;

"2. that also in their opinion the answers given by Dr. Geelkerken to the questions put to him, contain questionable expressions with respect to the authority of Holy Scripture.

"3. that in their opinion someone who reflects on the historicity of Genesis 2 and 3 comes into conflict with the Holy Scripture and the Confession;

"4. that they advise Classis to put again before Dr. Geelkerken the questions which he was asked on July 8, but to delete from question # 1 'Genesis 1,' since the above sermon passage did not refer to it.

"5. that in case Dr. Geelkerken fails to answer these questions or, in the opinion of Classis, gives insufficient answers, they advise Classis, apart from the provisional measures which it deems necessary to take, to address the Particular Synod because of the importance of this matter, with the request to have a General Synod convened as soon as possible in order that it may take a decision about this matter in its entirety."

In accordance with this advice, Classis decided to ask Dr. Geelkerken the following questions.

"1. Do you reject any presentation in which all that is communicated to us in Gen. 2 and 3 concerning the creation and the fall into sin is not understood as purely historical reality?

"2. Do you believe that God really gave the "test-command" to Adam, as Gen. 2: 16 and 17 describe this to us as an historical fact?

"3. Do you believe that the tree of knowledge of good and evil was a real tree, pointed out by God Himself?

"4. Do you believe that the serpent of which Gen. 3 speaks was a real serpent; that it actually spoke to the woman, and that first the woman and after this Adam actually ate of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil?

"5. Do you believe that likewise the tree of life was a real tree, designated by God Himself?"

A Purely Exegetical Issue?

Our readers will recall that basically the same questions came up in the case of the Rev. Netelenbos. To a large extent the contents of the questions put to Dr. Geelkerken

was derived from the questions which the Rev. Netelenbos had been asked to answer. One of the questions which the Rev. Netelenbos was asked to answer was: "When you state at the same place that you accept the facts of Gen. 2 and 3, namely, that there was a fall through temptation, and the sin has entered the human race from out of the world of the devils, but that we are told this fact in Oriental presentation, i.e. in mythological form, do you then mean thereby that only the fact of the fall is certain as Divine, revealed truth, but that the presentation of this story, particularly about the two trees in Paradise, the serpent which is said to have served as an instrument to seduce Eve and about the curse of God spoken upon the serpent, are to be regarded not as real history but as a mythical form, and thus as a human fabrication?"

One sees the similarity.

Until now we have passed on mostly what can be found in official documents. Left and right, however, people mingled in the affair. Several persons published brochures dealing with the basic questions as well as with peripheral ones. In several writings it was tried to reduce the whole issue to a question of exegesis, and freedom was demanded to give a different explanation without running the risk of being declared an heretic. From Dr. Geelkerken's latest reply, too, it was evident that it was his claim that no one should impose a particular explanation of certain Scripture passages upon the rest of the people. His quote from Augustine's Confessions shows this most clearly.

This was one of the points which would be discussed extensively: Is the issue about a scholarly-exegetical understanding or is it about a confessional truth? Classis Amsterdam as well as later on Particular Synod and General Synod were accused that they fixed a current exegesis and made it into a confessional pronouncement. The point was: Does the question of the speaking of the serpent have anything to do with our Confession or not? Can we say that one who denies that it was a real serpent which actually did speak to the woman merely has a different exegesis or must we say that he violates the Confession regarding the authority and the integral character of the Scriptures? If this was indeed, as was being claimed, merely a question of exegesis, a difference of opinion, the whole signing of the Subscription Form and the promises made therein would have become useless and meaningless. Then there is a freedom which leaves to everyone the opportunity to follow his own way and to deviate as much as he likes, for there should be "freedom of exegesis." This means, however, that theology and theologians are supposed to come to a conclusion as to what is real history, what are historical facts and what are not, even of those things which the Lord reveals to us as having taken place in reality.

However much we may have to criticize the procedure and the deviations from the Reformed church polity as they are to be noted in the whole procedure and later, we are thankful for the upholding of the Confession regarding the authority of the whole Scripture which includes that we receive for facts what the Lord describes to us as the facts. This was — and is — not a matter of exegesis but of confession.

— *To be continued*

Palmetto

Probably for most of us this is an unfamiliar name with a Spanish taste to it and that is indeed the case. Its name means something like city of the little palm trees and in a sense comparable with the biblical name of Jericho which was also called Palmeity.

However, for many in our churches from East to West this city is well-known.

It is situated on the Gulf of Mexico-side of Florida, in the neighbourhood of the big cities Tampa and St. Petersburg to the North and Sarasota to the South. All three cities have their own airport which can be used when travelling by air.

It is in or around the city of Palmetto that quite a number of people of our churches seek relaxation and at the same time an escape from the cold and long Canadian winter.

Though the greater number of these people belong to the "golden age" group they are certainly not the only ones who go there. Year after year we have seen an increasing number of families with their children who spent some time there especially during the winterbreak. We even saw several young people there who enjoyed sunny Florida for some time.

You may ask the question: Why do they come to Palmetto? Are there no other even nicer places to go? Indeed there are a lot of nicer places around in Florida, but the reason that many of our people prefer to reside in Palmetto and surroundings is that there on Sundays the brothers and sisters come together to practice the communion of saints, to pray and sing together and to listen to a sermon of one of our own ministers.

These gatherings start already in December and go on till the end of the month of April. The attendance varies from twenty to thirty five or higher and peaking during the weeks around the winterbreak to as high as one hundred and thirty.

On "normal" Sundays the guests are invited for coffee by the people who are staying in Florida for a longer period of time. A smaller group has the positive advantage to exercise the communion of the saints so much easier.

Last year we had a beautiful time

when the Rev. VanDooren was able and willing to speak to us an edifying word on eight consecutive Sundays. It was really appreciated very much by all of us.

Another question you may want to ask, maybe, is: Why are you writing this little piece about Palmetto? Our answer is for the simple reason that many do not know of our existence and our worship meetings and still spent some time in Florida.

Previously there has been some information in *Clarion* and in some local church bulletins. Palmetto was even discussed at a classical level and lately this fall there has been a meeting in Burlington to look into the possibilities how we can improve on the situation in order to come to a more "regular" church life in Palmetto. A committee has been formed with the mandate to find out what can be done in this respect in the future.

In the meantime we invite the brothers and sisters who are planning to go to Florida for a longer or shorter time this winter to come to the surroundings of Palmetto. When you stay in an area of about an hour's distance from Palmetto you still will be able to share with us the communion of the saints and to listen to the proclamation of Christ's glorious gospel by one of our own ministers. During the winterbreak we stay over for lunch while coffee and cookies are provided and cold drinks for the young ones.

Here are some directions how to find the place where we come together for worship on Sunday. Worship – 11 a.m. and 2:30 p.m. and in the winterbreak – 11 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

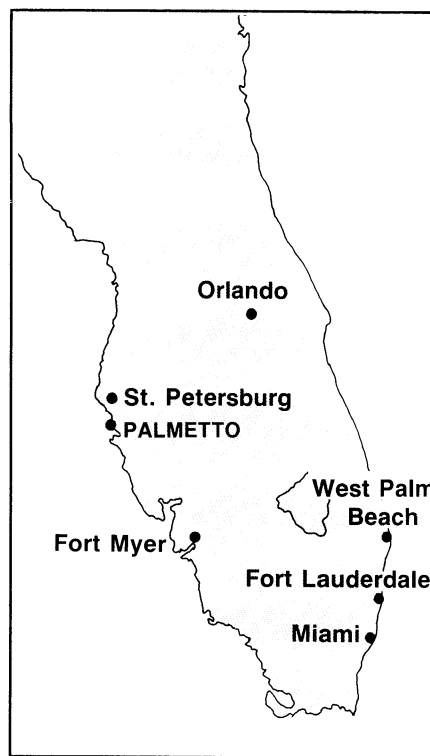
The address of the building:

Palm View Baptist Church
Welcome Center
415-49th Street East
Palmetto, Fla.

Here is also some travel information.

Most people, at least from Ontario, follow the interstate highway 75 which runs from Detroit to the very end of Florida. Others travel via highway 95, which ultimately also links up with highway 75.

Once on highway 75 look for exit 42



(Ellenton). Follow highway 301 West till it runs into highway 42. Take highway 42 North in the direction Tampa.

When you come to a stoplight with a SEVEN-Eleven Store at the lefthand side, turn to the left. The Welcome Center is a little ways from the corner of the 42 and 49th Street.

If you come from the direction St. Petersburg follow highway 19 South. The 49th Street is in between the 19 and the 42, about five miles past the beautiful Sunshine Bridge. If by mistake you follow the 19 till you reach the 42 you are a little too far. Try to turn around on the 42 and follow the 42 North till you reach the traffic light and turn left to the 49th Street. (see above) It sounds rather complicated in reality it is not.

If you are completely lost or need further information call: John Oostdyk, Coach House, Palmetto, Fla. Phone: 1-(813)-729-4863.

We hope that this information will be helpful for prospective "Snowbirds" as the Floridians call us Northerners.

Yours in the Lord

M. VanderVelde
4034 Aberdeen Rd.
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B6



New minister for the Fergus congregation

By J. Medemblik

Rev. J. Huijgen and his family arrived in Fergus on Tuesday July 24, 1990, from Harkstede, the Netherlands. With joy the new minister, his wife and their three children were received. The congregation at Fergus had been vacant for two years. The consistory, confident enough that Classis Ontario North August 10, would grant approbation of the call of Rev.

Huijgen, organized a welcome evening on August 7. Nearly the whole congregation, (a few were far away on holidays), assembled in the auditorium of the Maranatha Christian School. The M.C. brother J.D. Gansekoele, chairman of the consistory, opened the festive occasion by having all sing together several stanzas of Hymn 60. He read from Scripture, Psalm 147, and led in prayer and thanksgiving. He then addressed the family Huijgen and all present:

Brothers and Sisters, Rev. and Mrs. Huijgen: It is my pleasure to welcome you here this evening. After your visit with us, in December 1989, a lot of work has been done on both sides of the ocean in order to come to this day. First of all, Rev. Huijgen, there was the decision to accept the call. We were, of course, delighted and thankful. After this, gradually all obstacles were overcome and all conditions and rules complied with so that this evening became possible. So, the purpose of this evening is first, to thank and praise our Father in heaven who has answered the many prayers and supplications sent up to His Throne of Grace. We confess, that it was by His guiding hand that you were brought here, so that again the Fergus congregation may have its own minister of the Word. In the second place, in a variety of events we want to show how happy we are to have you with us. And we also

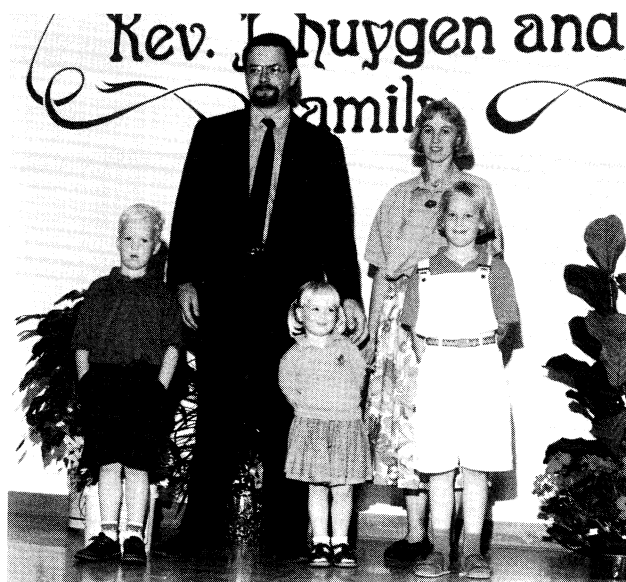
hope to give an impression of our life as congregation in its various activities. Further, we see this evening as the beginning of a new era. For you as minister and family in a new and strange congregation, as well as in a new country, and for us as congregation with a new minister and his family. But each one of us, minister as well as congregation must

on their behalf. The M.C. in his closing remarks thanked all those that had actively contributed to the success of the evening. He then called the Huijgen family onto the stage and presented to them a complete photo album, containing pictures of all the members of the congregation. He explained that the photo album was to serve as a means for them to

become quickly acquainted with all the "Fergusites." Following the singing of the closing song, Rev. Huijgen addressed the assembly. After the singing of Hymn 65:1-3, Rev. Huijgen closed with prayer and thanksgiving.

On the following Lord's Day, Sunday August 12, following the approbation by Classis Ontario North of August 10, Rev. P. Feenstra installed Rev. J. Huijgen as Minister of the Word in the church at Fergus. His sermon was based on 1 Corinthians 3:10-15:

Along with the elders and deacons Rev. Huijgen's calling is to a position of leadership. Every believer must seek the upbuilding of the church while the office-bearers are to see to it that work is done correctly.



day by day live out of God's grace, for every day we need to be forgiven for sins committed and duties omitted. We therefore look forward to your preaching and teaching, and your work in the congregation. May you first and foremost seek to do God's will in your calling in this congregation, so that we may be guided in His truth."

A spontaneous welcome indeed was bid! Under the able direction of Sr. Bonnie Bouwman, the Fergus Section of the Junior Choir, provided us with beautiful songs, also together with the Senior Choir. Every Society, Study Group, Committee and Board had appointed representative(s) to speak words of welcome

The apostle Paul gives three basic rules for proper construction of the church of Jesus Christ. *The first rule is: build on the right foundation.* The Corinthians were building on the wrong foundation by comparing the abilities of one preacher to the other. The construction of the church must rest on Christ as the only foundation, which is the unadulterated doctrine of salvation, which is the witness of prophets and apostles (Ephesians 2). True preaching will keep us on the right foundation. False doctrine – a wrong foundation – *robs us of Christ* and destroys the church. Therefore there is the command for the minister to preach the Word of God purely, and it is the congrega-

gation's responsibility to receive that Word. *The second rule for a well built church is: use proper building materials.* It makes a difference *how* we build. Members of Christ's church are to build with "gold, silver and precious stones," that means: being concerned with the things that last and have eternal value. Therefore sermons are to dig deeply, bringing out the wealth we have in Christ, for the upbuilding of our own life and that of God's building. *The third rule is: meet the fire regulations.* You can make beautiful things out of wood and hay and straw, but what's left when you light a match to it? Dust and ashes. Gold, silver and precious stones are fire resistant. The church needs to be constructed with fire resistant material. Our works must stand the final test. Fire does not consume silver and gold, but purifies them. If our work for the upbuilding of the congregation is done with the wrong material then it will go up in flames instead of being purified. Although the workers themselves may be saved, their works will not follow them. Terrible if this happens, for we dishonour God who wishes to see His own Work in our works.

Following the sermon, Rev. Feenstra spoke a word of welcome first on behalf of Classis Ontario North and then also on behalf of the church of Guelph. The same was done by elders on behalf of the churches they represented. A letter of congratulations was received from the church at Burlington West. Rev. Feenstra was thanked for all the work he did as councillor in and for the church at Fergus.

In the afternoon service Rev. J. Huijgen delivered his inaugural sermon on 2

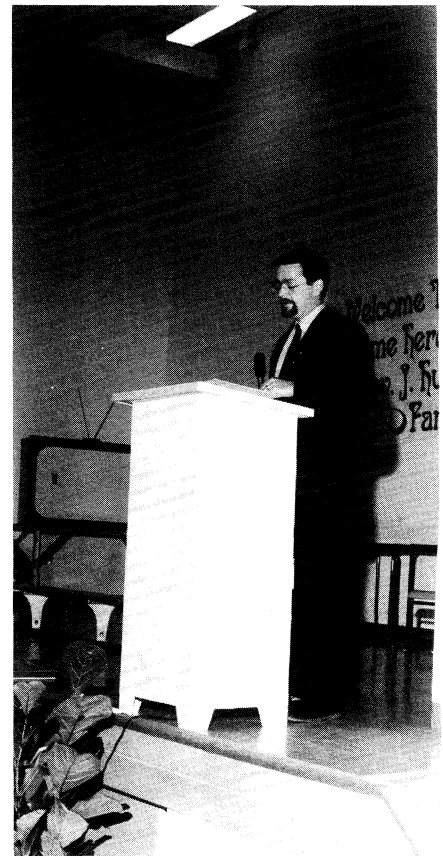
Peter 3:11-13. Lightning struck the church building during prayer before the sermon. Rev. Huijgen calmly stated following the heavy thunder: "having heard the voice of the Lord, we will continue this service." In his sermon he said: "It is a feast today because our God and Father in heaven proceeds with His work. His theme and points were: *In the dissolving of all things, one thing stays steadfast: God's promise.*

We see three things:

- 1) The dissolution of all things.
- 2) The stimulation of our lives by it.
- 3) The expectation that remains

1) The world in which we live is filled with disasters, wars and rumors of wars. But it is all happening by the appointment of the God who reigns heaven and earth. All these things are signs of the coming of God. Peter explains: *all things are thus to be dissolved.* Peter has to warn the congregation, to be aware of false teachers and mockers who said that from the beginning this world remained the same, and that one never can notice any action of God. So do what you want to do. But Peter says: God does not let things rust away on their own. Heavens and earth will pass away. There is a line from Isaiah via Peter to Revelation: God loosens the things which He fastened on the fourth day of creation. God moves His hand towards this world. This characterizes also the present day. A new minister is given to a congregation of Christ in a world in which you can feel, almost literally, that God is coming near.

2) What sort of person ought we to be in lives of holiness and godliness!



Rev. Huijgen — closing speech

One could conclude that, if nothing will remain of this world, even of the universe, man cannot make it. Here Peter wants to give comfort and a warning. If nothing of this world lasts forever, one has to look at things that will come and will last because they are coming from God who is able to shake everything, but also to keep things in place! He asks for *lives of holiness and godliness*: do what God wants His people to do their whole life long, twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, so God can recognize us when all things will be dissolved in God's purifying action! To warn and lead you, your God gives you a minister.

3) The pain of childbirth: A new world is coming. A new heaven and a new earth. Isaiah 65:17; says, *For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former things shall not be remembered, or come to mind.* May this keep you in a steadfast love for God's commandments. God dissolves everything, but He builds it back up again. With this promise we can live. Keep this in mind when from the pulpit the Word of God comes to you. It is all directed to the promise that God is busy preparing for His DAY! The preached Word will comfort and warn you, and will be your guide.



"Women Through the Ages" — skit by the Women's Society "In God we Trust"

News from the League of the Canadian Reformed School Societies — Ontario

In September, the League of the Canadian Reformed School Societies in Ontario held its first meeting for the 1990-91 school year.

Workshop for Board Members

Acting upon one of the suggestions in the Kampen Report, the Principal's Association organized a workshop to be held in October on "The Board and the Law." Mr. F. Ludwig and Mr. A. Witten will present some relevant information on how the Canadian Law with its many acts is an instrument of protection for us. This is especially so in the area of supervision and care and the discipline of students. Two other workshops are planned for the remaining school year.

Committee for Government Contact

This committee has been actively involved in the Forum of Independent School Associations (Ontario) since the time the league became a member last June. Acting upon a request of the Ministry of Education to organize an appropriate mechanism by which *all* private school associations could develop an ongoing dialogue with the Ministry, FISA was born and now represents 60% of all students in independent schools in Ontario. Two other school associations representing 25% of students in independent schools, are observers at FISA meetings. This is then accomplishing the goal of a more complete representation to the government.

Salary Study

The league has the ongoing task of studying and providing guidelines for those members who work on the salary grid. Every year the Credentials Committee meets to discuss and make changes to the salary grid which in turn is passed on to each local school board.

The suggestions made in the Kampen Report were discussed and will be relayed to the salary committee.

C.A.R.E. Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Education

This past summer, the participants of the Science Curriculum writing team presented a two day workshop for teachers during the week just prior to school. Their work, which was finalized during

the summer, is now in the process of being printed. Also at the printers is the product of work done by the Social Science writing team. Looking ahead, C.A.R.E. plans to proceed in doing work in the area of language arts next summer. However, they will wait with final plans until the result of a planned workshop scheduled for the February convention. At that time they hope to gain further insight into the most pressing needs for this subject.

C.A.R.E. continues to wrestle with the changes that are always taking place in curriculum. Although they cannot lose content, there is a need to change from content oriented to process oriented. Methodology has become a vital part of their work.

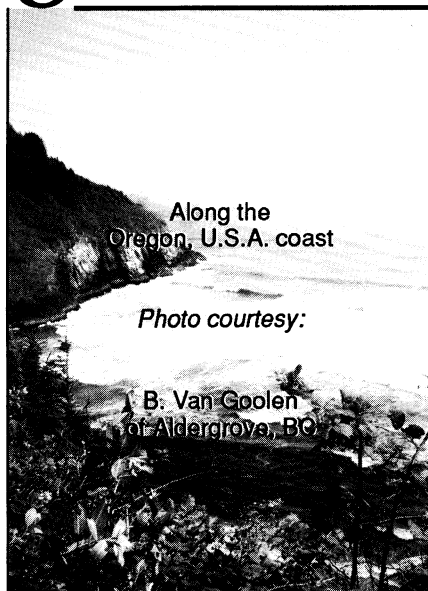
Principal's Association

There is now a representative of the principal's association at league meeting who will act in an advisory capacity. The league feels the principals will be better informed of matters taking place in the broader areas while the league can benefit from the overview principals have in the direct school related issues.

M. Spithoff



OUR COVER



PRESS RELEASE

"ANCHOR," Sept. 21, 1990, Burlington, ON

The Chairman opened the meeting with the reading of 3 John and prayer. He welcomed all those present.

Minutes of the meeting of May 18 were adopted.

The Director presents monthly reports at all Executive Board meetings, which are sent to all General Board members. The residents of Anchor Home are all doing well. A happy atmosphere is present in the Home.

The S.I.L. committee will have a budget ready for the S.I.L. program to be included in the CRAFTH budget in the spring of 1991.

The landscaping around the Home is being worked on and the wheelchair access to the basement has the attention of the Property Committee.

A suggestion by the H. Sieders Funeral Home regarding "In Memoriam" cards, has been approved by the Board. Each Board member received some samples of this card and were urged to present these to the membership to discuss and make a decision on.

Summer Camp was a great success this year and enjoyed by all participants and volunteers.

The Treasurer reported that "the Lord has put our fears to shame! All bills have been paid, the Lord has blessed abundantly."

Voting for secretary took place. J. van Amerongen was chosen for this position, which she accepted. T. Lodder has retired as secretary of the Board, she will remain as member of the General Board.

D. Lodder closed the meeting with prayer and thanksgiving.

On behalf of the board,
Secretary: T. Lodder

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



By Aunt Betty

Hello Busy Beavers,

Isn't it fun to get a letter?

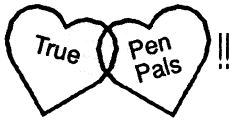
Just the other day I had a letter that said "Write back!"

Yes it's fun to get a letter. A letter just for you! It has your name on the outside. And inside is the name of the person who *thought of you* and who wrote that letter.

Busy Beavers, you know that to get a letter you must *write* a letter. Usually, anyway.

Would you like to get letters? Would you like a pen pal?

Write a letter to these Busy Beavers. They all wrote and asked for a pen pal. The Busy Beavers *who write back* are the



Don't let them down.
WRITE BACK!
And have FUN!

Cecilia Barendregt (age 9)
Box 2701
Smithers, B.C.
V0J 2N0

Jolene Olde (age 8)
15 Target Rd.
Albany 6330
Western Australia

Richard Lenting (age 12)
Box 434
Watford, Ontario
N0M 2S0

Krista Werkman (age 11)
Box 92
Neerlandia, Alberta
T0G 1R0

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

Karen DeBoer (age 9)
Box 164
Neerlandia, Alberta
T0G 1R0

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

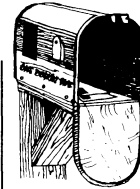
Albert DeBoer (age 11)
Box 164
Neerlandia, Alberta
T0G 1R0

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

Melanie DeBoer (age 13)
Box 164
Neerlandia, Alberta
T0G 1R0

Ann-marie Vanden Oever
(age 10)
RR 2
Beamsville, Ontario
L0R 1B2

Laura Aasman (age 11)
26 Inverness Cres.
St. Albert, Alberta
T8N 5J3



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Jodie Lodder*. You really are a Busy Beaver already! Thank you for the picture and the poem. Keep up the good work, Jodie!

Welcome to the Club, *Evelene Plug*. We are happy to have you join us. I see you have no trouble keeping busy! Are you looking forward to moving, Evelene? Bye for now!

And a big welcome to you, too, *Bradley Bartels*. I'm glad you like to do puzzles and quizzes, Bradley. We all enjoy that, plus lots of other things for you to join in! With all those bales in the hay loft can you still play there, Bradley?

Thank you for a pretty letter, and the pin, too, *Erinna Jansen*. I really enjoy all the letters I get. That's why I hope lots of Busy Beavers will get pen pals! And that's why I look forward to all those Busy Beaver letters!

What a pretty bookmark, *Suzanne Schouten*. Thank you! Also for the puzzle you sent. How do you feel about winter coming, Suzanne? Do you enjoy playing outside in the cold and snow?

I see you mean to keep the Busy Beavers really busy, *Alisa Schouten*! They will enjoy your "things to do." How do you keep busy at recess these days, Alisa?

Did you only watch your Dad baling or did you get to help, *Arlene Winkelaar*? I'm glad you like your teacher. I'm sure he likes you, too, Arlene. Keep up the good work!

Hello, *Cecilia Barendregt*. How are you doing? I hope you get your pen pal! Let me know, please, when you do. All right? Maybe another time you'll like the contest better, Cecilia. Bye for now.

I see you have been very busy, *Benjamin Bartels*. Good for you. What an interesting pen you have, Benjamin! Are all the colours still writing? I like your poster/picture, too!

Hello, *Gerald Bartels*. I see you are a good puzzler and artist, too! Keep up the good work. Maybe you'll send in another picture sometime to share with the other Busy Beavers! Bye for now, Gerald.

LORD, PLEASE REMIND ME

Lord, remind me that I'm not mine,
And keep me in Thy love divine.
Remind me please time after time.
That You love me and that I'm Thine.

(May be sung to the tune of Hymn 6)
By Busy Beaver Evelene Plug

BIRTHDAY WISHES!

What a long list of Busy Beavers celebrating a December birthday.

Here's wishing you all the Lord's blessing in the year ahead. May you have a super day celebrating with family and friends!

Congratulations!
Many happy returns of the day!

December

Alan Hofsink	1	Lisa De Boer	17
Kristi Viher	1	Christina Bergsma	18
Annette Bax	7	Jacqueline Bikker	19
Hannah Harlaar	9	Aileen Feenstra	20
Selby Bareman	10	Janice Berends	21
Leanne Beukema	10	Joni Dekker	24
Neil Van Seters	10	Wendy Hovius	24
Brian Jansen	11	Alwin Plug	26
Carla Schoon	11	Elizabeth Vanderpol	26
David DeBoer	16	Alice Van Bostelen	28
Richard Feenstra	16	Daniel De Gelder	29
Stuart Schenkel	16	Miranda Hulst	29

FOR YOU TO DO

Busy Beaver *Diane Flokstra* wrote:

"A few days ago, Dennis, my brother found an orangish, brownish barn owl. It was so nice. And it seemed like it had a heart-shaped face."

Did you ever find (capture, maybe?) a wild animal or bird?

- Was it hurt?
- What did you do with it?
- Did you keep it as a wild pet?
- We would love to hear your stories, Busy Beavers!

Here is our address:

The Busy Beaver Club
c/o Aunt Betty
Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R2J 3X5

Quiz Time!

PRAYER PLACES

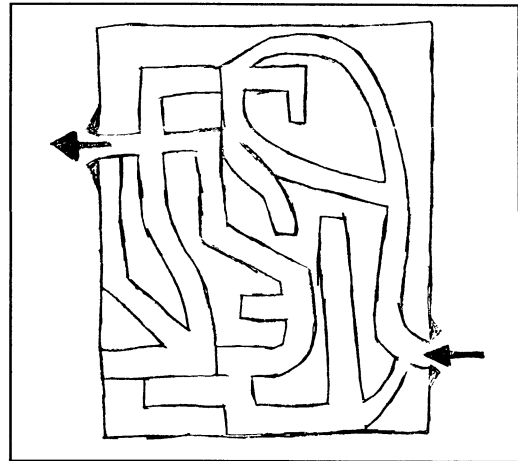
Prayer is very important in the lives of God's people. Wherever they are, they may call to God in prayer. Match each person with the place where he or she prayed.

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. Jesus (John 11:38) | a. in a tower |
| 2. Peter and John (Acts 3:1) | b. on a mountain |
| 3. Paul and Silas (Acts 16:23) | c. on a sick bed |
| 4. A group of women (Acts 16:13) | d. at a grave |
| 5. Jesus, Peter James and John (Luke 9:28) | e. in a fish |
| 6. Jonah (Jonah 2:1) | f. in bed |
| 7. Habakkuk (Hab. 2:1) | g. in jail |
| 8. David (Psalm 63:6) | h. at a river |
| 9. Daniel (Daniel 6:10) | i. at a window |
| 10. Hypocrites (Matt. 6:5) | j. in the Temple |
| 11. Hezekiah (2 Kings 20:1) | k. on street corners |

(See answers)

MAZE

By Busy Beaver *Alisa Schouten*



A RACING PUZZLE!

Slim, Red, Freckles, Jo-jo and Peewee are in these positions at the finish of a race:

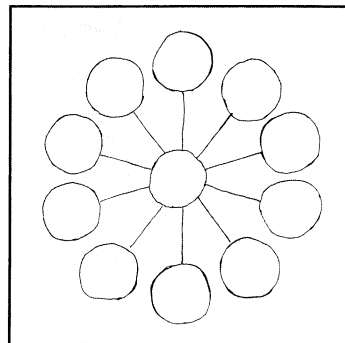
- Slim is 20 meters behind Red.
- Jo-jo is 30 meters ahead of Slim.
- Peewee is 50 meters behind Jo-jo.
- Freckles is 10 meters behind Peewee.

Who is the winner? Who is second? Third? Fourth? Last? How many meters is each boy ahead of the boy behind him?

HINT: Use a "number line."

(Answer below)

NUMBER PUZZLE



Put in the numbers 1 through 11 so that any three numbers in a straight line add up to 18.

(Answer next time!)

Answers:

Prayer Places: 1.d, 2.j, 3.g, 4.h, 5.b, 6.a, 7.a, 8.f, 9.i, 10.k, 11.c.
Racing Puzzle: Peewee is ten meters ahead of Freckles. Peewee is twenty meters ahead of Slim. Slim is 20 meters ahead of Peewee. Jo-jo is the winner, ten meters ahead of Red. Red is twenty meters ahead of Slim.

Hope you enjoyed the puzzles, Busy Beavers!
I'm looking forward to your letters!

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty