

A black and white photograph of a forest stream. In the foreground, a person is seen from behind, walking across a makeshift bridge made of logs and branches. Another person is visible further down the stream, also crossing the bridge. The stream flows through a dense forest of tall evergreen trees. The water is calm, reflecting the surrounding greenery.

# Clarion

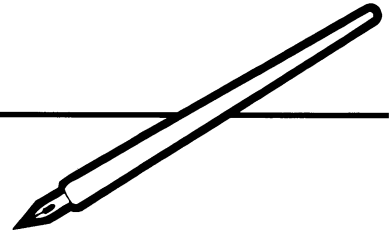
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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# EDITORIAL

By J. Geertsema



## A Report on Sexuality for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

### The Report

Recently two weekly magazines here in North America, *Time* and *Newsweek*, quoted from and discussed a report on sexuality. This report was prepared for the large Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). This month (June) it will be dealt with at the general assembly. The fact that these two magazines paid attention to the report indicates its importance. As in other cases, also of this study report there are two versions, a liberal majority report and a conservative minority report. The majority report leads this presbyterian denomination of about two-million members into the direction of modern licentious humanism. Almost everything is allowed in matters of sexuality.

*Newsweek* (of May 6, 1991) gives the following as the brief contents of the report:

On ethics: A Christian ethic of sexuality is needed that honors but does not restrict sexual activity to marriage.

On homosexuality: The fundamental moral problem is not gay men and lesbians but rather heterosexism, the oppression of this sexual minority by the privileged majority.

On fornication: No longer will the church insist that celibacy is the only moral option for single persons. The moral norm of Christians ought not to be marriage but "justice-love."

The article informs us further that the report was prepared by a committee of "17 ministers, academics and health professionals." It tells us that "Fundamental to the committee's argument is the assumption that sexual gratification is a human need and right that ought not to be limited to heterosexual spouses or bound by "conventional" morality. Another quotation from the *Newsweek* article is also very revealing. It reads:

Indeed, the panel of Presbyterians finds that marriage itself, though sometimes liberating, is too often vitiated by "patriarchalism" and "heterosexist" assumptions. "Gays and lesbians are feared," the report argues, "because erotic passion between persons of the same gender is a sharp break with socially conventional patterns of male dominance and female subordination."

What is the aim of the writers and promoters of the report? The article says that they want the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) to "liberate itself from an unsophisticated reading of the Bible, beginning with Adam and Eve, and reevaluate its definition of sin to reflect 'the changing mores of our society.'" Further, the church should try to keep its members. Recently the Presbyterian Church lost about half-a-million members.

Noting that a third of all Presbyterians are single women and men, the report warns that the unmarried will ignore the church unless the clergy cease their "painful" assumption that singles should remain celibate. Christians "must become the church for and of the marginalized,"

the report argues, meaning lesbians and gays, sexually active singles, women in general plus those males who exercise "little power."

What is presented by the report as the theological and ethical basis? The article tells us:

To accomplish these sweeping changes, the report suggests that the church adopt a new ethic, one that measures sexual relations on the basis of "mutuality, honesty, consent and fidelity" – all elements of what the committee calls "justice-love."

Before commenting on the report, I should mention that there is fierce opposition in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Many individuals and "79 presbyteries out of 174 have petitioned to have the report rejected." Opposition was voiced also in letters sent to *Newsweek*. In the May 27 issue one writer points out that what the report promotes is against the Bible and is not "acceptable in the Lord's eyes." Another quotes G.K. Chesterton: "We do not want...a church that will move with the world. We want a church that will move the world." ...What they [these would-be reformers] imagine as progress would be the most pathetic form of spiritual retreat." The article expresses doubt whether the report will be accepted. Let us hope and pray for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) that it will not.

### Some comments

One aim is said to be that the PC (U.S.A.) should try to keep its members, of which about one third are single. The suggestion is made that these single members have adopted the new morality. In the first place, this is either a terrible situation or it is offending a lot of members, accusing them falsely. In the second place, the church is told to change its principles in order to keep them. The norm is here not: what does the LORD say? The norm is: what do people want? Such a church has lost its purpose. It has already perished spiritually, as church of the Lord. If it does not repent, it can only further perish, also in number.

What rules here is the modern view of the so-called human needs and rights as proclaimed by homosexuals and feminists. These needs are not determined by God's Word, e.g., by the prayer that Christ taught us: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be Thy Name, Thy kingdom come (or: Thy kingship be acknowledged), Thy (revealed) will be done. No, the needs and rights are determined by modern licentious man. We have here the strong influence of the theology of liberation: woman/man must be liberated from any power above her/him. She/he must be free to determine her/his own life and make her/his own decisions in human autonomy. Woman is her own boss, her own god. And so is man.

What is presented as the theological and ethical basis for this new morality? We should ask this question, for it is sug-

gested that here is maintained the Christian and biblical command of "justice-love." Justice and love in the human relations. It means that one has to do justice to the other and have the consent of the other for committing fornication together. It means that sexual gratification is every one's right. How far is this humanistic, false, so-called love and justice removed from what God teaches us in His Word as true justice and love! Modern man says that sexual gratification is every one's right. How selfish is this reasoning. How totally lacking the requirement of responsibility and self-sacrifice toward God and the other.

God has taught us that true love and true justice are bound to His specific commandments. He binds "sexual gratification" to marriage:

Therefore a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh (Gen. 2:24, Matt. 19:5, Eph. 5:31).

We must read carefully and precisely. It does not say that a man shall cleave to his girl friend. It does not say that a man shall cleave to a prostitute (cf. 1 Cor. 6:12-20). It does not say that a man shall cleave to the wife of his neighbour. It says: A man shall cleave to *his wife*. "His wife" is that woman who has legally, in a legal ceremony, become his wife. It is these two who shall become one flesh. What is beyond this is fornication or adultery. Therefore, in this basic word of God all sexual relation outside of marriage is clearly forbidden, whatever modern man dares to assert.

God tells us through the apostle Paul:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither the sexual immoral nor idolators nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God (1 Cor. 6:9, 10 NIV).

Of course, this counts as long as they remain in their sin.

The report suggests that we should be liberated not only from "socially conventional patterns" but also from an "unsophisticated reading of the Bible." Such a simple reading of the Bible, reading what it says, makes clear that God forbids what the report promotes. A more honest advice would have been: people, look at what the world around you says and does, and follow that pattern, and keep the Bible closed.

We can see here the result of modern "theology" which approaches the Christian faith and religion as a human historical religious phenomenon; and if we study the Christian religion we have to leave God out of the picture, for God escapes our scholarly investigations. Now, in line with this, leave what God says also out of the picture, or, change its message completely.

To commit sin and live in it is one thing. To proclaim sin as liberating truth in the name of Christ is horrible. This is done here. Licentiousness is preached in the name of the gospel of Christ. This is blaspheming the holy Name. God warned that he who blasphemes His Name will not be held guiltless. The second terrible thing is that through a false church (leadership) people both in and outside the church are misled. Sin that destroys is proclaimed as liberating life. Here is the old deceit of the deceiver of the whole world. God says that sin destroys life. God reveals His wrath against it, Rom. 1, Eph. 5. The New Testament speaks of false prophets and anti-Christ in 2 Thess. 2, 2 Tim. 3 (the coming apostacy over against an holding on to the inspired Word of God, "that is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God(!) may be complete, equipped for every good work," v. 16), 2 Peter 2 and Jude.

There is here a serious warning for all of us to submit to God's Word, in a simple, unsophisticated reading of and liv-

ing by what it says. We are not immune for the influence of the new morality which allows sinful man to live according to what he determines to be his needs and to what are the desires of the flesh. The pure worldly influence of the TV and the surrounding world is enormous. The Lord warns:

*Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: fornication, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. On account of these the wrath of God is coming (Col. 3:5, 6).*



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#### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Geertsema

Coeditors: J. De Jong, C. Van Dam, W.W.J. VanOene

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#### IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — A Report on Sexuality for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) — J. Geertsema .....	294
Genealogy and Chronology — C. Van Dam .....	296
Press Review — Dutch Initiatives in Brazil and the U.S.A. — C. Van Dam .....	298
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene .....	299
C.R.W.R.F. — Papua New Guinea — Refugee Aid .....	303
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty .....	306

# Genealogy and Chronology

By C. Van Dam

In his article that appeared in the previous issue, Dr. Byl has done us a service in bringing up an issue of some importance, namely, whether we can use the genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 to construct a chronology. It is unfortunate that this discussion takes place so long after the original article was published (March 13, 1989). My inability to respond sooner to Dr. Byl's article which I received in January of this year has aggravated that situation. My apologies for that.<sup>1</sup>

In order to refresh our memory and for the interest of clarity, the relevant part of the original article will first be passed on. That portion was entitled, "The Age of Earth." Next, the concerns of Dr. Byl will be further addressed. This will have to be done as briefly as possible, since one could easily write a book about the many aspects that could be brought to the fore.

## The age of the earth

A question that is often raised in this context is: How old is the world? Very briefly, the following two factors should be noted.

It is not the purpose of Scripture to answer such questions of curiosity. However, what the Bible tells us is true and needs to be taken into account also when discussing issues like the age of the earth. Two critical factors immediately stand out. First of all the length of the days during which God created all things. We have seen that these were not long periods of time, but days as we also experience days, with evening and morning, darkness and light. The second factor is the genealogies which are found in Genesis 5 and 11.

Can the genealogies be used to compute precisely the amount of time that has elapsed from creation? The answer is no. The reason is that genealogies recorded in Scripture frequently omit generations. A well-known example is the genealogy found in Matthew 1. In Matthew 1:8, three names which are found elsewhere are missing between Joram and Uzziah; namely Ahaziah (2 Kings 8:25; 2 Chron. 22:1), Joash (2 Kings 11:1; 2 Chron. 24:1) and Amaziah (2 Kings 14:1; 2 Chron. 25:1) and in

verse 11 Jehoiakim is omitted after Josiah (2 Kings 23:34). Indeed, in verse 1 the entire genealogy is summed up thus: "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." Many Old Testament examples can also be mentioned.<sup>2</sup> Genealogies were often reduced because a full listing was not necessary for the purpose of the author. This should make us cautious in assessing the chronological value of the genealogies found in Genesis 5 and 11. Indeed we know, for example, that Genesis 11:12 skips a generation. It says that "when Arpachshad had lived thirty-five years, he became the father of Selah." From Luke 3:36 we know that the name of Cainan has been omitted so that if there are no other omissions, Genesis 11:12 actually tells us that when Arpachshad had lived thirty-five years, he became the *grandfather* of Selah by begetting Cainan, (for according to Luke 3:36, Cainan is the father of Selah). The point is that terms like "became the father of" or "begot" do not necessarily indicate direct father and son relationship. The expression "became the father of" can refer to a grandfather or great grandfather relationship to the distant relative who is named, rather than referring to an immediate offspring. As one scholar has correctly expressed

it: "So in Genesis 5 and 11, 'A begot B may often mean simply that A begot (the line culminating in) B.'"<sup>3</sup>

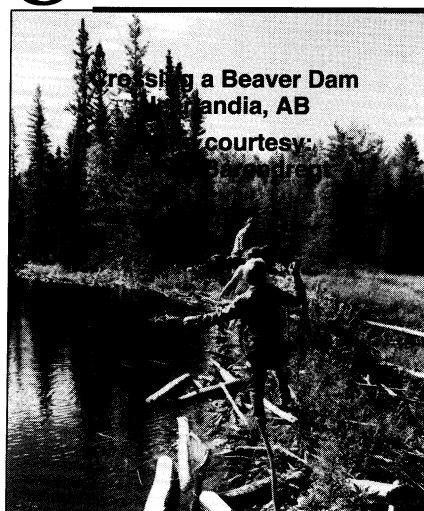
In the light of the above, it is understandable that the Bible never deduces a chronological statement from these genealogies. Nowhere are the numbers given in these genealogies totalled. Scripture does not tell us how much time elapsed from the creation of the world or from the world-wide flood. (Scripture does give numbers of years for other important events. Cf. Ex. 12:40 and 1 Kings 6:1.) The genealogies in Genesis 5 and 11 do not have as their purpose to give chronological information and we should therefore not use them for that end.

We must thus reject the famous calculation of James Ussher (1581-1656) by which he placed creation at 4004 B.C., a date he derived in part also by using the genealogies in Genesis as a chronological tool. On the other hand, the Old Testament gives every reason to believe that the world is thousands and not millions or even billions of years old. Since the Bible does not tell us how old the world is, a precise answer cannot be given on that basis. Among those who accept that God created everything in six days, the age of the earth that is often mentioned is no more than ten thousand years. The evaluation of the scientific data on which such a date is based is beyond my competence;<sup>4</sup> but such an age does not seem impossible in the light of Scripture.

## Missing generations

We now turn to Dr. Byl's criticism. It does not make one feel too comfortable to be told that he is taking issue with virtually all of Christendom until the late nineteenth century. I cannot judge whether such a statement takes all relevant factors of the present question into consideration. Since the opportunity to do a systematic historical study of the interpretation of the genealogies eludes me now, and since Scripture and not tradition is decisive, I will restrict my arguments to those based on Scripture. Because of space limitations, I will also confine myself to the genealogy of Genesis 11.

## OUR COVER



crossing a Beaver Dam  
— Mandia, AB  
— courtesy: —

It is acknowledged that there are unquestionably instances in Scripture where genealogies omit generations. Dr. Byl also acknowledges that comparing the Genesis genealogies with Luke 3 reveals an apparent gap in Genesis 11:12, namely, the omission of Cainan. Unfortunately, rather than simply accepting what the Hebrew of Genesis 11:12 and the Greek of Luke 3:36 say, and drawing the logical conclusion that Genesis 11 omits a generation, the text of Luke 3:36 is made suspect, evidently because there are not to be any omissions in Genesis 11! This is not the place to enter into detailed text critical arguments. Having read the article of R. Niessen that Dr. Byl refers to, I can only say that this treatment of this point was not convincing to me. The conclusive text critical evidence is simply not there to affirm that the Greek text of Luke 3:36 has been tempered with and is, therefore, incorrect.

Another indication that the genealogy of Genesis 11 does not mention every generation is the fact that certain unlikely consequences can be drawn from this genealogy, if interpreted as a chronological tool. If the relevant numbers in Genesis 11 are simply added up, then the number of years from the Flood to the birth of Abram are 292. Since Noah lived for 350 years after the Flood, according to a strict chronological interpretation of Genesis 11, Noah was still alive in the time of Abram and did not die until Abram's fifty-eighth year (cf. Gen. 9:28). Indeed, according to the calculations of Morris and Whitcomb:

If the strict chronology interpretation of Genesis 11 is correct, *all* the post-diluvian patriarchs, including Noah, would still have been living when Abram was fifty years old; *three* of those who were born before the earth was divided (Shem, Shelah, and Eber) would have actually outlived Abram; and *Eber*, the father of Peleg, not only would have outlived Abram, but would have lived for two years after Jacob arrived in Mesopotamia to work for Laban.<sup>5</sup>

This picture of the period after the flood is, however, not the impression we get when reading Genesis 11. By the time we have moved from Noah to Abram, we get the sense that the days of Noah and his immediate children belong in the distant past. Indeed, Scripture elsewhere supports this impression and we run into problems if we maintain a strict chronological interpretation of the genealogies. After all, according to Joshua 24, Abram's fathers were idolaters, who served other gods (vv. 2, 14, 15). According to Dr. Byl's interpretation, this

would mean that all the men mentioned in the genealogy, including Noah and Shem were idolaters. But this is impossible. Hebrews 11 speaks of Noah as an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith (Heb. 11:7). What we know of Shem's conduct (Gen. 9:23) and the blessing he received (Gen. 9:26, 27) also does not agree with seeing him as an idolatrous contemporary of Abram.

Another element that should be mentioned is that the genealogical information in Genesis 11 is introduced by the words "These are the *tôledôt* of Shem." The Hebrew word *tôledôt* has been translated "generations," "descendants," and the like. It is important to realize that the book of Genesis is divided into 11 sections introduced by this word (2:4, 6:9, 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:12, 19; 36:1, 9; 37:2). Each time, the mention of *tôledôt* indicates a new beginning. The word can literally be understood to mean, "this is what came of it." In Genesis 11:10 we read of the *tôledôt* of Shem. This is what became of the line of Shem and we are given the connecting link between Shem and Abram. This is not simply a family tree, but a piece of history writing which gives an overview of the time of the flood to the time of Abram without pretending to be exhaustive. We get the (correct) impression that many years have passed from leaving the name of Shem to arriving at the name of Abram. The history of the tower of Babel had taken place and nations have been established over the world (see Gen. 10:1-11:9)! But in all this, there is the covenant faithfulness of God as seen in the historical summary (we call it a genealogy) of Genesis 11.

From our modern western outlook, we can easily ask the wrong questions about a passage like Genesis 11. Our speaking of a genealogy already steers our thinking into a certain direction. If we, however, let our thoughts be guided by Scripture's intent and purpose in this chapter, certain limits to our curiosity and ability to reconstruct will be recognized. We cannot necessarily expect questions such as the precise number of years between the Flood and Abram to be answered by Scripture. That information may not be here because Scripture's primary purpose is otherwise. Now it could very well be that new insights, such as in the use of language employed here, could suggest further illumination on Genesis 11. Such research is going on. But, on the basis of the scriptural data given above, I am convinced that one cannot use the genealogy of Genesis 11 as a complete and exhaustive list of all the descendants of Shem and so use it as a chronological chart.

## Other objections

In light of the above, the other objections of Dr. Byl can be dealt with in a succinct manner. Dr. Byl asks if there is any instance in Scripture where the verb "begot" means anything but the direct father-son relation when the age of the father is given. This usage is only found in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. There we have the case of the omission of Cainan (Gen. 11:12) which Dr. Byl would rather not accept. In my estimation, the arguments brought forward above show that generations have been omitted and so the Cainan omission is probably not the only one. Of course, the verb "begot" is used in Scripture of skipped generations. Think again of Matthew 1. In this regard Genesis 11 would not be unique.

Dr. Byl is not convinced by the argument that no totals of the numbers used in Genesis 11 are ever given. This was presented as a secondary argument. However, it is a striking omission when one considers that totals are given on basis of genealogical information in Numbers 1 and 26.

## Conclusion

With Dr. Byl, I too am concerned that we retain the full weight of the first chapters of Genesis. We must, however, be careful not to go into a direction where Scripture does not take us. This comment also applies to Dr. Byl's statement that "we are finally approaching that much-longed for 6000th year," as the year of Christ's return. I too long to see our Saviour come and make all things new again. What a joy that will be! "But, of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father only...the Son of man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matt. 24:36, 44).

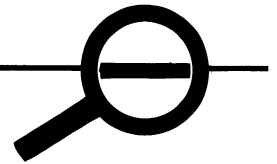
<sup>1</sup>A small point of clarification. Dr. Byl refers to *Clarion* as "our official church magazine." For the record, the Canadian Reformed Churches do not have an official magazine. *Clarion* is owned by Premier Printing.

<sup>2</sup>For example, compare 1 Chron. 6:3-14 with Ezra 7:1-5 and the impossibility of the completeness of the genealogical relationships found in 1 Chron. 23:6 and 26:24. See further W.H. Green, in W.C. Kaiser, ed., *Classical Evangelical Essays in Old Testament Interpretation* (1972) 13-21.

<sup>3</sup>K.A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (1966), 39.

<sup>4</sup>See, e.g., P.D. Ackermann, *It's a Young Earth After All* (1986) 60; J.A. van Delden, *Schepping en Wetenschap* (1977), 182; W.W. Fields, *Unformed and Unfilled* (1976), 198-199.

<sup>5</sup>J.C. Whitcomb, Jr., H.M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood* (1961), 477.



## Dutch Initiatives in Brazil and the U.S.A.

Recent events in the Americas involving our Dutch sister churches, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, deserve our attention. Directly or indirectly we are or will become involved.

### A new church in Unai, Brazil

Since the colony in Monte Alegre in the state of Parana was disbanded in 1968, there was no Brazilian sister church of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. That has now changed, although not as a result (yet) of the ongoing mission work in that large country. *Nederlands Dagblad* (April 18, 1991) reported that a congregation was formally instituted in Unai, more than 100 kilometres from the capital Brasilia. This congregation (which numbers 73 of whom 39 are communicant members) is the result of recent immigration from Holland. Since 1984 they were a house congregation, but the time was now considered ripe (in consultation with the Reformed Church at Assen-Zuid) to organize as a full fledged church. Dr. K. Deddens, well-known to us from his teaching at the Theological College, was there (with Mrs. Deddens) for three months from the beginning of the year to help prepare for formal institution. Two elders and a deacon were chosen and subsequently ordained by Dr. Deddens.

The name and address of this new church is: Igreja Reformada "Brasolandia," C.P. 167, Unai, M.G., Cep 38610, Brazil.

### The Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

The Synod of the RCUS which met from April 2 through 5, 1991 has decided to enter into a sister relationship with our Dutch sister churches. The Synod of Leeuwarden had decided to establish such a relationship with them last year and now the RCUS has also formally agreed. This means, for example, that attestations are accepted from each other and that ministers from the sister churches can be invited to preach. Rev.

J. De Gelder and elder J. van der Kolk were on hand to witness this historic moment. Commenting on the new relationship in an address to synod, elder Van der Kolk said: "It does not mean that from this moment the Reformed Church in the United States and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) have become copies of each other. It means in my opinion, that we – as sisters – can help each other to maintain our reformed birth papers and to grow in the reformed faith and reformed church government. It means also that we can intensify our cooperation for the church of Christ in Zaire." The mentioning of Zaire reminds one that the cooperative work done in that African nation for the Église Reformée Confessante au Zaire was an important factor in the establishing of this new sister relationship.

Rev. P.K. De Boer and elder Kuik from the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman witnessed the entire proceedings of Synod. The consistory of the

Carman church has been having contact with the RCUS for some time. It is to be hoped that in due time also the Canadian Reformed Churches and the RCUS may be able to find each other in a sister relationship.

The RCUS number about 3500 members spread over 35 congregations which are predominantly found in the mid-west of the U.S.A. They are of German origin and maintain the Heidelberg Catechism as their confession. (Sources: *Nederlands Dagblad*, 11 April 1991, *The Reformed Herald*, April-May 1991.)

### The Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC)

The *Nederlands Dagblad* of 18 April 1991 carried an interview with Rev. J. Peterson conducted by J. Elliot. The subjects raised as well as the responses given are of interest to us, especially since Rev. Peterson is a member of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the OPC and he is familiar with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Since Rev. Peterson and Rev. G.I. Williamson recently visited the Netherlands he was asked about his contacts there. They had spoken to representatives of the Netherlands Gereformeerde Kerken (the so-called "buiten verband" churches). Their contacts with these churches go back to the meeting of the Reformed Ecumenical Synod at Nimes in 1980. They recognize their desire to remain Reformed, but the independence in these churches is a stumbling block for the OPC. When asked about the relationship with the Reformed Churches (Liberated), Rev. Peterson said that they would not be able to move in seeking a closer relationship with them until the Reformed Churches (Liberated) had heard from the Canadian Reformed Churches. According to the rules for correspondence, these sister churches have to consult each other with respect to the relationship with the OPC.

### CHURCH NEWS



#### DECLINED TO:

London, ON

**Rev. G.H. van Popta**

of Ottawa, ON

#### CLASSIS ONTARIO SOUTH DECLARED:

**Candidate. W.M. Wielenga**

of Ancaster, ON

eligible for call in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

#### CALLED BY:

the church of Lynden, WA

**Candidate W.M. Wielenga**

of Ancaster, ON


Will the Canadian Reformed Churches stand in the way of closer ties with their Dutch sister churches? Rev. Peterson responded that the Canadian Reformed Churches have recognized the OPC as a true church in 1977 and appointed a committee to see if we can become sister churches. During the 1980s that process was slowed down when the OPC was discussing unity with the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA). During our last Assembly there was concern that the Canadian Reformed Churches are not making much headway. In February 1992 the OPC Committee on Ecumenicity will meet the Canadian Reformed deputies to discuss this further.

J. Elliot brought another point up for discussion. The Canadian Reformed Churches have admitted two former OPC congregations into their midst. According to Elliot, these congregations call

the OPC a false church. Is this not a large stumbling block that will hinder for the time being contacts with the Reformed Churches (Liberated)? Rev. Peterson did not think so. The OPC wants to continue the contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches. They do wonder how the admission of these churches affects the attitude of the Canadian Reformed Churches to the OPC. In any case the OPC relationship with the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in the Netherlands will continue, if only via the ICRC (International Conference of Reformed Churches), assuming that the OPC will be admitted in 1993.

With respect to the above, it is unfortunate that Rev. Peterson apparently never mentioned to J. Elliot any of the concerns that were behind the fact that the two congregations left the OPC. Something else should also be mentioned here. The churches of Blue Bell

and Laurel were admitted into the federation of Canadian Reformed Churches without any meaningful involvement of our Committee for Contact with the OPC. If decisions about these former Orthodox Presbyterian Churches had been made in consultation with our Committee for Contact, there would probably at present be less reason for questions about the whole matter both within the OPC as well as in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Rev. Peterson was also asked about OPC contact with the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (the sister churches of the Free Reformed Churches in Canada). The OPC deputies will recommend that their next General Assembly agree to a sister relationship with these churches. This means, among others, that a local consistory can decide to admit ministers from the sister church to the pulpit and members from the other churches to the Lord's Supper. 

## NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene



There was a time when no *Clarion* appeared in your mailboxes that did not contain a newsmedley. This was a long time ago. The reason why this is no longer the case is not that I have retired from this work, nor that I no longer receive a sufficient number of bulletins. But you can understand that I am not very enthusiastic about writing another one when I have to wait four weeks or longer for the previous one to be published. Not only is much of the news no longer news by that time but it also makes one less eager to stick to a schedule. However, here we are again.

Let us begin with some personal notes.

There is in the first place this, that the Rev. J. Mulder has asked for permission to retire by September 1st of this year. It must have been a difficult decision to make, but I can fully appreciate the reasons which he gave. Let me pass on his own words.

"It was not easy to come to this decision. I would have loved to serve a few more years among you as your full-time active minister. But, together with my wife, I came to the conclusion that for the congregation, the council, and ourselves, it would be best that I retire. Also in view of the many vacancies around us I do hope that the LORD still will grant us to be of some service to you, but physically and mentally I am unable to give you regular teaching, preaching, counseling, etc. as you may expect of your pastor and teacher. This is the main reason for my decision, which is also recommended by my doctor and specialist."

However hard it may have been to come to this decision, it is a very wise one. No congregation is served well by someone who can do only a fraction of the work; and for the minister himself it is a source of constant self-accusation that he should have done more than he was able to do. It is of no weight in this connection that this self-accusation is unfound-

ed: it will be there regardless. This, in turn, will cause the health to deteriorate even further. It is our sincere wish that, once the pressure has been taken off, our brother may still be able for a long time to provide the service he feels he is able to give without feeling obligated to give it.

A more pleasant personal note is what Rev. Mulder wrote about Prof. J. Geertsema. On May 13th, Rev. Mulder wrote, "at the Wycliffe College Convocation he will receive the Master of Theology degree in the convocation hall of the University of Toronto."

This honour is the fruit upon much work and studying hard. Our brother had to work for this degree over and above his work at our own Seminary and the preparation for his own lectures. In addition, he preached practically every Sunday and did work for our *Clarion*. Sometimes the telephone rang at our place at around ten-thirty at night, and there was our brother Geertsema. He had to discuss a few things. This means that it was one-thirty in the morning in Ancaster. I threatened that I would not talk to him any more if he did not promise to go to bed right away. Our sincere congratulations with this achievement and happy holidays. Take off for some weeks!

Another vacancy has been caused by the retirement of the Rev. P. Kingma. This retirement became effective at the end of May. We can be assured that our colleague will remain active for as long as the Lord gives health and strength and that he will pursue the very work he has given so much time and energy to: taking up and maintaining contact with many who are looking for faithfulness to the Word of God and who are eager to learn more about the Reformed doctrine. We'll come back to this later on.

Moving up or going East, we come to Watford. There the consistory decided to make a change in the voting procedure or rather, not in the procedure itself but in the manner in

which the results of the voting are made known to the congregation.

"The consistory decided to abandon the practice of counting the votes in public, once the communicant male members of the congregation have cast their vote for the election of new office-bearers. From now on, a committee of three ... will count the votes privately and report the result of the election to the chairman of the consistory. He will then make known to the congregation who has been elected. The number of votes each candidate received will only be known to the consistory and the two other members of the counting committee.

"We came to this decision, because we feel that elections often — wrongly so — have the character of a popularity contest. Children often ask, 'Who won? How many votes did he get?' and so forth. And what children ask often lives in the hearts of many of us as well. Moreover, counting the votes publicly can be — it does not have to be — very humiliating for a candidate who only receives a small percentage of the votes. All in all, we considered the present practice to have too many negative overtones and not very upbuilding and therefore decided to change to the manner that is indicated above."

The above decision has everything for it and nothing against it. Not in every congregation the results of an election are so close as I saw in one bulletin where a few ballots were needed to elect the required number of brothers. At the last ballot the one had just one more, the other just one fewer than half of the total number of votes! Even so, our consistories would act wisely when discontinuing even the publication of the figures after the election and when they simply make known to the congregation who have been elected and were appointed by the consistory with the deacons. At times I did consider it quite painful for a brother if he had acquired only a very small number of votes. Publication of the number of votes each candidate received also makes it more difficult to nominate the brother next time or after a couple of years.

In the above I wrote "the consistory with the deacons." This is still the proper way of putting it in spite of the use of the term "council" as found in several congregations. Not so in Hamilton, where "the use of the term 'council' to denote the body of elders and deacons combined was examined. The present use of 'consistory' to denote the elders only and 'elders and (or with) deacons', where appropriate, will be continued."

Hamilton's consistory with the deacons is also considering a new sign in front of the church building. "A number of ideas were then submitted for a new church sign. These came complete with photographs and sketches. The Committee of Administration was requested to prepare a final draft proposal with a budget price not to exceed \$6,000." Ouch!

During the past months church visitation was brought to several churches. It is customary to announce these visits to the congregations and also to mention the possibility church members will have to discuss certain matters with the visitors. Care should be taken, however, that the proper wording is used, a wording that will not confuse church members but makes clear what the matters are that church members may discuss with these visitors. In various bulletins I read "Members of the congregation who wish to submit any matter to the Church visitors should notify the consistory of this as soon as possible." Not every bulletin contained precisely the quoted wording but the contents of the information was the same.

This wording gives a wrong impression, namely that any church member may bring to the attention of the visitors any matter he or she wants to discuss and is allowed to appear in the meeting to conduct such discussion. Members are allowed to bring only such matters to the attention of and discuss them

with the visitors at the consistory meeting as *could not be solved in their discussion with the consistory*. Apart from the terminology used, the thought itself is very well expressed in Carman's bulletin: "Members of the congregation may request consistory to speak to these visitors, but only concerning matters that they have first addressed the consistory about and concerning which they could not come to a good consensus."

Now that we are speaking of terms and terminology anyway, I might as well add the following.

The proper term for the act of public profession of faith is not "to do confession" or even "to do profession" but to *make profession of faith*. And the proper term for a minister who has been appointed to assist a vacant church is not "councillor" but "counselor." A councillor is a member of a council; a counselor is someone who gives counsel, advice.

There was another point that drew my attention when I was scanning the bulletins. It is the point of the Christian Censure. Sometimes this is wrongly called "censura morum," and it refers to what we provide in Art. 73 of our Church Order. In olden days the provision existed that this Christian Censure was to be held before the celebration of the Lord's Supper. This is perhaps the reason why some still think that it has something to do with this celebration. In one bulletin I read: "Censura morum is held with a view to the celebration of the Lord's Supper. Consistory members have no objection to the celebration of the Lord's Supper." Imagine that they had! I would recommend that the brothers read Art. 73 of our Church Order and, possibly, an explanation of the same. Then they will discover that an Australian consistory was correct when putting it this way: "Christian censure according to Art. 78 C.O. — with them it is Art. 78, VO — takes place. It is noted with thankfulness that there are no objections to the way fellow office-bearers have executed their offices."

The Ebenezer Church in Burlington is happy with their new churchbuilding. They are also very happy with their organ. They even organized an "Inaugural Recital." I would have loved to attend that, although I am in doubt as to whether I would have come indeed. I felt sad when reading that an admission fee of seven dollars was being charged, and I thought: thereby several members who have been members for many years may have been prevented from sharing in the joy because they could not afford that fee. Besides, I thought, is that now the proper way of expressing gratitude to the Lord for His wonderful care when people are told: You may come and share in our joy, but it will cost you seven dollars? If it had been any other recital at any other time I could have justified asking an admission fee, but not now. I do realize that the organist had to have his fee, but in that case I would have asked someone less "well-known," some members of the churches most likely who may not have been as skillful but who certainly would have been able to show the beauty of the instrument and to accompany the songs of gratitude in an edifying manner. And they could have received a substantial token of appreciation, even if only a collection had been taken at the doors.

"The organ committee reported on its activities. As requested by council, the committee reviewed and evaluated the new melody with the new text of 'The Apostles' Creed' composed by Dirk Jansz Zwart. It was suggested not to include this melody as a replacement or as an additional melody in the *Book of Praise*. Council adopted this suggestion and will pass this information on to the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*." In a later bulletin it was mentioned that a letter was sent to that effect.

This is the second consistory that expressed itself on the suggested melody and also the second one that rejected it.



Burlington East sold both parsonages and this eases the financial burden somewhat.

Burlington South has made progress in its efforts to obtain a permanent place for worship. The offer made was accepted so that the property on Plains Road West will be theirs, "conditional of course on congregational approval, financial arrangement, and city approval for an eventual building permit." The size of the property is 1.5 acres and it has two houses on it. "Both of these homes can be rented out to create income." Possession date is July 2nd, and a "cleaning bee" is scheduled for shortly after that date so as to make the whole more presentable. I am surprised to learn that such a large property was still available in that region.

"The consistory, after having received advice from Classis, has again discussed the matter of women who are the heads of households, voting for the calling of a minister. In the advice, given by Classis, are a number of interpretations of the articles of the church order which deal with these matters. In view of the diversity of the opinions expressed in the congregation and consistory and also in the advice of Classis, the consistory decides that a change in the voting procedure would best be dealt with through an appeal to a broader assembly."

I had to scratch my head a few times when reading this. If I am to believe that the above is a correct rendition of the situation, I must come to the conclusion that there is an almost unbelievable confusion with every one concerned.

Point one: voting is not a matter of "heads of households," but of being a communicant member. Thus the being "heads of households" has nothing at all to do with the point in question.

Point two: there is no article of our Church Order at all that "deals with these matters." The whole point of the sisters having or not having the right to vote is not touched upon at all in our Church Order. "A number of interpretations" cannot introduce this matter into them either, except by a magician's wand, but that would be mere illusion. We do not say anywhere in our Church Order that only male communicant members are allowed to vote, nor do we state that they are *not* the only ones. The whole matter simply stays out of view.

Point three: we read here of "An appeal to a broader assembly." What "appeal"? Has the consistory been wronged by the advice of Classis? But how could a consistory be wronged by an advice in which a "diversity of opinions" was expressed?

Point four: "a change in the voting procedure" is a local matter and not something for the federation. How could such a change ever "best be dealt with through an appeal to a broader assembly"? If a consistory cannot come to a conclusion in a certain matter, it should not try to make it a federal matter but continue to discuss and study it among themselves, asking for wisdom from above. Perhaps the light will break through one day, and then they can serve the federation with their acquired insight. All they can achieve now is unrest and confusion.

Some general news from the Burlington area may be included as well. Mount Nemo Nursing Home received permission to expand. The newspapers reported that "A \$1.5 million, 30-bed expansion of Mount Nemo Nursing Home was approved by the Halton Health Department and the Niagara Escarpment Commission." It was also stated that "Once the expansion is completed, the Mount Nemo Nursing Home will be the region's first with a wing dedicated solely to Alzheimer's patients." Several of our fellow-church members are being taken care of in that home and we are thankful for the opportunities we have to provide this care.

In the Bulkley Valley there are also discussions going on

about the establishment of a Christian Senior Citizens' Home. "You will never run out of old people," we were told already some thirty years ago by an official of the Department of Health.

A less pleasant experience was the part of several school children whose bus was in collision with two other vehicles and then flipped on its side. Two children had to be hospitalized for a few days, but thankfully it can be reported that no serious injury was sustained. Oftentimes we do not think of the many dangers to which all of us are exposed when travelling. Thousands of our children are transported every day from home to school and back and it is a miracle that not more accidents have happened. We do not see the angels, but they are there most certainly.

In Elora there seems to be some progress as well. "Reading the local newspaper *Elora Sentinel*, I noticed headlines in which the Land Division Committee of the county approved the proposed building lot for a church, and that the related fees were even waived. The Committee of Administration attended this meeting and it did indeed go well. From what I understand, the only hurdle remaining is the rezoning of the lot, so it seems that good progress is being made."

Our last stop in Ontario is in Toronto. The consistory published again some decisions made in 1985 regarding the solemnization of marriages. There are several points in these decisions which should be taken to heart in every congregation. Couples planning to get married are reminded of the Scriptural mandate of 2 Cor. 6: 14-16. They are urged not to schedule a marriage for a Saturday before the celebration of the Lord's Supper, evidently with a view to the setting up of the tables which would have to be done late Saturday in case there is a wedding ceremony in the afternoon.

Another point to be considered is that "the Consistory strongly recommends the use of the organists designated by the Consistory for leading the worship services. If the couple desires to use an organist not from this church, they must receive approval from the Organ Committee."

What I do not understand is why the couple has to take up contact with the *clerk* of the Consistory and not with the minister. No one needs the approval of the consistory to get married, does he or she? Marriage still is not a church matter but a private affair. It is beyond doubt that members are subject to the supervision of the consistory in their whole life with all its aspects, but this does not mean that they have to ask the consistory's permission for all sorts of actions.

I was completely at a loss how the following meaning could be introduced into Art. 63 of our Church Order. "Since Article 63 C.O. provides that only ministers authorized by the Consistory may solemnize marriages, it is required that the prior authorization of Consistory is obtained, if someone other than the local minister is intended to be asked to solemnize a marriage."

Article 63 C.O. does not provide this at all, and it is a riddle to me how anyone can read that into it. What this articles states is that the consistories shall ensure that the (local) minister(s) solemnize only such marriages as are in accordance with the Word of God. There is not one letter in this article that would support the statement that only the local minister would be permitted to solemnize a marriage of a member of that particular church, and that as a consequence a couple would have to secure permission from the consistory if it wanted to ask another minister. Here I find what the Dutch would call "inlegkunde."

It is a good custom to ask the local minister and, in case the partners belong to different churches — for a good understanding it be said that hereby I mean e.g. the one belongs to

the church at Toronto and the other one to the church at Orangeville — to ask the one of the church to which the bride belongs. But there can be quite a few reasons why a couple would wish to have another minister officiate. It could be that this other minister is a relative, or a good friend, or solemnized the marriage of the parents. It could even be that the couple cannot get along so well with their own minister or does not like the manner in which he conducts the ceremony, and for this reason wants to ask someone they like better. And then they should have to ask the permission of the consistory for this *private* ceremony to invite someone else than the local minister to officiate at it? And this is then supposed to be the provision of Art. 63 C.O.? Let's go on.

Our sisters in many congregations are very active in gathering funds in every possible way. I did mention the activities and results of Ladies' Aids, Ladies' Auxiliaries, and so on more than once. One of the ways in which they raise money is the "Cash for Trash" program. UPC coupons are collected and at the opportune moment exchanged for a cheque. Another method is the saving and collecting of cash register tapes that can be exchanged for a certain percentage of their value, usually approximately .3%. It would be extremely encouraging for our sisters if someone could calculate the total value of these activities that have been going on for years.

Alas, almost every congregation has members who stay aloof and "cannot be bothered." They refuse to take the little trouble of saving their cash register tapes and handing them in let's say once every three months. Or they "cannot be bothered" with cutting out the UPC coupons and saving them so that church or school can benefit from that. Or they do save the UPC coupons, but then save the whole bag or box so that the one collecting them has to spend hours on end to do what every one could have done personally. The result is that in several congregations this activity has been discontinued for lack of cooperation. That is a shame.

It was with great joy, therefore, that I read in the Winnipeg bulletin "The Trash for Cash program is not going to be dropped! A big thank you to Mrs. A. who volunteered with several ladies to take it on." And also for the encouragement and stimulation of other congregations it be mentioned that two brothers "are building bird houses and magazine racks for the Ladies' Aid sale." I hope that these are the same fancy models of which I saw several in Winnipeg, specifically Transcona. I mean the birdhouses, of course, not the magazine racks.

In practically all churches the blessing of the Lord was seen in that many younger members came to the profession of faith. Parents, elders, ministers, they all rejoice because of this continuing in the path of the covenant. The Providence Church in Edmonton saw no fewer than thirty brothers and sisters come to the consistory with the request to be allowed to make profession of faith. In general, the examination by the consistories went well, although many of the young people will have been quite nervous. In Winnipeg "During the examination coffee and cheesecake were enjoyed by all, including one of the young brothers who was being examined." I was wondering whether the other candidates were too nervous to enjoy these goodies.

All churches apparently received a report from the Grand Rapids church regarding the project "Minister-at-Large." There will have been parts in this report that were not suited for publication, but I regret it that the membership has not been more amply informed about its contents and about the work that has been done in this respect by Grand Rapids and particularly the Rev. Kingma.

The Carman bulletin contained an extract from the report and I pass the following information on. "There remains a dis-

tinct possibility that a house congregation under the oversight of the American Reformed Church in Grand Rapids can be formed in the Chicago area composed of several families." In connection with the visits made by Rev. Kingma and the correspondence conducted by him, we are told "The extent of the correspondence with such contacts has led the consistory of the American Reformed Church in Grand Rapids to form a committee which shall conduct the business affairs of the Project." Although for the time being no further contributions are being asked of the churches, it is good for the membership to know that the funds they did contribute are being put to good use.

Smithers experiences the same annoying thing that undoubtedly all churches experience: "the increased tendency to walk out and into the auditorium during the worship services ... the consistory hereby urges the members and especially the parents to keep this coming and going to the bare minimum." Our readers will understand what these lines are referring to. They will also have seen that when one lamb walks out with a triumphant smile (or smirk?) on the face, others soon follow. This is very disturbing, not only for the minister but also for the congregation, and I would commend the above lines into the merciful attention of all parents. In by far the most instances there is ample time to take such measures before the services that the services themselves do not have to be interrupted in any way.

On our way to Australia we stop over in the Fraser Valley.

The Abbotsford consistory "dealt with a proposal on the table that the elders in the reading services use the salutation and the benediction as they are worded in Numbers 6:24-26, II Cor. 13:14, and Rev. 1:4. This will be implemented as of June 2nd."

On the other hand, "a request was made to have a Lord's Supper table placed in front of the pulpit; the decision was not to accede to this request."

The consistory of Langley decided to increase the number of elders by two with a view to the growth of the congregation.

"Future growth and development was discussed. Since the church — what is meant apparently is the church building, VO — at Langley is rapidly approaching its capacity, several options were considered: extra rows of chairs; division into two wards with four services; eventual split towards Aldergrove. More deliberations and guidance will be necessary for a decision to be made."

The consistory of the Maranatha Church declared itself "in favour of The Voice of the Church possibly pursuing television broadcasting."

In Vernon we can see that the one hand washes the other: "We were informed by phone that the oak pews of the Church of Coaldale would be available to us for \$4,000. This offer was gratefully accepted and the Committee of Administration was charged to make the necessary arrangements."

There is only one thing that we want to mention concerning Australia. It was good, after the disappointing and discouraging information coming from Papua New Guinea now to read "From oral reports via the telephone we heard that things are looking up in Port Moresby. Rev. K. Bruning could give the joyful news that members are attending the worship services in greater numbers and that the spirit at the congregational meeting was very positive."

In closing I would like to make a few remarks about the manner in which consistories are to deal with the acts of broader assemblies. Sometimes I read that a consistory "ratifies" the decisions of those assemblies. At times I read that they were read and that no objections were raised. Which of the two is correct?

The latter. Decisions of broader assemblies are binding from the moment on when they were taken. Consistories most certainly should study them, check them and see whether there is anything in them that would compel a consistory to reject them. But it would be a totally wrong idea that they become binding only when a consistory has "ratified" them, accepted them and thus given them the binding character. If a consistory stated: "But we are not bound by the decision, for we have not yet ratified it," this would be a completely wrong concept. It would be equally wrong, of course, if a consistory just received the acts, glanced at them, and deposited them

into the archives without paying any further attention to them.

The proper procedure is: receive them, read them, study them and see whether the brothers at the broader assembly abided by their mandate and did everything according to the charge given them. If this is the case indeed, no further action is needed except such action as may be required by the decisions made.

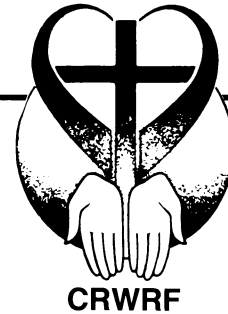
I doubt that this medley will find a place in one issue. If not, you will have something to look forward to next time.

In the meantime I wish you all a very fond good evening.



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## Papua New Guinea - Refugee Aid



Doing volunteer work in a foreign culture is not without pitfalls, but it definitely has its rewards. That's what Richard Bultje, recently returned from Papua New Guinea, discovered and shares with us in the following article.

Richard spent a little over two years in P.N.G. as a volunteer with ZOA (Zuid Oost Azie – South-East Asia) helping refugees from Irian Jaya resettle. Initially his job involved overseeing the operation of two sawmills which provided lumber for schools, clinics, etc. for five refugee villages located on government donated land just inside the P.N.G./Irian border. As time went on, his tasks also included teaching carpentry skills and supervising much of the actual construction.

When he left, the villages were becoming better established with roads and general conditions much improved over two years before. Gardens had been put in and the villages of the first refugees who arrived were beginning to resemble any other bush village in P.N.G. or Irian Jaya. With the sawmill and construction operations now able to be handled by the refugees and local people, Richard's task was completed and he returned home to Chatham in November of last year.

As a volunteer, Richard's living and travel expenses were covered by ZOA. C.R.W.R.F. was able to underwrite a good percentage of the costs involved, thereby encouraging this brother in his work, while at the same time helping refugees to begin a new life and achieve independence once more.

In the following article, Richard reflects on his years in P.N.G.

Being home from Papua New Guinea for close to three months now I have had time to reflect on my stay and what brought me there. Looking back I can see how God used me and caused me to grow through my work there. But let me go back to the beginning.

In 1986, I gave in to a little voice that had been telling me for some years to get more involved in missions. I had been on a short-term summer mission to Bolivia a few years ago, which had helped me to think more about my obligations to God my Creator and Saviour, and to my fellow man. I began to do more community work when I returned

from Bolivia. I also started to read mission magazines to see if that type of work was for me. One of the articles was in *Clarion* regarding the work of C.R.W.R.F. I contacted C.R.W.R.F. and through them came into contact with ZOA, a Dutch organization which is involved in relief and development work amongst refugees all over the world.

I had been interested in refugee care since I was a boy but never really thought of it as something I could do. However, I wrote ZOA asking them what ZOA stood for, what their organization was involved in, and if they needed anyone with my skills. They informed me



*Clearing the jungle to make way for more buildings – an arduous task*

that they were a volunteer organization mainly involved in the medical side of refugee care, but that they were starting to become more involved in different aspects of refugee care also. They requested a resume.

We corresponded back and forth for over a year, during which time I took some courses to upgrade my skills. After this, things moved quickly, and within six months I was in the jungles of Papua New Guinea as a sawmill manager helping to set up a relocation site for refugees coming from Irian Jaya.

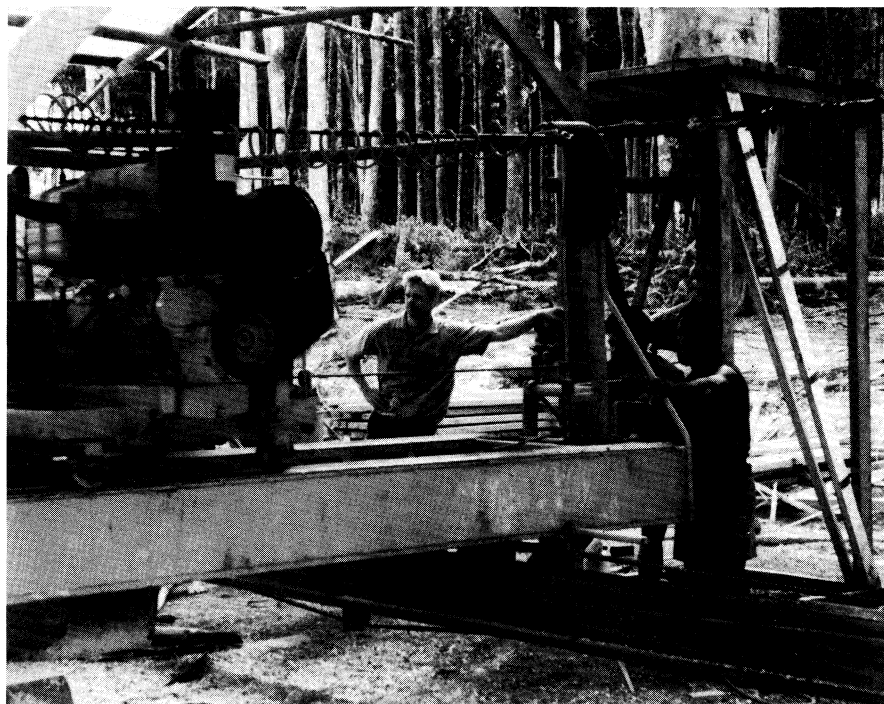
My main task in Papua New Guinea was to manage two portable sawmills, as well as to oversee the construction of staff housing, hospital wards, office buildings and refugee community buildings. This, especially at the start, involved much teaching of sawmill techniques and standard work practices. It also taught me a lot of patience.

I had mainly refugees working for me as well as a few local Papua New Guineans. The refugees relocation site where I worked is unique in that it is not a transition site for refugees who will move on to another country. This relocation site is more of a development project with the refugees themselves doing most of the work and hoping to remain in the area. Since this area is one of the most remote spots in P.N.G., the government can develop the land and at the same time help the refugees get a new start. The only difficulty with this arrangement is that the land is very poor agriculturally and therefore very difficult for gardening, which is the livelihood of almost all refugees and locals.

Being so isolated, I was quite lonely for the first few months. It wasn't easy, but, looking back, I see that during this time God was very close and taught me that He will always take care of my real needs: His presence and love. I remember that a few times, when I felt really lonely, just at that time I would receive a letter or that just then someone would come through the refugee camp and stop for a talk.

After this initial time of loneliness, I started to make friends and also became more adept at my job. On arrival, it was hard to get things done the way I wanted them done, primarily because of differences in language and culture. Most of my workers weren't used to having a job and found it hard to show up for work on time or work when I wasn't there to supervise. I also had to be careful not to reprimand one worker in front of his peers, for in their culture this would mean I wanted everyone to think this fellow was useless.

The main difficulty, though, was due



*Richard – supervising at the sawmill*

to my not understanding the language. The refugees' home language is Indonesian, but they picked up Pidgin which is the trade language of P.N.G. It was this tongue that they mainly communicated in. Pidgin is comprised of the different languages of the countries that have colonized the area, together with native words. The words are predominantly English though to someone unfamiliar with the tongue, these would be hard to recognize.

By my fourth or fifth month, I had learned enough Pidgin to instruct my workers in most of what I wished them to do. By this time many of the workers had picked up some English also, so that if I couldn't explain something in Pidgin, I could insert some English phrase and they would understand.

Upon becoming better acquainted with the refugees, I began to ask them about their lives in Irian Jaya and how they became refugees. They told me stories of religious persecution, of having land and rights taken by the government, and of people being thrown into jail due to their support of the O.P.M. The O.P.M. is an organization which was set up by the Irian people after the Indonesians took over their country in 1963. Its aim was to try to force the Indonesians to leave – by political as well as by military means. In order to deter the Irian people from supporting the O.P.M., the Indonesian government jailed people, burned down bridges, and sent people from jobs and schools if they were suspected of being O.P.M. sympathizers.

Some of the refugees told me they came from Reformed churches in Irian Jaya and wanted to set up a church in the camp. (Most of those who came over were of Roman Catholic persuasion.) Knowing I also came from a Reformed church, they asked my help in getting Indonesian Bibles and Psalm books. Right from the start, there was a struggle determining what the main aim of the church should be. Many of the refugees put their political aims first and argued that all refugees should worship together regardless of differing views on salvation, so that they could pray to God in unity for the freedom of West Papua (Irian Jaya). Many saw this as the main reason to start a church at the relocation site.

I attempted to explain the error in this, but because of the cultural differences and language problem, I could not do so adequately. Looking back now I think it was more a case of them not wanting to listen. But after much time and prayer, a few families separated from the majority view and I began to worship regularly with them. It was quite hard for these few families because in making this break they isolated themselves from the larger community. In a culture such as theirs where there is no unemployment insurance, old age pension, etc., there is a lot of emphasis on helping each other. The group that disagreed with the majority thus excluded themselves from being assisted by the rest of the community.

Four families initially started having

worship services together. One of the fathers and I took turns preparing a little talk for the service. He had extra work in translating my words into fluent Indonesian so that the rest of the members could fully understand. We also corresponded with Reformed Churches in Australia and Port Moresby trying to determine the possibility of a mission church being established in the relocation site.

During my time there, I was able to get Indonesian Bibles and Psalm books donated by ZOA. Although Australia seemed very much interested in the refugees and sent several clothing packages, nothing as yet was decided in the area of the relocation site being a mission field. The Port Moresby Church being itself a Mission church was unable to help.

By the time I left P.N.G., we had five good carpenters who were able to work on their own with little supervision. Road and general conditions had much improved in the refugee villages making life more pleasant for all concerned. I made some very good friends during my stay, among them a P.N.G. man, Noah, with whom I lived during my last year there. We still correspond and hopefully will continue to do so. At my departure, I was honored with gifts and a farewell evening attended by a few hundred refugees. The group with whom I worshipped also held a farewell service and the numbers at that service swelled to over 60.



*Richard with a community pet*

When I first contemplated doing relief work, I saw it just as a way to help the needy. However, through my time in P.N.G., I realized that I myself could be helped and grow in many ways. The refugees and Papuans taught me through their simple way of life not to be so interested in the things of the world. Though being isolated and away from family and friends, I began to talk with God more, seeking His will through

prayer and Bible reading. I also learned that if I study the Scriptures, not only am I enabled to grow in my relationship with God, but it is also of benefit to my neighbours and brothers in Christ when I speak to them of God's Word.

Being home now and having time to remember occasions when I was lonely or sick with malaria, tropical ulcers or diarrhoea, or the times when I was homesick, I still feel extremely blessed that I was able to experience a different way of life. I am grateful for the financial and prayer support that enabled me to meet people's needs in a physical way by teaching sawmill and construction techniques and setting up buildings to help the refugees become more self-sufficient.

Through daily contact with the refugees as well as organized study, I was also privileged to help many in a spiritual way, pointing them to the Bible and the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ, who alone can save.

\* A letter recently received reports the good news that between 10 and 15 families now worship together.



*With friends at a farewell evening given for him*

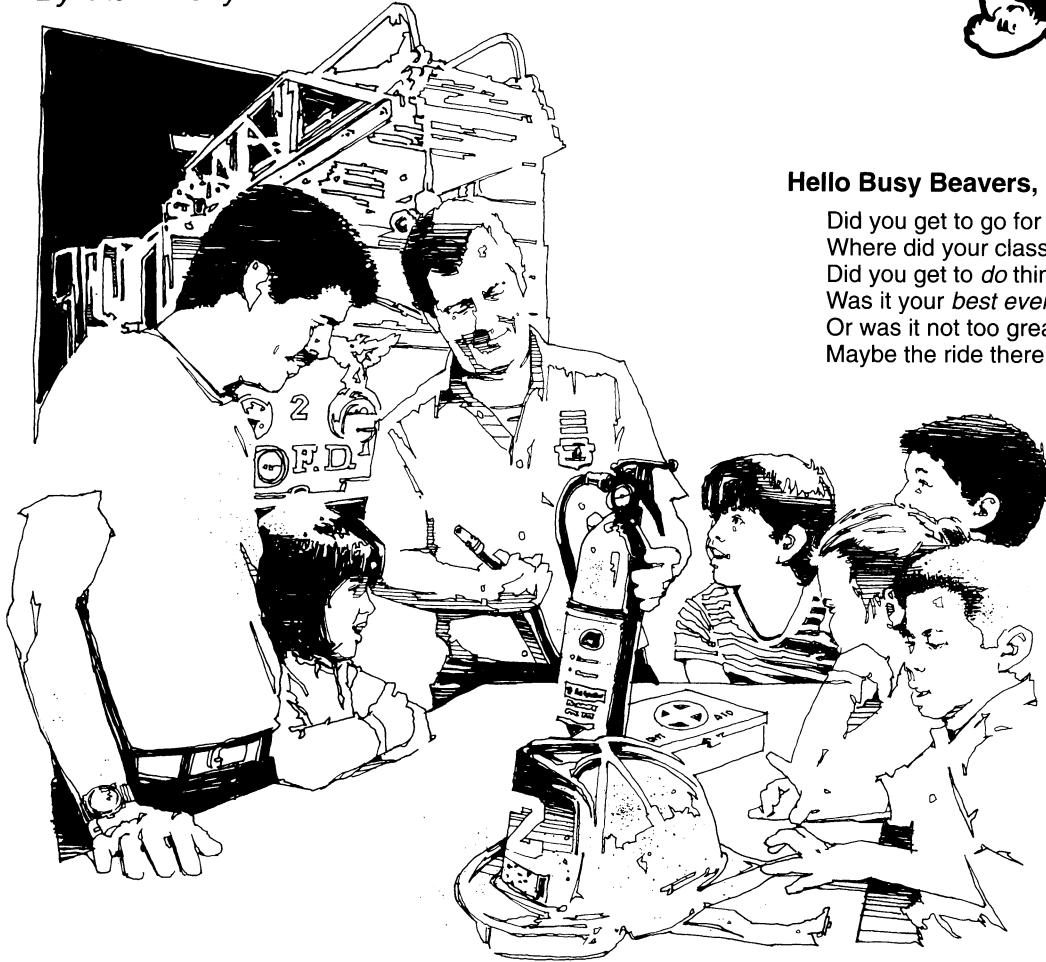
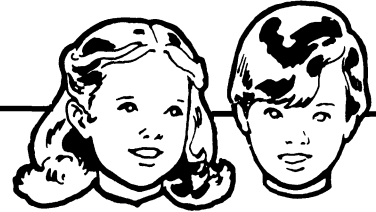


Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund  
P.O. Box 85225, Burlington  
Ontario, Canada L7R 4K4



# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



## Hello Busy Beavers,

Did you get to go for a *school trip* this spring?  
Where did your class go?  
Did you get to *do* things?  
Was it your *best ever* school trip?  
Or was it not too great?  
Maybe the ride there was the most fun?!

You can win a prize telling us about your trip and how you enjoyed it.  
Let's hear your story!

Send it to:  
The Busy Beaver Club  
c/o Premier Printing Ltd.  
One Beghin Avenue  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
R2J 3X5

## Quiz Time!

### Fear Not

Many times God's people are told "Be not afraid...Fear not." Can you fill in the blanks?

1. Jesus said to the ruler of the synagogue, "Do not fear, only \_\_\_\_\_." Mark 5:36
2. The Lord appeared to him...and said, "...fear not, for I am \_\_\_\_\_ you." Gen. 26:24
3. ...the Lord of hosts, Him you shall regard as \_\_\_\_\_; let Him be your fear. Isaiah 8:13
4. ...we will not fear though the earth should \_\_\_\_\_... Ps. 46:2
5. For I, the Lord your God, \_\_\_\_\_ your right hand; it is I who say to you, "Fear not, I will \_\_\_\_\_ you." Isaiah 41:13
6. Though a host \_\_\_\_\_ against me, my heart shall not fear. Psalm 27:3
7. When I am afraid  
I put my \_\_\_\_\_ in Thee.  
In God, whose word I praise,  
in God I trust without a \_\_\_\_\_. Psalm 56:3,4
8. Fear not, for those who are with us are \_\_\_\_\_ than those who are with them. 2 Kings 6:16
9. Be not \_\_\_\_\_; for behold, I bring you \_\_\_\_\_ news of a great \_\_\_\_\_.  
Luke 2:10
10. Fear not, little \_\_\_\_\_, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the \_\_\_\_\_.  
Luke 12:32

# Knock-Knock JOKES

Knock, knock!  
Who's there?  
Lettuce.  
Lettuce who?  
Lettuce tell you some good  
knock, knock jokes!

from Busy Beavers *Elisa & Karen VanderGaag*

Knock, knock!  
Who's there?  
Pizza.  
Pizza who?  
Pizza chocolate pie would  
be great right now!

Knock, knock!  
Who's there?  
Ken.  
Ken who?  
Ken I come in?  
I'm freezing out here!

Knock, knock!  
Who's there?  
Catchup.  
Catchup who?  
Catchup with me and I'll tell you!

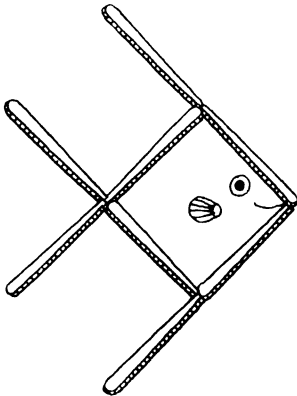
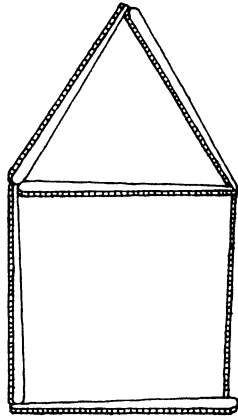
Knock, knock!  
Who's there?  
Jess.  
Jess who?  
Jess me and my shadow!

## Toothpick Teasers

### House into Squares

Using six toothpicks, make a "house" like this:

Now, moving only two toothpicks, change the "house" into five squares.



### Turn the Fish

Arrange eight toothpicks to make a "tropical fish," as shown at left.

When you finish, the fish will be swimming to your right. Can you turn it around, so it's swimming to your left? But to do this, you may move only *three* toothpicks!

(Answers next time!)

## Code

by Busy Beaver *Kimberley Driegen*

A = 1	B = 2	E = 5	G = 7	I = 9
J = 10	N = 14	O = 15	R = 18	S = 19
U = 21	V = 22	Y = 25		

9 5 14 10 15 25 2 5 9 14 7 1

2 21 19 25 2 5 1 22 5 18

## Word Search

by Busy Beaver *Sharon Heemskerck*

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

### Look for:

kid	good-bye	their
made	doing	bottom
letter	now	on
hello	word	quiz
name	want	dear
say	this	street
good	all	to



Busy Beavers, I wish you all *one super summer holiday*, and a safe one, too!

Have a great time at home and wherever you are. And keep **BUSY!**

Love to you all,  
Aunt Betty