

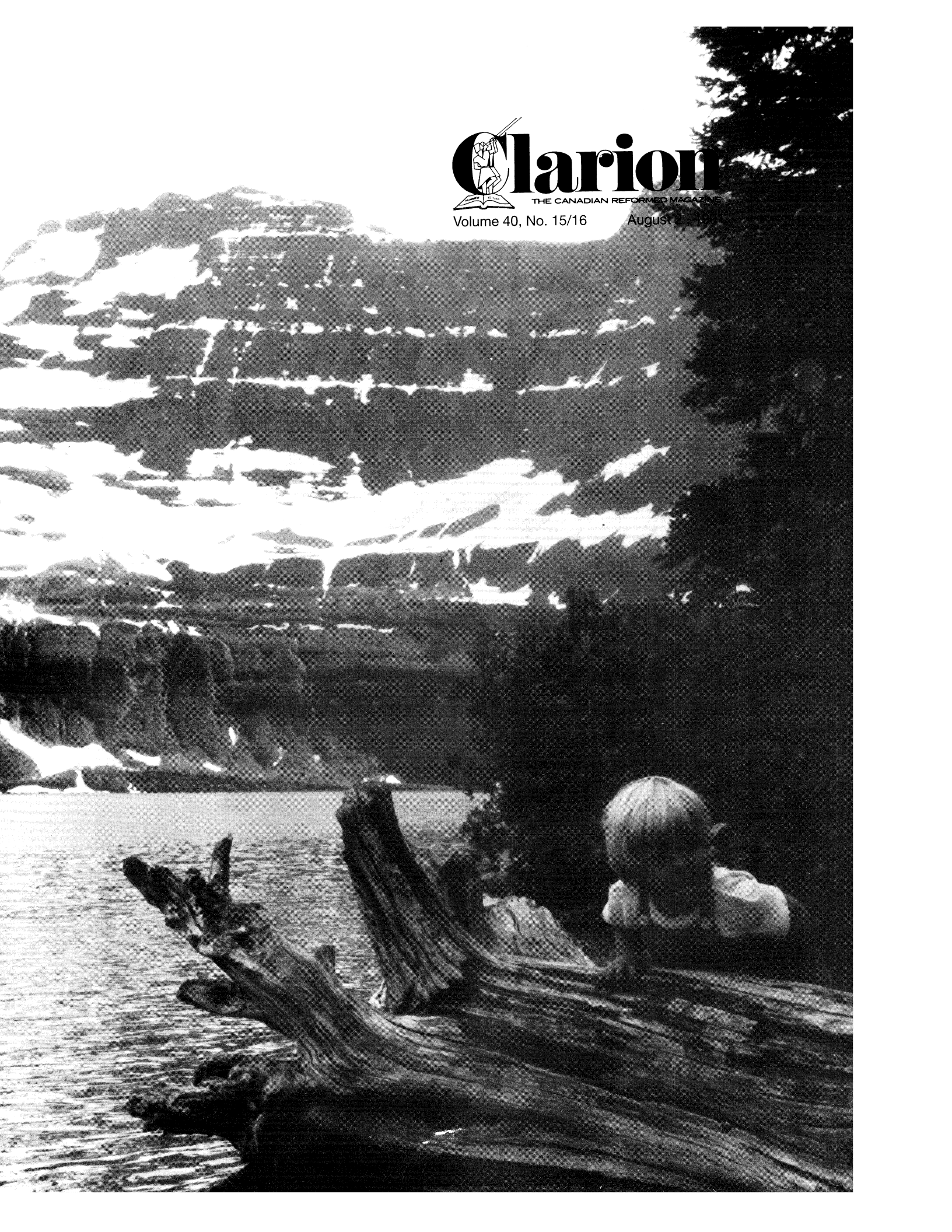


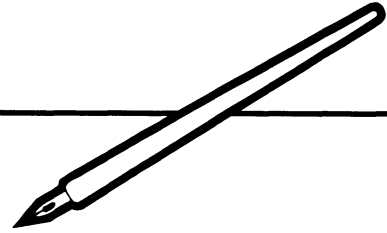
Clarion

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Hebrews 11:3 and “Theistic Evolution”

The term and the context

The Synod of the Christian Reformed Church [hereafter CRC] has met last month and made decisions regarding a report on Creation and Science. This report dealt with the controversy about creation as described in the Scriptures and the modern approach of evolution. The problem in the CRC is a compromise between the two opposites in what has been called “theistic evolution.” In this compromise God is believed to have created by way of an evolution during some billion years, an evolution that includes the mutation from one kind of life into another kind, e.g., the evolution from an ape into a human being.

In connection with this struggle in the CRC, the reader will find in this issue an article from Dr. John Byl. It is taken over from *Christian Renewal* of February 11 of this year with permission of both the author and the editor. At the request of the author a few paragraphs were left out since they were relevant in a CRC setting but not of much help for the Canadian Reformed readership. We thank both Dr. Byl and the editor of *Christian Renewal* for their permission.

At the same time, I take the opportunity to inform our readers about decisions that were made at the CRC synod in this matter as well as in the matter of “women in office.” To begin with the latter, the synod decided “not to accede” to the many overtures that requested to rescind the decision to open all the offices in the CRC to women. One of the grounds was that “no new and compelling biblical or confessional grounds have been advanced beyond those involved in making the 1990 decision.” The synod also appointed “a small *ad hoc* committee to gather from the various synodical study committee reports and related publications the biblical grounds for the decision of Synod 1990 to change Article 3 in the Church Order.” This article says that only male members of the church can be elected for the office of elder and minister. I wonder whether 1 Cor. 14:34ff and 1 Tim. 2:11-15 will belong to these grounds.

With regard to the Creation/Science problem, basically the majority report’s recommendations were accepted which gives the Calvin College teachers of theistic evolution their freedom to go ahead. A statement that Adam and Eve were the first human beings and that we therefore do not come from a long line of evolution was first adopted and later drastically weakened in its effectiveness.

It is clear, therefore, that the liberal line has won again and showed itself stronger than that segment that seeks to abide by Scripture and Confession. The question comes up, here too: Why is the energy of error so strong? Why does it get

pushed upon a church federation with so much force? How is it possible that it can find such a welcome, while an honest reading of the Scriptures points out so clearly that here is a deviation from what God’s Word says? But I will not deal with these questions now. We are called to humbly submit to what the Lord says in the Scriptures, out of sincere love for Him. I want to go here to one specific text in the New Testament that deals with creation, Hebrews 11:3.

The text (Hebrews 11:3) says (RSV):

By faith we understand

that the world was created by the Word of God,

so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.

A more correct translation of the last line is:

so that what is seen was not made out of things which appear.

The Epistle to the Hebrews came to its first addresses, and comes to us, with an urgent appeal to live out of faith. This faith is faith in God, the Father of Christ, the God of the old and the new covenant with its rich promises. It is also faith in God’s Son, through whom God spoke in these last days “to us,” “through whom also He created the world” (1:1, 2). He is the Mediator, the great prophetic King and Priest through whom God worked and works salvation.

What does such faith mean? Chapter 11:1 gives a definition: “Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” And verse 2 adds that by faith “the men of old received divine approval.” What is stated in this “definition” is worked out in the examples of faith that follow: Abel, Noah, Abraham and Sara, with Isaac and Jacob, Moses, and so on. They all lived or acted out of faith. They all were sure of the truth and reliability of what God spoke to them in promise. God spoke to Noah about the forthcoming flood, and that he had found grace in God’s eyes and would be saved, but through the ark which he had to build. Noah believed. So, he built the ark. He was firmly convinced regarding the things God spoke about, even though he did not see any of them for one hundred and twenty years (Genesis 6).

The very same counts for Abraham. God promised him a son of his own. Abraham trusted this promise of God with a sure hope. Although, for many years, he did not see this son, he was fully convinced that the Lord would make His word true. It was in this same sure hope and firm conviction that he was willing to obey God and offer Isaac to Him.

Why is this faith, this surety and conviction with regard to what God says, so important? The epistle is clear about it: salvation is received only in the way of this faith. Why did so


many of Israel, though delivered from Egypt, not enter the promised land but died in the wilderness? "They were unable to enter because of unbelief" (3:19). For this reason the readers are constantly admonished to endure and persevere in faith in order not to forfeit this entering into the rest that is waiting (4:13; cf. also e.g. 2:1-4, 6:1-8, 10:19-39, 12, 13).

Now it is not my intention to give a detailed exegesis here of this text, but just make a few remarks. In the first place, creation is here clearly presented as a historic fact. It stands at the beginning of a series of examples of faith which are taken from history. We don't have here mythical figures of mythical stories. In the second place, Hebrews 11 obviously follows the historical and chronological line of Genesis and what follows after it. We can conclude that Hebrews takes the Genesis account as historical, including the creation.

Further, it is stated in this New Testament text that God created the world by His Word. It is the conviction of faith that Genesis 1 is true and reliable when it says that God spoke and things came into being. There was no light; God spoke, and there was light. We can compare here what Paul writes in

Romans 4:17 about Abraham who believed in God who "calls into existence the things that do not exist." In the light of Scripture as a whole this evidently includes creation *ex nihilo*, out of nothing.

The conviction that in Genesis God gives us an historic account of His creation by His Word, so that what is seen has not come into being out of what appears, what exists, is a matter of the same faith that was in Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and so on. We do not see it for it happened long ago, yet we believe it, because God says that it was this way. God *speaks* (present tense) to us what is in Scripture (Hebrews 3:7). There can only be one valid response: faith that this is true as it is said.

So it is through faith that we as believers understand the origin of the world in this way: God created the world by His Word, so that what is seen has not come about out of things which did already appear or exist. We believe creation as God, the Creator, reveals it to us, and not as the theory of theistic evolution presents it. 

GENERAL AND SPECIAL REVELATION

Evolution Theory Wins Out in Creation/Science Report

By John Byl

In 1988 the CRC synod appointed a study committee to address the relationship between special revelation (i.e. the Bible) and general revelation (i.e. nature), focusing primarily on the implications for biblical interpretation and the investigation of God's creation. The committee was to deal specifically with issues concerning Genesis and evolution.

The issue was occasioned by the writings and teachings of Calvin College professors Howard Van Till, Clarence Menninga, and Davis Young. The Calvin Board of Trustees had judged that their teachings fell within the limits set by the synodically adopted guidelines for the interpretation of Scripture. But many in the church were not satisfied by this. No less than 32 overtures were sent to Synod 1988, where it was decided to appoint a committee to study the issue.

This committee is to report back to Synod 1991. Their report has now been sent to the churches for study. It is a lengthy one: 47 single-spaced type-written pages plus a 19 page appendix on the evolutionary view of origins.

Glancing quickly at the end of the report, the final declarations of the committee at first sight look very good. But a closer reading indicates that, in actuality, Van Till and Co. have been given essentially a clean bill of health. It comes down to this: the majority of the committee claims that the Bible and the confessions do *not* rule out an evolutionary view of origins, including the evolution of man.

Brief summary

Let us examine briefly how the committee comes to this conclusion.

The committee notes that

a plain reading of the first chapters of Genesis, as it was almost universally accepted by Christians until the 19th century, indicates that God made the world in 6 days a few thousand years before Abraham ... Eve was created from Adam's rib and together they were the first parents of the human race (p.36).

In recent times, however, this account of origins has been challenged by that of

evolutionary science. It is because of alleged "increased scientific knowledge" about origins that the traditional reading of Genesis is now in doubt. According to the committee:

... this issue concerns the impact of general revelation upon our understanding of special revelation. If we stood in a tradition that instructed us in our reading of Scripture to ignore either general revelation or the results of science, the question of how Genesis records history would not arise (p.14)

How can we resolve the "apparent conflict" between evolutionary science and the Bible? An easy solution would be to simply reject those scientific conclusions that conflict with the Bible. This the committee labels as "fundamentalism" (p.37) and refuses to do:

as Reformed Christians who recognize the authority of general revelation and the legitimacy of the scientific enterprise as a God-given task, we...resolutely reject (this) alternative (p.37).

To reject science “would be to abandon the heart of the Reformed vision of life” (p.39). The committee emphasizes that “the authority of general revelation, no less than special revelation, is a divine authority which must be acknowledged without reservation” (p.43).

Instead, the committee hopes to “mitigate (i.e. lessen, JB) the tension between science and the Bible by stressing the importance of *interpretation* on both sides” (p.37).

The committee points out that there are limits on the extent to which Genesis can be interpreted. In particular,

any interpretation which calls into question the event character (i.e. which questions the actual occurrence of the events, JB) of the story told in these first...chapters of the Bible must be firmly rejected, whatever difficulties this may cause with respect to the scientific evidence (p.38).

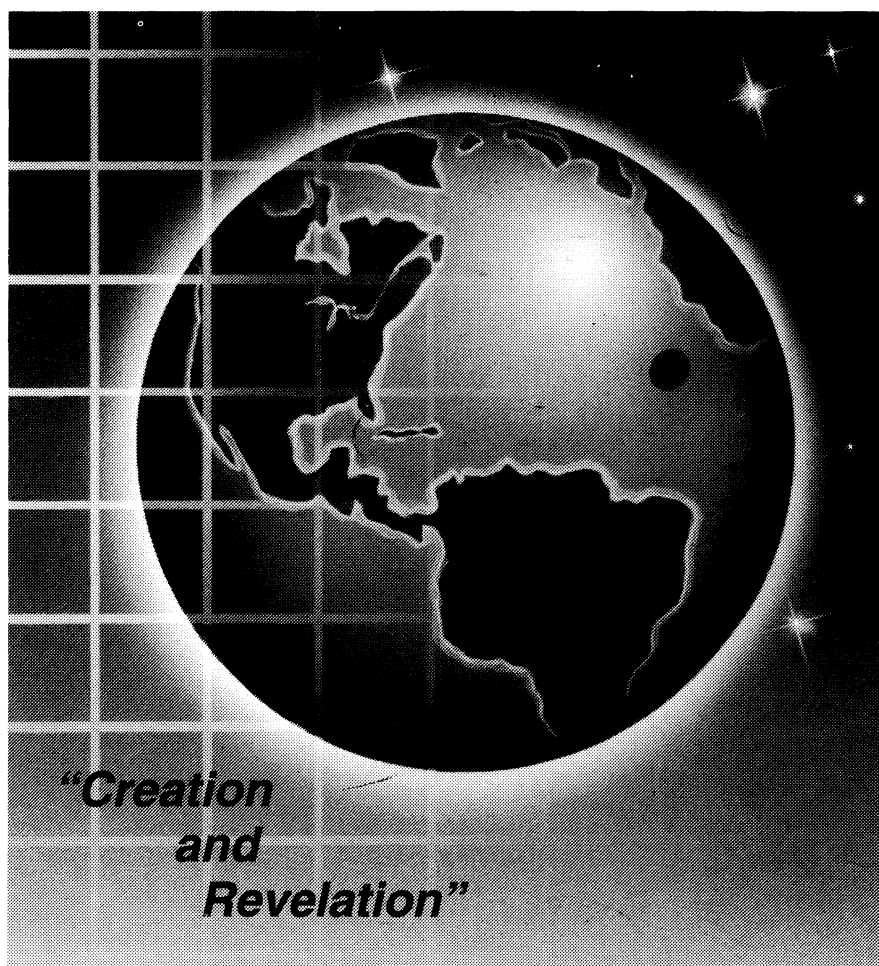
Nor, adds the committee, may the Bible be interpreted contrary to its own intention.

Unhappily, such nice phrases turn out to mean very little. For the committee goes on to argue that “Scripture may not be isolated from what we know to be true in the arena of creational revelation” (p.13). What this means, in actual practice, is that it is permissible to read Genesis in such a way that it will not clash with so-called “scientific conclusions” about origins. Particular attention is given to possible re-interpretations of Genesis 1 (pp.19-27) and the account of Babel (Gen.11) (pp.15-16). Here the committee concludes that “our increased knowledge of early human history ... cautions us against drawing historical inferences unrelated to the revelational intention of the (biblical) account” (p.16). However, even the supposed “revelational intention” of Genesis appears to be fixed more by so-called scientific knowledge than by the text itself.

But does not the committee state that it wants to stress the importance of interpretation on *both* sides of the issue? Why, then, not re-interpret the scientific evidence along creationist lines? The committee responds that there are strict limitations on the extent to which the scientific evidence can be reinterpreted (p.38). While conceding that evolutionary theory is not an established fact, the committee continues:

it is also true that there is a considerable body of evidence for which evolutionary theory has greater explanatory power than any comparable alternative theory (p.38).

It is evident throughout the report that the committee is very much impressed by



evolutionary science. Yet, it does grant that evolution is not a proven fact. Nevertheless, time and again it is implied that those who reject evolutionary conclusions are denying “the authority of general revelation” and refusing to acknowledge genuine truth and knowledge.

The lengthy Appendix, entitled “Brief Summary of Current Scientific View of Origins,” is devoted to a (mainly favorable and uncritical) detailed account of *only one* view of origins: that of evolution. The committee seems quite confident that secular science will provide us with definite answers to our questions about origins.

The evolution of man

As I have already noted, the formal Declarations, listed towards the end of the report, look quite good. The committee even goes so far as to stress that the church should “insist...that all theorizing should be subject to the teaching of Scripture and the confessions” (Declaration C). The unwary reader might expect that to mean that evolutionary theory, to the extent that it contradicts the plain teaching of Scripture, must be rejected.

But, alas, it means nothing of the sort. For Declaration F (the only one to deal specifically with the main issue), which asserts that Scripture and confessions rule out evolutionary theories of the origin of man, was supported by only *two* of the eight members (Maatman and Spykman). The majority gave the following reasons for rejecting the minority declaration:

- (a) It is not wise to make formal declarations in this area
- (b) Further study is needed
- (c) The church should not bind the consciences of its members beyond what is the clear and indubitable teaching of Scripture and the creeds.

Of these only the last one merits further comment. Does Scripture indeed not speak clearly on this matter? The following points are in order:

1. The committee itself concedes that the traditional reading of Genesis 1-11 is in fact the plain reading of the text. (In my dictionary “plain” is equated with “clear” and “obvious.”) Indeed, especially the

detailed creation account of Adam and Eve (read Gen.2:7-25) unambiguously rules out an evolutionary origin of man.

2. Reformed hermeneutics has always insisted that the most obvious interpretation should be preferred, unless internal scriptural evidence deems otherwise. But whenever Scripture refers to Genesis it takes for granted the historicity of its events, even down to the details. Thus, for example, regarding the creation of man, 1 Tim. 2:13 refers to Adam being created before Eve; Luke 3, tracing the lineage of Christ, ends with "...Seth, the son of Adam, the son of God" (committee members take note: not "Adam, the son of ape"); etc.

3. As the committee itself notes, the real problem is not that the Bible is not clear on the matter. Rather, the problem is that the obvious reading of Scripture does not agree with the so-called findings of evolutionary science. Why, then, don't they simply admit that here instead of pretending that the Bible itself is unclear on the matter?

General revelation and science

How does the committee justify its high assessment of evolutionary theory? Can it really be equated with God's general revelation?

The committee has a number of things to say about general revelation and science. It views general revelation as the manifestation of God's wisdom in the world, science as the discovery of that wisdom (p.9). Since general revelation comes to us with divine authority and since science is the study of this divine revelation, we must take science seriously. We should not reject the work of unbelieving scientists. "The Reformed tradition places on its adherents a moral obligation, in fact, a religious duty, to acknowledge truth wherever it is found" (p.12).

Now, with all this I heartily concur. I agree that general revelation comes with divine authority. I agree that we must take science seriously. In its study of present processes science can indeed discover the wisdom of the Creator and apply its results, in accordance with the cultural mandate.

The committee, furthermore, quite rightly distinguishes between the actual givens of creation (i.e. the actual things we see: observational data) and the construction of scientific theories. Only the former come to us with divine authority (p.38).

Agreed. But then it must follow that there can be no conflict between general revelation and Genesis. For Genesis deals with ancient history, while general revelation yields us direct information

only about the present. To draw scientific conclusions about the past we must go beyond direct observations of general revelation and rely on theoretical speculations. Hence the conflict is in fact between Genesis and scientific theorizing.

Regarding theorizing, the committee acknowledges that more than one interpretation of the data is possible, that theories are subject to change, that they are not the final truth, etc. (p.14). It recognizes the large role that philosophical presuppositions play in the construction and choice of theories; science is not religiously neutral (p.38).

Thus, to summarize: the committee concedes that evolution, being only a plausible theory, cannot be equated with general revelation; it concedes that scientific theories are speculative and subjective; also, it declares that all scientific theories must be subject to Scripture. And yet, incredibly...when it comes to the crunch it is evolution, not Genesis, that easily comes out on top.

Why? It is precisely at this critical point that the committee falters, setting aside even a pretence of rationality and objectivity. It seems to feel that evolution is much more plausible than creationist alternatives, that it is more likely to be true. But it gives no substantial grounds supporting this value judgment. No criteria are offered for assessing scientific theories or for determining at which stage a

scientific theory can be considered to be sufficiently probable so as to over-rule the plain reading of Scripture.

As the committee says, we should acknowledge truth wherever we find it. But the question is: how can we recognize the truth as truth when we find it? Surely not by a majority vote of secular scientists.

A false dilemma

The committee presents us with a false dilemma. It contends that rejecting those scientific conclusions that clash with Genesis would be "to deny the authority of general revelation and the legitimacy of scientific research."

But, as we have seen, this is hardly the case. A rejection of evolutionary origins involves not a denial of general revelation, nor a denial of the legitimacy of science. What is questioned is only the reliability of scientific speculation about origins. The committee appeals to the cultural mandate to legitimize science. However, the command to subdue, replenish, and have dominion (Gen. 1:28) refers more directly to scientific applications rather than to speculations about origins. Nowhere does Scripture even hint that man, through his scientific theorizing, is able to uncover the truth about origins. Rather, it stresses the limitations of human knowledge (see, for example, Job 38-41).



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Special revelation and science

Given that evolution is only a plausible theory, not a proven fact, it must remain at the level of mere human speculation. I am disappointed that the committee did not examine what Scripture and the confessions have to say about the relative trustworthiness of human ideas and the Word of God.

The Belgic Confession is very explicit. It insists that we should "believe without any doubt all things contained in Scripture" (Art.V), "against which nothing can be alleged" (Art.IV); that "it is forbidden to add unto or take away anything from the word of God" (Art.VII); and

Neither may we consider any writings of man ... of equal value with divine Scripture, 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; for all men are of themselves liars, and more vain than vanity itself. Therefore we reject with all our hearts whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule ... (Art. VII).

We are admonished to test the spirits: to examine all teachings in the light of Scripture. Hence, with regards to the issue of Genesis and evolution, it is evolution that must give way in the event of a conflict.

The committee denies that it is rejecting Genesis. It claims that the problem is only one of *interpretation* (p.24).

However, that is nonsense: once we reject the straightforward interpretation of Scripture, letting the chips fall where they may, in favor of artificial readings dictated by scientific speculation, then we have in fact stopped listening to God's Word. Our hermeneutical principles must be consistent with our confession of subjection to God's Word.

Essential/non-essential

The committee cautions that the church must testify to that which is *central* to Scripture and the confessions (p.43). We must distinguish what is essential to the faith from what is not, allowing vigorous discussion on the later (Pastoral Advice No. F, p.45).

But this simply won't do. The most essential thing is our confession of an inerrant Bible. If we can no longer believe *everything* it tells us, how can we believe *anything* it says? That is the issue at stake. Therefore, since we confess to believe *without any doubt* all things in Scripture, we must uphold all of Scripture, not just those parts we feel are "essential."

Conclusions

In summary, evolutionary science cannot be equated with God's general revelation. The conflict between Genesis and evolution is at heart a confrontation between God's Word and human scientific theorizing. The confessions make it clear that such theorizing ought to be subject to Scripture, rather than vice-ver-

sa. Hence all scientific conclusions contrary to the plain reading of Genesis should be ruled out of bounds.


The central issue here is how we assess different sources of knowledge (i.e. epistemology). Accepting Scripture as the final authority will have significant implications for both our hermeneutics and our scientific theorizing.

Had the committee been more in tune with the Reformed confessions, its declarations *should* have been along the following lines:

1. The re-affirmation of the epistemological supremacy of Scripture.
2. The affirmation of hermeneutical principles consistent with such a high view of Scripture.
3. The affirmation that the authority of general revelation does not extend to scientific theorizing.

4. The specific rejection of *all* scientific theorizing (not just the alleged evolution of man) that contradicts Scripture.

Thus, in my opinion, even Declaration F (which rules out the evolutionary origin of man) does not go far enough. It still leaves the rest of Genesis 1-11 (e.g. Gen. 1, the Fall, the Flood, Babel, etc.) open to modification by secular science.

Dr. John Byl is a professor of mathematical philosophy at Trinity Western University in Langley, B.C. 

Appeal or Revision?

By W.W.J. VanOene

Brother C. Lindhout Jr. did me the honour of sending a "Letter to the Editor" regarding a passage in a Newmedley in the April 26, 1991 issue. As a "Letter to the Editor" his submission is too long for that column. Years ago it was decided at an editorial committee meeting that Letters to the Editor should be no longer than one-column print at the most. It appears good to remind our correspondents of this, for these letters have a tendency of becoming articles, and this is contrary to their character.

Brother Lindhout's submission deserves more than just publication. It asks for a reply. This is also expressed in so many words. Let me first take over the letter so that our readers can follow the reply.

I would appreciate having the opportunity to make some observations about the following quote, which appears in the News Medley (*Clarion*, April 26, 1991):

'I found the same mix-up in the bulletin of another church, where we were told that the consistory would seek "revision" at the next classis of a classical decision made on an appeal against a consistory decision. If a consistory feels that it has been wronged by a classical decision on an appeal that concerned this consistory, *it is completely wrong to go to the next classis to ask for "revision."* (My emphasis C.L.) In case the consistory cannot accept the decision, the only way open is an appeal to the next

regional synod. Let's stick to the proper ecclesiastical behaviour.'

The Rev. vO. has the privilege of 'editorializing' on the news, and, frankly, I welcome it. However, is it completely wrong to ask the next classis for revision? Is the only way open an appeal to the next regional synod? Is that so in all cases and at all times? 1)

There were clearly different opinions about the contents and just as clearly different opinions on the way to resolve these differences. It would, therefore, have been helpful, if any comments were made at all, to expand those comments so that the parties involved, and the readers in general, might be instructed about what is 'proper ecclesiastical behaviour' and why. The Rev. vO, having

written a book or commentary on the Church Order, may be seen as somewhat of an expert, 2) and, if News Medley is not the forum for further illumination, he might at least have referred to further authority (e.g. see my book page...). 3)

As it is, it may leave some people to wonder how a certain consistory can be so ignorant, 4) that it does not even know that asking the next classis for revision is not proper ecclesiastical behaviour. Surely, the Rev. vO. knows that there is, at least some, authority that seems to fly in the face of the quotation above. To ignore such authority, or not address it, is, I submit, not very good academic practise. 5)

For your readers' benefit I just want to cite the following to support the observations in the last paragraph:

From Idzerd Van Dellen and Martin Monsma: *The Church Order Commentary*, 1964 Printing, Zondervan Publishing House copyright 1941, Grand Rapids, Mich.:

P. 139: Furthermore, when a member or a body desires to make an appeal concerning any action of a minor assembly, such an appeal as a matter of course goes to the major assembly to which the appeal is rightfully made. No minor assembly can in such cases sit in judgment over its own actions, *although reconsideration of previous decisions is, of course, always permissible.* (emphasis mine – C.L.)

P. 141; 3. To which body must the appeal be made?

To major assemblies. Consistorial decisions may be appealed to Classis. Classical decisions may be appealed to Synod. *In exceptional cases one may appeal from one assembly to the next. That is from one classical gathering to the next classical gathering...* (emphasis mine – C.L.) 6)

What might be examples of 'exceptional cases'? Can it be where Regional Synod is a year away? Or can it be where one considers that the assembly did not deal with a matter in an 'ecclesiastical manner' described as follows: 7)

...in our ecclesiastical assemblies we should by all means seek to convince and persuade each other from the Word of God. We should not seek to force our opinions and convictions unto others. Our assemblies should far rather guide and direct. By mutual consultation and consideration of God's Word we should endeavour to come to a mutual conclusion. (Ibid. p. 137) 8)

Using my (free) translation, I would also like to quote from Dr. F. L. Bos, *De Orde*

der Kerk toegelicht met kerkelijke besluiten uit vier eeuwen. 1950. Uitgeverij Guido de Bres, 's Gravenhage:

Outside the assembly (after it has made its decision – C.L.) one can attempt in two ways to have the decision changed or withdrawn.

This can in the first place be done by a *request for revision* (herziening) to an assembly of the same level as the one that made the decision.

Article 31 does not mean that, when someone has an objection to a decision of any ecclesiastical assembly, one may not urge the same assembly to a revision (herziening) of that decision, and *must* appeal to a broader assembly (Assen 1926). (pages 117/118) 9)

If there clearly is a 'right way' and a 'wrong way,' then without doubt, let us learn it. But if there is room for different interpretation (as the citations show), or if there are different ways in different circumstances, then let us acknowledge that there was not necessarily any 'mix-up', but a conscious consideration of the options that appeared to be open.

Mr. Editor, this letter has become somewhat lengthy. Perhaps you will see this matter as important enough to give it space. Of course, I will welcome the Rev. vO's comments, so that all of us may be instructed.

With brotherly greetings,
(w.s.) Cornelis Lindhout (Jr.)

The above letter gives me a welcome opportunity to elaborate on the

point in question. For the convenience of the readers I have placed figures with the passages on which I should like to elaborate. This prevents the need for repeating parts of the letter. The reader knows what I am referring to.

The point itself is clear: There was a consistory that considered itself wronged by a classical decision made on an appeal against a consistory decision. It is my thesis that this consistory did wrong by addressing the next classis, asking for revision. If the consistory could not abide by the decision, the proper way was: go to the next regional synod.

ad 1. We are to differentiate between a request to a classis for revision of a decision made by a previous classis, and the reaction of a member or a consistory to a classical decision on an appeal.

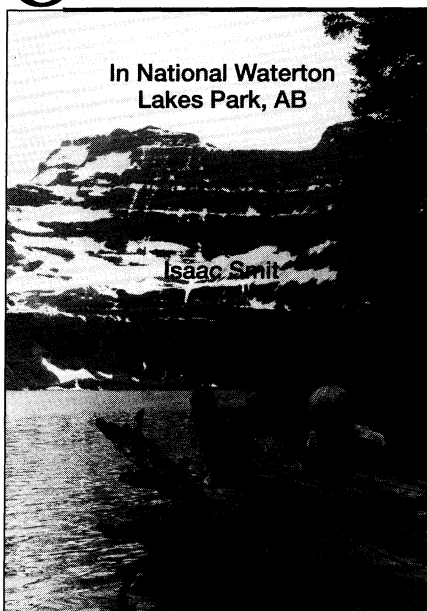
It definitely is possible and permitted to try to have a previous classical decision changed at a subsequent classis. In "olden days" Art. 46 of our Church Order contained the provision that the Acts of the previous broader assemblies should be consulted before the instructions regarding the matters to be dealt with were written, "in order that what was once dealt with should not be proposed again, unless it is deemed necessary that it be changed." Here we have the possibility of revision, and correctly so, but it is not permitted to expand this "revision" to decisions on appeals according to Art. 31.

We find basically the same in our present Art. 33: "Matters once decided upon may not be proposed again unless they are substantiated by new grounds." The very text of this article prevents us from transferring this possibility of revision to Art. 31.

A classis might decide that the next classes shall begin at six in the morning instead of at nine. I know that it is a silly example, but it is clear, I trust. No one will deny that revision of such a decision may be asked at the next classis, with the presentation of new arguments, of course. At no time did I advocate or even imply that e.g. classical regulations can be changed only by way of an appeal to a regional synod. Nor did I advocate or imply that no revision may be asked of a decision with which a consistory is unhappy. If new arguments can be found, why should that consistory not be allowed to ask the next classis for revision?

But that was not the point in question. Here we had a decision on an appeal against a consistory decision. The rule is that all parties abide by a decision on an appeal. But if either party cannot abide by the decision and considers itself wronged by it, Art. 31 clearly stipulates the way: appeal to a broader assembly. Here it is not a matter of making a proposal (Art.

OUR COVER



33) and of adducing new grounds but of complaining that one has been wronged. The churches have agreed that the way open for having the decision on an appeal changed is: go to the next broader (not: similar) assembly.

This is a wise decision. Experience teaches that all the ministers are at every classis, that frequently the same elders are in attendance, especially those from the smaller congregations. It should be prevented as much as possible that one judges one's own decisions in the matter of appeals.

ad 2. It is not my custom to come with lengthy quotations. One can "prove" almost any point with quotations and one can almost always find someone who agrees with what one is out to prove, or at least some words of others that seem to support one's thesis. Besides, a newsmedley is not the place to come with extensive argumentation. This is one of the reasons why I am thankful for the opportunity brother Lindhout's letter offers. In a newsmedley I may just make statements, with the odd argument for them added here or there. If our readers desire further elaboration, I am most willing to give it. If our readers see me "as somewhat of an expert," they had better abandon that illusion. I shall reply to the best of my ability to questions posed to me and shall give the best advice I can give in the circumstances when asked for it, but no one should get the notion that I am an expert.

ad 3. No one would expect me to toot my own horn, would he? Don't expect that I shall say "See my book, page..." unless someone else referred to it first, and it fits in with the argument going on. If someone reads and uses the book referred to, I am happy, but don't expect me to advertise it. And as for adducing "further authority," I repeat that one can almost always find quotations that (seem to) support one's stand.

ad 4. Be it far from me to make derogatory remarks about any consistory among us, but, on the other hand, I am compelled to state that among our consistories the knowledge and understanding of our Church Order is often minimal, which might give ministers an opportunity to push certain ideas through without too much opposition. After all, "he studied for it and will know how things should be done." Is that not often the reply one gets when asking how brothers could agree with a certain decision or a certain course? How many of our office-bearers have been trained to some extent in the knowledge and application of our Church Order, if at all? This is the main reason why I considered it necessary to write a practical guide to the use

of the Church Order. The title "commentary" is hereby politely declined.

ad 5. Be it repeated that in the newsmedley I am not occupied with scholarly labours or scholarly or even academic argumentation. Everyone can rest assured that, when dealing with the Church Order at our Seminary, I gave full attention to other opinions and theories and that we endeavoured to treat church polity in an academic manner. But academic practices are taboo in a newsmedley. One has to keep the character of our column in mind.

ad 6. Thus, when dealing at the Seminary with Art. 31 and 33, I did take into account what Monsma and VanDellen wrote. I have the 1954 edition, but this will not make any difference, I presume. The relevant passages are, in any case, literally the same as brother Lindhout quoted them.

Our readers will have noticed one thing right away: Monsma/VanDellen's commentary *just makes those statements, but does not adduce any proof.* When reading the above-mentioned pages again, I could not find any proof for them either. On what do these statements rest, then? On the personal authority of the authors? But that is a very shaky ground. Their commentary may then have been called "worth its weight in gold." I am so bold as to disagree with that. They follow Joh. Jansen, and then as he had changed after 1925! Let the reader draw his own conclusions.

One may disagree with the arguments I adduced under *ad 1*, at least one does not have to go only by my word or statement. *That* would not be good practice, academic or other.

ad 7. Justly brother Lindhout asked what "might be examples of 'exceptional cases.'" The writers whom he quoted do not specify them either. It is easy to state that in "exceptional cases" deviation from the rule would be allowed, but to state something and to substantiate or explain it are different matters. I would not know what such "exceptional cases" might be. When we have agreed upon something we are to abide by it and not try to find ways around it.


ad 8. This quotation is totally irrelevant in this respect. Those who have seen me "at work" at consistory meetings or major assemblies can testify that it has always been my striving to reach a consensus and that only when it appeared that there was no other way to reach a decision than the way of taking a vote I was willing to choose that way.

There is an expression in this quotation to which I have serious objections. Our assemblies are not there to "guide and direct," at least not the broader assemblies. They are there to deal with

the matters legitimately put before them and make a decision on these matters according to their mandate. Only consistories are there to "guide and direct." Classes and Synods are not. And further, although the brothers are bound to do everything in total submission to God's Word, it is simply impossible in all matters put before them to "seek to convince and persuade each other from the Word of God." It sounds good to state this, but it is more of a slogan which has no power of argument.

At the Synod of Emden 1571, the brothers from Cologne asked "whether not all things should be confirmed with Holy Scripture. The brethren answered that those matters which concern the conscience must be confirmed with Holy Scripture but that those matters which concern the common order of the Churches or which are average should not be pushed to such necessity." That was a down-to-earth approach more than four hundred years ago, and I like that much better.

ad 9. We now turn to F. L. Bos *De Orde der Kerk*. The only "proof" that he adduced for his statement that a *request for revision* to the following similar assembly is permitted is a decision by the General Synod of Assen 1926. Brr! Readers of the column "Patrimony Profile" may have learned what I think of the Synod of Assen 1926, at least as far as the decisions in church-political respect are concerned. There is a history behind that decision. The "Classis Amsterdam" had been dealing with the matters around Dr. J. G. Geelkerken as if it were a permanent body, taking on the matter time and again. Further, the turnabout of Dr. H. H. Kuyper, and in his trail the Rev. Joh. Jansen, had disastrous effects on the course of the churches as far as church polity was concerned. Broader assemblies assumed more and more the character of permanent bodies, be it that their membership as such was subject to change. I would be very careful with quoting that General Synod in support of any claim regarding church polity. It would go too far if someone stated that exactly the opposite of what that synod decided should be adhered to, but extreme caution is required here, and I certainly would not appeal to its decisions to substantiate my stand in the matter of church polity.

Conclusion. Has any argument been adduced which would compel me to change my stand in the matter raised? Our readers can judge for themselves, but I myself have not found any. Thankful for the opportunity to say a little more about the subject, I sign off. 

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R. Schouten

Is Heaven Real?

When was the last time that you prayed for the return of Jesus Christ? And I don't mean when you were participating in the worship service, but when you were alone somewhere in prayer. And if you did pray for this event, did you do so with heartfelt longing? Or, did you do so, well, because that's what Christians are supposed to do?

Hard questions, aren't they? Do you perhaps feel guilty because you don't have a sufficiently great expectation for the return of the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it perhaps true that you never think about the new world because you're quite happy in this old one?

Well, if you have to honestly say yes to these questions, you are probably in the company of a great many Christians. The Church of Jesus Christ has perhaps become somewhat complacent. Maybe it has so much fallen in love with this present world that it can't even imagine a different, better world. If you listen and observe Christians very closely, do you get the impression that they are standing on tip toe as they wait for the appearing of their Saviour?

Of course, we know and confess that heaven is real. For the Bible tells us about heaven! We pray to "our Father in heaven." We ask that His will be done on earth just "as it is already done in heaven." And every decent Christian expects to go to heaven when he dies.

And yet, do we really long for heaven? How do we really value heaven? Would we be happy to go there soon? Are we heavenly minded? Is heaven a real treasure for us?

Well, we should be "heavenly-minded."

The apostle Paul tells us to "set our minds on the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God" (Col. 3:1).

The great goal of the apostle's existence is to be completely united with Christ. That's why he can even say in 2 Cor. 4 that he would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord! And in Phil. 2, he states that his desire is to depart and "to be with Christ," for that is "far better."

So we notice that for Paul the great thing about "going to heaven" was that he would then be "with Christ." But don't we already now live with Christ? Of course, but now we live *by faith* in Him. We don't see Him. There is a separation. And so we would just love to live no longer by faith, but by sight, face to face with the Lord Jesus. With Paul we desire to see Christ with our own eyes – Christ in His glory, adored by men and angels, our Beautiful Saviour.

So we can already say that heaven holds fascination and commands attention only for those who know and love Christ. If you have entrusted your life to Christ as Saviour and serve Him as King, then it will be your constant desire to be with Him.

Indeed, as we grow in our life of faith and service to Jesus Christ, the time of separation from Him sometimes becomes nearly unbearable. We will often find ourselves singing, "Come Lord Jesus, Maranatha." If our desire to be with the

Lord is weak, that is a bad sign. If you are in love with someone and are temporarily separated, you will spend a lot of time thinking about the great reunion. Well, so it ought to be if we love the Lord Jesus Christ.

We desire to see the Lord's glory. We may also know from Scripture that it is the Lord's desire to reveal His glory to us. In John 17, we hear the Saviour praying to His Father. He says: "Father, I desire that they also, whom thou hast given me, may be with me where I am, to behold my glory which thou hast given me in thy love for me before the foundation of the world" (v. 24).

And not only does the Lord want us to see His glory, but He also wants us to share it! Being with Christ in His perfection means that we ourselves will be perfected. For one thing, we will be perfected in holiness. Don't you sometimes get tired of sin? No matter how hard you try, you still do what you know is wrong! Sure, you can make progress, but you don't get to the goal. This makes us sad. We are grieved because of our remaining sin. And we want the Lord to come again so that we will finally be rid of our old nature completely. At last we will be able to give the Lord the kind of loving service that He deserves! And so we pray: Come Lord Jesus and deliver me from this evil nature which I just can't shake.

Also our bodies will be perfected! When you are young and perhaps healthy, it is easy to imagine that your bodily life will go on forever. But all too soon, you will notice signs of degeneration. Youth slips by in a hurry. And then you begin to realize that your redemption is not yet complete. You start longing for the resurrection body. You want to see the Day of Christ on which He "will change our lowly body to be like His glorious body, by the power which enables Him even to subject all things to Himself" (Phil. 3:21).

Weightlifting can build up the body. Running can strengthen it. It's good to strive for physical fitness. But nothing we do can erase the essential weakness of the body. Our present body is just a flimsy tent, temporal and frail, vulnerable to all kinds of attacks upon it.

CHURCH NEWS



CALLED BY:

Brampton, ON, London, ON,
Rockway, ON and by Toronto, ON
(missionary in Irian Jaya)

Candidate W.M. Wielenga
of Ancaster, ON

DECLINED TO:

Grand Rapids, MI
Rev. P.G. Feenstra
of Guelph, ON

DECLINED TO:

Ancaster, ON
Rev. G.H. van Popta
of Ottawa, ON

Only Christ can restore our physical natures. For He is a complete Saviour. Also our bodies belong to Him. He has redeemed them. And He will transform them completely so that they are fit for life in the new world. Already now, He is preparing eternal bodies for us (see 2 Cor. 5:1-5). On the day of His coming, our present mortal bodies will be swallowed up by life!

Another motivation for us to "set our minds on the things that are above" is the pain and misery and futility in this present creation. In Romans 8, Paul hears the whole creation groaning in travail. The world labours on under the curse which God has placed upon it. Don't we all experience that every day? There is something so terribly frustrating about life under the sun today. We get trouble in our jobs. There are all kinds of "natural" disasters. Wars and unrest brew throughout the world. New diseases flourish. Farmers always have to fight the same old weeds. Hospitals are constantly full of cancer patients. Relationships so often fall apart. There is emotional suffering and bondage of many varieties. Christians are persecuted. Children are abused and violated.

Who can sum up the pain of this world? What is left of the sweetness of Paradise? The world groans! We also groan as we await the redemption of our bodies.

But Paul says that this groaning is like the groaning of a woman in labour. And the result of that painful labour is birth! A new life comes into the world.

And so we may know that right through the groaning of this present creation, through the groaning of our own bodies, through the pain of our imperfect spirits, a new world is coming! But what labouring mother-to-be doesn't long for the end of her labour? So we long for the day of Christ. We pray for the restoration of all things.


Yes, there's a new world coming. The great frustration of every believing heart will be replaced by a huge contentment. Longing will be satisfied. This present world, scene of struggle, sin, disaster, disappointment, torment, torture, war and wickedness, will become the temple of the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb. God will dwell with His people. Heaven and earth will be united. The age old promise of the covenant – "I will be

your God and you shall be my people" – will be fulfilled.

Do you long for that?

Of course, you don't have to feel guilty about enjoying life under the sun. As long as God gives you life and a task, you can rejoice in that. But still, nothing in this life is completely satisfying. Even when you are young, you need to develop an eye for eternity. The greatest present experiences are only a short foretaste of the bliss of paradise. They just whet our appetites for the greater glory to come. How could this world satisfy us? For we are citizens of a different world. We have set our hearts on the things that are above.

Or are you being lured away from these kind of thoughts by the temptations of the world? Has the evil one convinced you that heaven can't compare with the pleasures available right now? Are you too busy to nourish your faith by reading the Bible? Are you so occupied with your own life that you never dream of praying for the glory of Christ?

Just remember: what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. Fix your eyes, therefore, not on what is seen, but on what is unseen. 



Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

Changing the guard

Synod Winnipeg 1989 appointed the following brothers to the Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church: Revs. R. Aasman, J. Mulder (convener), D.G.J. Agema, and the brs. G.J. Nordeman and T.M.P. VanderVen. Rev. R. Aasman was appointed secretary to the Committee.

Throughout the remainder of 1989, Dr. J. Faber was requested to attend the Committee meetings as advisor. The Committee wishes to express publicly its thanks and appreciation for the work that Dr. Faber has done over many years (since 1977) as member of this Committee, and for the support and advice he untiringly offered to his fellow committee members.

During the Spring of 1990, Rev. R. Aasman accepted a call to the Church at Edmonton, which made it impossible for him to continue as member of our Committee. With much regret, his request to be released from his responsibilities was accepted. Also his contributions were recognized with gratitude. In accordance with the Synod decision (Synod Winnipeg, Art. 167), Dr. N.H. Gootjes was invited to join the Committee. He was able to accept this invitation and attended his first meeting on November 7, 1990. Br. T.M.P. VanderVen was appointed secretary.

During the meeting of February 20, 1991, the Committee was faced with yet another request for release. In part, the minutes of that meeting read:

Rev. Mulder is given the opportunity to explain why he requests to be released from his duties as member of the CCOPC. He has been a member of the Committee for Contact with the OPC since 1977, and this request is not made without personal agony. His desire is to continue if that were at all possible, but his health is such that a drastic reduction of his responsibilities is necessary. Rev. Mulder briefly highlights aspects from his own experience in the work of contact with the OPC, and emphasized that we may not be ready for a merger, but certainly ought to continue the contact with the brothers of the OPC. Following these remarks, Rev. Agema states that Rev. Mulder's decision and subsequent

request for release must be respected. He thanks him for all the work done in this Committee as well as for the good cooperation with each other throughout a shorter or longer period of time. He commends him to the care of our Lord in all things.

The Committee decided to request Rev. P. G. Feenstra to join the Committee. He attended his first meeting on April 24, 1991.

These changes do, indeed, amount to a changing of the guard: none of the original members of this Committee are any longer with us. Yet we believe that the work continues in the same spirit and desire as before: by the grace of our God to be instrumental in the church-gathering work of the only Head of the Church, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Contacts with the OPC – 1990

Our Committee met for a full day with the brothers of the OPC's Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relationship (CEIR) on February 27, 1990, in the Burlington-West church building. The agenda included discussions (on the basis of previously prepared study papers) on the fencing of the Lord's Supper, the OPC statement on the Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church, and the relationship between the OPC and the Christian Reformed Church.

This meeting decided that a progress report would be submitted to both committees for approval so that it may be published for the general membership of our respective churches. After the necessary exchanges, our Committee was advised in a letter dated May 4, 1991, that the OPC's CEIR was able to approve the final version, and that this Progress Report would be submitted to the 58th General Assembly of the OPC as part of their report. We therefore include this Progress Report with this press release.

We also noted from the Minutes of the 57th General Assembly the CEIR's report on our combined meeting, highlighting in particular the discussions concerning the fencing of the Lord's Table and the OPC's relationship with the Christian Reformed Church. Unfortunately, this General Assembly being convened in California, no members of our Committee were able to attend. The

secretary, Rev. R. Aasman, sent our greetings by letter instead.

Contacts with the OPC – 1991

Due to Rev. Mulder's illness, our Committee requested that the meeting with the CEIR scheduled for March 6, 1991 be postponed till the early Fall of 1991. We now hope to meet with a subcommittee (five members) of CEIR on November 6, 1991, in the Pittsburgh area. The agenda of this meeting will include further discussions on the fencing of the Lord's Supper, as well as the matter of confessional membership. Study papers on these topics are being prepared by our Committee. We have requested a further meeting for February 1992.

Rev. P.G. Feenstra and br. G.J. Nordeman were delegated to attend the 58th General Assembly of the OPC, to be held from May 30 through June 6, 1991. Their report will be published as soon as available.

It is appropriate to close this Press Release with part of the letter sent on behalf of our churches to the 57th General Assembly of the OPC:

We are pleased with the intensification of contact between the Committee of Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations and our own Committee for Contact with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. There is a good cooperation between these committees and a genuine desire to address the matters of mutual concern. It is our hope and prayer that we may continue in this line. May the Lord our God so bless us that this may be instrumental in bringing us closer together, that we may come to the fullest expression of the unity of faith so highly desired and commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

May we remain faithful in every way to the Head and King of the Church, and expect from Him alone our blessings.

For the Committee for Contact with the OPC,
T.M.P. VanderVen, Secretary

Please address all correspondence to:

The Committee for Contact with the OPC
T.M.P. VanderVen, Secretary
29 Lorraine Drive
Hamilton, ON L8T 3R8



Relations Between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches

On February 27, 1990, in Burlington, Ontario, there was a combined meeting between the Committee for Contact with the OPC of the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. Based on this meeting, it was decided to publish a progress report, drawn up mutually by the two committees, in order to make our congregations more aware of the progress in the relations between the Orthodox Presbyterian Church and the Canadian Reformed Churches. The following report is based on the discussions at the combined meeting.

1. Supervision of the Lord's Supper

Position papers by both committees on the supervision of the Lord's Supper had been circulated prior to the meeting for study. The OPC brothers indicated that the OPC exercises a restricted communion. There is no question about **whether** there is restricted communion, but **how** to practise it. It is left up to the freedom and discretion of each local session how guests are to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. In many cases this is done by means of an oral warning. Some OPC brothers indicate their dissatisfaction with this manner of supervising the Lord's Supper.

The Canadian Reformed brothers indicate that it is not sufficient for the office bearers simply to declare to guests that they must discern the Lord's body lest they partake unworthily, and so eat and drink condemnation to themselves. Proper supervision of the Lord's table requires that office bearers are also assured of the Christian doctrine and life of guests at the table, just as they would of the regular members of the congregation. The use of attestations, as practised within the Canadian Reformed Churches, would give office bearers the evidence that a guest is a member in good standing of a sister church, and thus is to be admitted to the Lord's Supper. In the discussion it is made clear that the Canadian Reformed brothers would like to see the matter of how the Lord's Supper is supervised – particularly in re-

lation to guests – brought to the attention of the OPC General Assembly, with a view of studying the whole matter more carefully.

The brothers of the OPC are of the opinion that the matter of how the Lord's Supper is to be supervised should be studied by both churches. They point out that the Canadian Reformed practice would exclude many believers from participating in the celebration of the Lord's Supper in a Canadian Reformed Church. This observation appears to grow out of the differences in the respective understanding of the true/false church distinction; this will be explored further. They also question the Canadian Reformed practice of "confessional membership" and wonder whether this does not lead to barring from the Lord's table those who are less mature in the knowledge of faith. They desire clarification on this in the future.

It is clear that some questions will have to be answered by both the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. We agree that the sanctity of the Lord's Supper table is to be protected by the keys of the kingdom. However, the practice within the local congregation, specifically with respect to guests, needs much further discussion.

2. Biblical Principles of the Unity of the Church

This is a report written by the OPC and given to the Canadian Reformed brothers for their scrutiny and advice. Some remarks have been made to refine this statement with respect to the doctrine of the church and covenant. These remarks were gratefully received. The Canadian Reformed brothers expressed their appreciation for the fact the OPC shows it does not want to work with an invisible church concept which nullifies the scriptural demand for unity where there is unity of faith. We agree that proper ecumenicity strives to seek unity with those who are faithful to the Word of God.

It is reaffirmed that the purpose of contact between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian

Church is to seek as close an ecclesiastical relationship as possible.

3. Christian Reformed Church

The Canadian Reformed brothers expressed their concerns about the OPC's relations with the Christian Reformed Church. They offer as background to their concerns the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches' relations with the Christian Reformed Church in the past decades. The matters of the new hermeneutics, devaluation of ethics, and women in office found within the Christian Reformed Churches are some of the concerns raised. These concerns are accentuated by the fact that occasionally Christian Reformed ministers are preaching in Orthodox Presbyterian pulpits.

The OPC brothers take note of these concerns. They assure the Canadian Reformed brothers that the OPC will take these concerns into consideration in subsequent discussions with the Christian Reformed Church.

* * *

The above report is offered to the members of the Canadian Reformed Churches and Orthodox Presbyterian Church in order to give some insight into the discussions by the contact committees, and show some of the progress made. Obviously, our discussions are not over and there are still more matters to be discussed. However, if we strive to listen to one another and continue to submit ourselves to the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ, then our discussions may serve to be mutually edifying and lead to a proper ecclesiastical unity. Let us keep the relation between the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in our thoughts and in our prayers.

Committee for Contact with the
OPC of the Canadian
Reformed Churches.

Committee on Ecumenicity and
Interchurch Relations of the
Orthodox Presbyterian Church.





Life is full of surprises. Sometimes these surprises are unpleasant, sometimes they are exactly the opposite. One day the mailman, who rarely skips our place, brought us an envelope from Burlington and this envelope was different from the ones in which I receive the bulletins. We felt something sturdy inside, and upon opening it we discovered a cassette with a program and accompanying letter. It was a recording of the "dedication concert" and on behalf of the Organ Committee a copy was sent to me. "Knowing you to be an admirer of the pipe organ, we look forward to your comments in *Clarion*."

That is quite an expectation. As far as the technical aspect is concerned I am just a "layman" and do not claim any special knowledge or ability. I love the pipe organ, I love to play it, but that is all I can say. Keeping this in mind, you may read on.

We have listened to the cassette several times and every time anew we are most favourably impressed. Here and there I would have loved a more distinct sound. I do not know whether addition of a sesquialter or cornet is possible, but in my opinion this would even further enhance the excellent qualities of this instrument. Realizing that my technical knowledge is very limited, I am so bold as to give as my impression that the disposition of the organ is directed more towards the French than towards the German oeuvre, but I shall yield at once to any criticism of this statement.

The congregation of Burlington East is to be congratulated with the acquisition of this instrument, and I was happy to read that "The organ committee further requested approval to organize future recitals by talented organists or groups. Council acceded to this request." Of course, we would say. It is a pity that both our auditoriums and meeting rooms as well as organs are used so sparingly during the week. Although the cost of a good instrument is well justified with a view to the Sunday worship services, to the glory of our God and the edification of the congregation, yet it should be seriously considered whether we could not make much more use of all the facilities that the Lord has given us. And as for further recitals, in *those* cases an admission fee of seven dollars is fully justified!

One remark about the recording as such: it is of excellent quality, such as we are used to receive from Audiocraft. I am certain that copies are available, and I would recommend them to all interested. You might wish to contact Mr. A.L. Hartman, 5387 Murray Cresc. Burlington, ON, L7L 5T6. Perhaps sale of the cassettes could add some "juice" to the meagre financial result of the "dedication concert" as "after expenses, an amount of \$186.35 could be forwarded to the C.R.W.R.F." Only \$186.35.

Another thing that gave me much joy was the consistory's decision that "The church – what is meant is the church building VO – and its facilities will be made available for all church-family- and related 'festive activities' of all our members FREE of charge. However, there is a cost for the rental of dishes, and the services of the Ladies' Auxiliary and the custodian." I never understood why members who want to celebrate a wedding or a wedding anniversary or some other festive occasion and want to do so in the familiar surroundings of the church building have to pay extra for that. I even have my

doubts whether a church, enjoying tax exemption, is legally allowed to charge for the use of the facilities, such apart from the point that I fail to see why members who are faithful in contributing for the maintenance of the ministry of the Gospel have to pay for the use of meeting rooms or halls. I am glad that Burlington East broke with that custom. If extra work by Ladies' Auxiliary or custodian is required, it stands to reason that remuneration should be given, but this is separate from the availability of the facilities as such.

We are not through yet with Burlington East. "An offer was made by an anonymous donor to provide the funds to purchase and install video equipment in the church building for the benefit of those not able to attend the worship services. The offer was thankfully accepted and the Committee of Administration was requested to make the necessary arrangements to acquire and install this equipment. Eventually, more information will be published with regards to the availability of tapes and necessary playback equipment."

Too long, I think, we have neglected the advantages of videotaping the services for the benefit of our members who are unable to attend the services as well as for broadcasting purposes. Present-day technology provides us with the possibility of videotaping the services in a very unobtrusive manner. Cameras can be positioned in inconspicuous places and be operated by remote control. Such was the case, e.g. in Rockingham, Western Australia. "Re video of baptism in Rockingham. This is not normal practice and was only done for historical purposes. The video camera was not manned but set up and left to work itself." We'll come back to Byford later on. Our congregations should consider very seriously whether we should not make more use of this possibility. At various occasions such as graduation ceremonies I see several brothers with video cameras in their hands or even on their shoulders, although the latter happens less and less frequently due to the shrinking of the camera sizes. I am also certain that the cable companies will be most happy to broadcast such taped services, perhaps even for a very modest fee.

We have stayed long enough in "East" and go to "South."

The brothers reported from the last-held classis – not: "meeting of classis" or "classis meeting" VO – that the brother from Sackville "informed classis that another family was leaving this already small congregation to take up a teaching position in one of our schools. This leaves Sackville with only five communicant members, which is very discouraging for these brothers and sisters... Let us hope that if there are families or single members who are thinking of relocating, that they keep this small outpost in mind."

It is not often that we can mention something about Sackville, and I wished it were more favourable news that I could pass on, but I do use the opportunity to mention this sister church and underline the "hope" expressed in Burlington South's bulletin.

As for the property that "South" purchased, "On July 2, 1991, the property at 289 Plains Rd W. becomes officially ours. After that date, we will need to call on all, and especially those brothers and sisters in the building trades and with clean-up skills, to help prepare the homes for occupation by the tenants..."

The smaller house on the property is rented effective Aug. 1, while the larger home will be occupied as of September 1."

A suitable property has thus been acquired. Now comes the harder part: gathering sufficient funds to erect a church building. Perhaps the renting out of the two houses will contribute to that.

In this connection I like to answer a question that was asked by a brother here in our neighbourhood. He read in a newsmedley that Burlington South considered it possible to "create income" from renting out the two houses on the property and asked whether it was proper that a church does this. Since the question *may* be living with more among our readers, I do wish to give my own reply to it. *If* a church should buy houses in order to create income, this would be wrong in my opinion. But when a church purchases property with a view to erecting a church building on it, and when there happen to be two houses on that property, is it then really wrong if that church rents them out? Should they tear the houses down and just let the property "sit there" until they have sufficient funds to start building a place for worship? Would that be responsible stewardship? I think that this question answers the question.

A last word about the Burlingtons: To my surprise I found a sheet with "General News" for all three churches.

More property-news. Rockway is in the process of trying to acquire property. They did make an offer on one, approximately 2.4 acres in size. It was presented to the owners who had until the end of the month (June) to "accept or reject." It was "unofficially rejected," "but a final decision has not been made as yet, due to a disagreement between the owners."

Fergus considered installation of airconditioning in the auditorium but decided not to do it because it was too costly. Instead they decided to keep the inside air in and outside air out. The custodian will be asked to "keep windows and curtains closed during the week and open them thirty minutes prior to the church services." I wonder how this will work out.

The consistory also discussed the celebration of the Lord's Supper, "whether to change it to separate cups or to leave it as it has been in the past. It is decided to leave it as it is now."

Nearby Grand Valley reported concerning the latest classis that the brothers "recognized the remarkable developments at Chatsworth by agreeing to appoint ministers to preach in this House Congregation once every two months."

In order to save precious funds, it was decided to institute "Janitorial Services." This does not mean that until now no one cleaned the church building; it only means that a schedule was drawn up for volunteer services. As far as I know, this has always been done in Winnipeg, and not only with respect to the church building, the same is done with the school building. No one will be able to calculate how much has been saved in this manner during all the past years.

The consistory also considered the task of the deacons. "A discussion was held on the question: On what biblical grounds should the deacons be involved in church-governing work (such as is called for in many articles of the Church Order). This discussion will continue in future meetings." I would rather put the question differently: "On what scriptural grounds should the deacons be *excluded* from church-governing work?" It is my firm conviction that the deacons belong to the consistory and should not be excluded from *anything*. I am convinced that one would have a hard time to prove on the ground of Scripture that the deacons should be excluded; or rather, one would be unable to prove it.

For the encouragement of others who may be facing similar difficulties I quote from the Carman bulletin: "You may recall that some time ago two sisters of the congregation working as nurses requested the Manitoba Labour Board that they be

freed from joining and contributing to a labour union that had come in. After quite some struggle, this request was granted. Recently a member of the church in Winnipeg made the same request. This time the Labour Union involved did not even contest the matter so not even a hearing was necessary. We may be thankful that the action taken by these sisters along with the consistory may continue to reap fruits in this way. We must be especially thankful to the Lord who also in this way gives room for His children to labour without being bound to an ungodly organization." It is especially encouraging to read this now that the Supreme Court has declared that labour unions have the right to use dues for whatever purpose they decide to use them. Paying dues or being forced to be a member would thus involve a member in support not only of the union and its activities but also of political, social, and even moral enterprises such as abortion-promotion, which are diametrically opposed to what the Lord teaches us and requires of us.

The consistory also amply discussed requests to introduce worship services in the Dutch language and this for the elderly. The conclusion of thoroughly considering all the aspects was that such services should not be introduced.

"The consistory is willing to help the members who do not know the English language well enough by:

- a. helping them set up weekly or bi-weekly meetings where a sermon is read (or a tape played) in the Dutch language;
- b. setting up and teaching a course on 'ecclesiastical language' next fall for a number of weeks."

The ministers in the Barrhead-Edmonton-Neerlandia region enjoy their regular "pulpit exchange." Now I read in the Providence bulletin: "Our minister hopes to preach in Barrhead. Isn't 'pulpit exchange' a funny expression? The ministers may have a different pulpit, but I am quite sure we have the same one as always." I am not so certain that it is a funny expression when it is said that the *ministers* exchange pulpits. Possibly a better expression could be found and I solicit suggestions in this respect. There is another expression that comes to mind: that a church receives "pulpit supply." We know what is meant by it. Perhaps something else could be found for this, too.

What I find a funny expression is that a minister *hopes* to preach somewhere. Why not say simply "Our minister *will* preach in A." or "Our minister is *scheduled* to preach in A.?" I wrote about it before, and will not repeat it, but I think that the verb "to hope" is vastly misused. Perhaps the underlying thought with using it is that we can never be sure whether we shall be able to execute our plans. We remember the "condition of James," and therefore we "hope" to do this or that. However, actually it is not so that we *hope* to do this or that; we are planning on doing it and shall do it if the Lord permits. But it is not necessary at all to add every time "the Lord willing" as long as we live in this faith. Let's discontinue, however, the funny use of "to hope."

The Langley consistory discussed the Lord's Supper celebration. "Feed-back from the family visits was received; this was followed by an extensive discussion. It was decided in principle to change the current practice of having several tables in order to better reflect the importance of the preaching of the Word and to promote the unity of the congregation."

Concerning special services on Ascension/Thanksgiving days it was "decided to return to celebrating this day on the Sunday before."

Happy days in Vernon: On June 4th there was the official Sod Turning Ceremony. Our sincere congratulations!

Digging all the way through, we arrive in Australia.

The Bedforddale consistory sent a letter to "Deputies Church Book indicating that the revised version of Hymn 1A – as proposed – is not favoured by the consistory."

We did mention Byford above in connection with video-taping, but there is more.

"Recently, the consistory received a request from the members living in Bunbury to allow church services in the Bunbury area every third Sunday. The consistory gave the green light. Consequently, the first service will be held in Bunbury, the Lord willing, on June 23, and from there, on average, every third week... Understandably, for those who live in the Bunbury area this is an exciting development. Indeed, I personally hope that services in Bunbury will even encourage families to consider Bunbury more seriously as a place to live."

I realize that, in general, the names Bunbury or Rockingham or even Byford may not mean all that much to our American or Canadian readers, just as the name Rockway will not have all that much contents for our Australian readers, but we do mention these things to show the mercy that the Lord bestows upon His churches by making them grow and expand. Institution of new churches also expand the possibilities our members have for seeking opportunities in a wider region.

For this time we have been chatting long enough, I think. Again you received some food for thought and I have the satisfaction of having met our readers again. I shall be back, the Lord willing.

As always Yours
VO

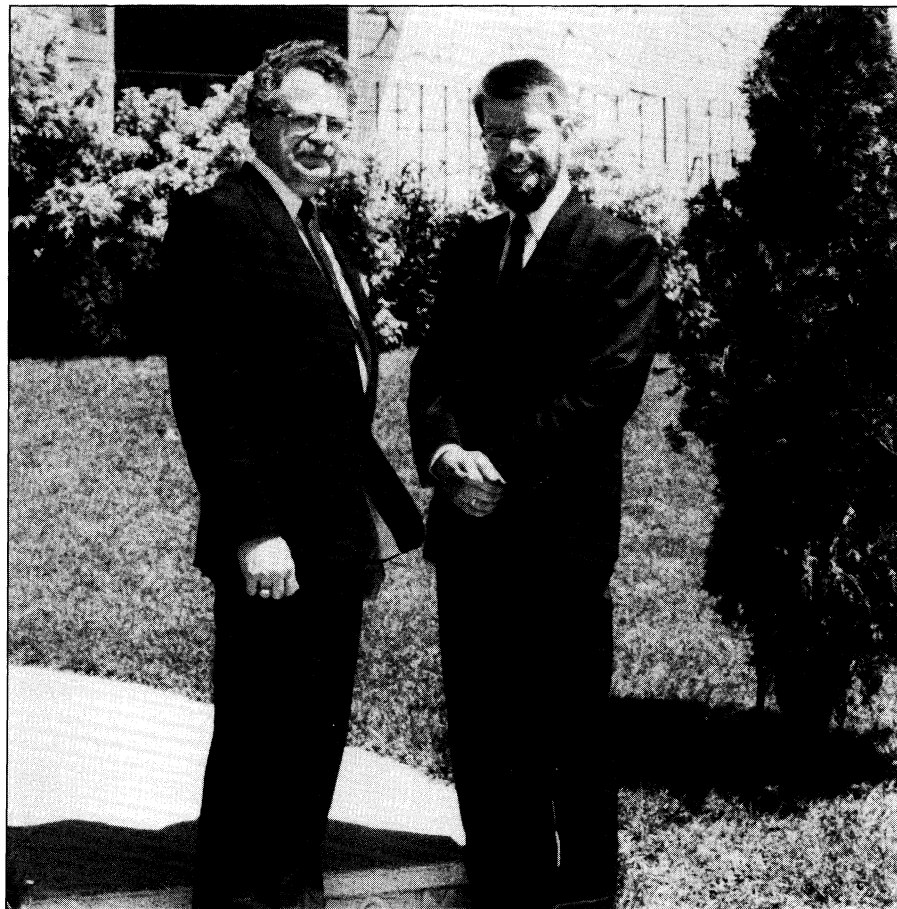


Welcome Rev. Jonker!

By Otto Bouwman

After a wait of only about eight months, many members of the congregation at Winnipeg enthusiastically welcomed the Jonker family at Winnipeg's International Airport on June 1. Friendly Manitobans greeted the immigrants by singing our national anthem in the airport's corridors. The ministerial family and their luggage were loaded into several waiting vehicles and the final trip "home" could begin. After their journey half way around the world from Launceston, Tasmania, the family could finally settle in to the newly redecorated manse.

The second week of June was a busy week for our new minister. In the first place, Rev. Jonker had to travel to Edmonton where Classis was held. After classis approbated the call, he had to rush back to Winnipeg to be present for the welcome evening scheduled for Friday evening. At the beginning of this festive occasion, the chairman of the consistory, Br. J. Jissink, formally welcomed the new minister in our midst. Rev. DeBoer was given a token of appreciation for all the work he had done during the absence of a minister. A perfectly enjoyable evening quickly passed by. The wide variety of music gave the minister a taste of our rich local talent. The sisters of the congregation also managed to introduce every working confessing member in song. Noteworthy was also the "Manitoba Survival Kit"



Rev. K. Jonker with his colleague from Carman, Rev. P.K.A. de Boer

presented to the minister, including, among other items, a snow shovel, an ice scraper, and some mosquito repellent. We are confident that he will have an opportunity to use most of these gifts within the next year or two. Rev. Jonker in conclusion expressed the hope that the joy experienced during the evening could continue in the future.

Sunday June 16 was the date on which Rev. Jonker became the pastor and teacher of the congregation at Winnipeg. Rev. DeBoer conducted the installation service. Using the text Titus 2:15, he explained the source and the need of the authority with which the servant of the Lord works. The sermon was appropriately directed at both the minis-

ter and the congregation; all must be aware of the authority of the Word. The blessing of the Lord is promised over faithful work.

Immediately after the service a congregational meeting was held during which the form of subscription was read by the chairman of the consistory and signed by our new minister. Then Rev. DeBoer, on behalf of the Church at Carman, congratulated Winnipeg and Rev. Jonker, and expressed appreciation for the excellent cooperation that has existed between the two congregations. He also, on behalf of classis, welcomed the new minister to this region. Letters of congratulation were read from Barrhead, Calgary, Edmonton (Immanuel), Edmonton (Providence), Neerlandia, and Orangeville.


As text for his inaugural sermon in the afternoon, Rev. Jonker paraphrased Luke 24:47a: "And that there should be preached in His name repentance and forgiveness of sins." The commission to preach was explained to a packed church. The minister described both the character and the content of this preaching. Immediately it became clear that this preaching is to be constantly Christ-centered. All

Rev. K. Jonker addressing the congregation ▶

The Jonker family enjoying themselves at the welcome evening. ▼

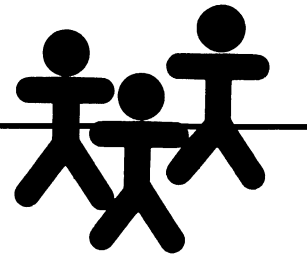


were reminded that the task of the minister, and of all officebearers, is a beautiful but serious one: they proclaim the gospel, calling the flock to repentance and administering the forgiveness of sins.

It is our hope and prayer that the congregation here may be built up by the preaching of this servant of the Lord. We hope too that our minister may serve fruitfully in our federation of churches. 

SCHOOL CROSSING

By A. Witten



Children at Play

One of the fascinating aspects of being an adult, especially as parent or a teacher, is observing children at play. Some psychologists and others have written much about the developmental characteristics and need for children to be able to play in a secure non-threatening situation. Much personal character development and growth takes place through informal interaction between children. Children learn so much from each other! Children, not at all dissimilar to adults, are in the process of acquiring ways and means to structure and order their activities. Especially when they are at play much can be observed and learned about a child's development. What "lives" in a child is shown. I'm reminded of the reality of Proverbs 20:11

"Even a child makes himself known by his acts, whether what he does is pure and right." It is perhaps for that reason in particular that in three recent "John Calvin" school bulletins attention was given to teacher observations of school ground activities. In each of these situations an effort was made to help students to appropriately use their play activities.

From the John Calvin School in Smithville, Ontario (News & Views, Vol. 17, No. 6) the following is noted:

During the course of performing their outdoor supervision duties, teachers have become increasingly aware of a growing tendency among our children (right down to Grade One) to engage in rough, violent forms of play that in many cases appear to

be imitations of programs or characters presented on television or computer games. Especially attractive are those characters who exercise power through physical strength, force and agility.

We have spoken to the pupils about this matter. Many spoke quite openly about their attraction to Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Mario Brothers, boxers, wrestlers, and other current fads. We have tried to explain to the children as simply as possible that their behaviour has to show that we are children of the LORD. Just as a tree is recognizable by the fruit or leaves it produces, God's children must be recognizable by conduct that shows they are children of their heavenly Father.

From the John Calvin School in Launceston, Tasmania (Calvinist, Vol. 2, No. 3) the matter of "rough and tumble play" was addressed. Interestingly, some helpful suggestions are given to assist in distinguishing between (bad) aggressive play and (necessary) rough play. The Grade One teacher suggests:

The belief that rough and tumble play evokes antisocial and aggressive behaviour and that what starts off as play fighting usually ends up in real fighting is seen by A.D. Pellegrini and J.C. Perimutter as unfortunate misconceptions.

Their study has found that young children's rough and tumble has the following behaviours: laughing, running, smiling, jumping, keeping hands open, wrestling, play fighting, chasing and fleeing, and does not result in injury to playmates. As play-fighting, not to be confused with aggressive behaviour, is an important aspect of rough and tumble play, children use open hands, not the clenched hands, used in aggressive behaviour.

Different behaviour was observed in aggression, being fixation, frowning, hitting, pushing, taking and grabbing. They noted that children are happy (e.g. laughing) in rough and tumble play and angry (e.g. frowning) in aggressive behaviour.

Aggression and rough and tumble play also occur in different environments. Rough and tumble tends to occur on playgrounds with soft surfaces rather than on hard surfaces like asphalt, whereas aggressive behaviour occurs in the context of property disputes. In rough and tumble play children alternate roles, e.g., in chases.

The research (Pellegrini and others) suggests that rough and tumble play has positive educational and developmental value. Children learn to use and practise skills that are important for their social competence, e.g., alternating roles between victim and victimizer. Such reciprocal role taking may be important for children's social perspective taking ability. Their observations indicated that rough and tumble play tended to lead to games with rules, e.g., chasing and tag, both involving running, dodging, and reciprocal role taking. In these forms of play, children develop physical (e.g. running) and cooperative (e.g. planning) skills. Children who engaged in this type of play, typically

"... provide situations for positive, constructive play."



boys, also tended to be liked and to be good social problem solvers.

To encourage children to participate in this positive type of play they need to have the opportunity to play regularly outdoors or in spacious indoor facilities. Daily outdoor play opportunities should be used with all children. Some children, especially with aggressive tendencies, need help in play and differentiating between rough and tumble and aggression. A suggestion is to have an adult spend time with a child or children discriminating the two behaviours and help the children with cooperative interaction that they come to realize that, e.g., sharing and taking turns are effective social problem solving strategies. This in turn reduces children's aggression... (Mrs. F. Hidding).

At yet another John Calvin School, this time in Yarrow, British Columbia (School News, April 1991) it is noted that exciting stories are told at home of what occurs out on the playground:

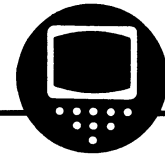
Maybe you know more about what your children play, than about what they learn in the classroom. Often times it must appear as if we have recess all day long. Although that is, of course, not the case, it is true that students spend close to an hour each day outside on the playground. Although I am aware of the quarrels..., the students indeed have barrels of fun as they interact with each other during their time together on the playground.

Quite often, students in one grade can be found playing together: skipping, soccer, tag (on the adventure set or by the big tree), baseball, basketball, girls after boys or choo-choo train. Not too long ago, the fourth grade students set up a mock diking project, complete with dams, lakes and trenches.

Often times too, older students are found with the younger students. They help them in their play. Recently, many younger students could be found lined up beside the swings, eagerly awaiting their turn – strong sixth graders were swinging them high. I also have to think back to the first week of school in September. The first graders were being taught how to play Red Rover by the excited seventh grade girls who loved to mother these new students and make them feel at home at school.

As a teacher on yard duty, it is quite interesting to stand back and observe the children at play. Then you see that the students are busy with teaching and learning from each other.... (J.I.B.)

Obviously teacher and parent effort to train a child in the way he should go includes paying attention to the manner of play. As we do that at home during the summer months let's enjoy observing our children and provide situations for positive, constructive play. Incidentally they, normally, also enjoy being watched by a caring adult. Have a good summer. **C**



Classis June 12, 1991 at Smithville of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches in South Ontario and East U.S.A.

Rev. D. Moes of the convening Church at Watford opens the meeting of delegates in the Christian manner with singing, reading and prayers. A welcome is extended to cand. W.M. Wielenga and his wife. Br. Wielenga is present to be examined for admittance to the ministry. Also the Rev. P. Kingma and Rev. L. Moes, retired ministers, are welcomed. The delegates of the church at Grand Rapids MI have not yet arrived. The Church at Laurel MD has sent a letter stating that this church is unable to send delegates at this time. Rev. Hofford has arranged with the ministers Stam and Kok to substitute for him in the examination of exegesis N.T. The Rev. Hofford request prayers for his wife who is undergoing surgery. This request is honoured.

The delegates of the convening church report that all credentials are in order, classis can be constituted. The ministers D.G.J. Agema, Cl. Stam, and J. VanRietschoten take their place as chairman, clerk, and vice-chairman in charge of Press Release respectively.

Memorabilia: The Church at Lincoln is congratulated with the acceptance of the call by the Rev. G.A. Snip. Hope is expressed that the vacant congregations, among them Smithville and London who saw a call declined, may soon receive their own pastor and teacher. Also the retirement of the Rev. P. Kingma is remembered.

Br. R. Faber of the American Reformed Church at Lynden WA is present as observer, and is duly welcomed.

Seating of the Rev. P. Kingma as advisor: In keeping with the decision of the March Classis the Rev. P. Kingma is present as examiner in church doctrine and creeds. Classis asks him to serve in an advisory capacity. Rev. Kingma is seated as advisor.

The delegate of Grand Rapids arrive with proper credentials. They are welcomed and are seated.

The agenda, which is now adopted, has as first item the preparatory examination of cand. Wielenga. The necessary documents are read and found in order. The candidate presents a sermon pro-

posal on a assigned text, 1 Cor. 2:14-16. This presentation takes place in the church auditorium. In attendance are as guests the students of the three senior grades of the John Calvin school with their teachers. These guests return later to witness the last part of the examination. In closed session the sermon proposal is discussed. Classis decides that the remainder of the examination can proceed. Rev. J. VanRietschoten examined O.T. exegesis, Isa. 9:1-7 (Eng.). This is in the Hebrew 8:23-9:6. Rev. Cl. Stam examines N.T. exegesis, Acts 14. Rev. P. Kingma examines church doctrine and creeds. In closed session classis discusses the outcome of the exam. Classis decides to declare cand. W.M. Wielenga eligible for call in the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. The cand. and his wife receive the congratulations of all present. Br. R. Faber of the American Reformed Church at Lynden, Washington adds to his congratulations a Letter of Call from his consistory. To the candidate this no doubt was reason for thankfulness.

The second item on the agenda is a proposal of the Church at Hamilton regarding a tentative arrangement for examination of the Rev. T. Hoogsteen. Rev. Hoogsteen has requested to be examined by the churches in order to be declared eligible for call in the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. Rev. Hoogsteen came to us from the Christian Reformed Church. Presently he and his wife are members of the Canadian Reformed Church at Ancaster, ON. The proposal of Hamilton was rejected. Classis, however, did appoint a committee to work with the Rev. Hoogsteen to pave the way toward such an examination.

Next on the agenda was Question Period according to Article 44 of the Church Order. The Church at Grand Rapids MI request the services of the Rev. P. Kingma as counselor. This is granted. The Church at Lincoln ON asks advice in a matter of discipline. Advice is given. The Churches at Grand Rapids, London, Rockway and Smithville request pulpit supply. One Sunday per two months is arranged for each of these congregations, beginning with the month of Sept. 1991.

A number of reports are received. The Church at Watford has checked the

Archives, kept by the Church at London, and found them in good order. Br. D. Van Amerongen of Lincoln, classical treasurer, has submitted an audited financial statement. For the season 1991-92 the churches are asked to contribute \$5.00 for Classis and \$2.50 for Regional Synod. The treasurer is discharged for the period June 1990 to June 1991. A letter of thanks will be sent to the treasurer. Reports of church visits to the Churches at Grand Rapids, Smithville and Watford are read and received. A report of the Fund for Needy Students is submitted by the Church at Chatham ON. This report is multiplied and handed to the brothers to present it to their consistories. A report from the Church at Ancaster re: Fund for Needy Churches shows that the Fund is depleted. Several churches are encouraged to send in their contributions for 1991 so that the Fund can fulfill the obligations.

Arrangements for the next classis are made. The Church at Ancaster is appointed to convene that classis for Wednesday, Sept. 11, 1991 at Attercliffe ON. Suggested moderamen: B.R. Hofford, chairman, D.G.J. Agema, clerk, and Cl. Stam, vice-chairman. The treasurer, and the churches which are assigned specific tasks, are reappointed. A roster of church visitors is drawn up. A change is made in the slate of examiners. The Rev. Cl. Stam will examine in church doctrine and the creeds. The Rev. D.G.J. Agema will examine in diaconology. To the committee ad hoc for Rev. T. Hoogsteen are appointed, Rev. D.G.J. Agema (convener); Elder W. Bartels and Prof. Dr. J. Faber.

During the personal question period J. Kooistra, elder to the Church at Grand Rapids, asks whether in extreme circumstances their minister emeritus, the Rev. P. Kingma, could be delegated to a classis, seeing the small size of the consistory. Advice is given that by exception this could be done.

Censure according to Article 44 of the Church Order is not needed. The Acts are read and adopted, the Press Release is read and approved. The chairman closes classis in the Christian manner.

J. VanRietschoten, e.t.
vice-chairman

Classis Alberta-Manitoba June 11 and 12, 1991 at Edmonton, Alberta

Opening

On the evening of June 11, 1991, br. K. Leffers, on behalf of the convening Church at Coaldale, calls the meeting to order, requests that Ps. 119:1 and 40 be sung, reads Phil. 2:1-18 and leads in prayer. He welcomes the brothers. A special welcome is extended to Rev. K. Jonker who is present this evening for his colloquium. The convenor mentions that Rev. J.D. Wielenga is not present because he is in Surrey, B.C. for several months, exchanging pulpits with Rev. G.H. Visscher.

Constitution

After the delegates from the Church at Coaldale report that the credentials are in good order, classis is constituted and the officers take their places: Rev. R.A. Schouten, chairman, Rev. R. Aasman, vice-chairman, and Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, clerk. The chairman thanks the Church at Coaldale for the work done in preparing for classis. The agenda is adopted.

Colloquium of Rev. K. Jonker

In accordance with Article 5 of the Church Order, a colloquium is held with Rev. K. Jonker of Launceston, Tasmania, who has been called by the Church at Winnipeg. The colloquium proves to be satisfactory. The chairman congratulates Rev. K. Jonker and wishes him the Lord's blessings as he takes up his task as pastor and teacher in the Church at Winnipeg. At this time the call of Rev. K. Jonker to the Church at Winnipeg is also approved and he signs the Form of Subscription. The classis is informed that, the Lord willing, the installation of Rev. K. Jonker will take place this Sunday, June 16.

Report

A report from the observer to the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, held on March 5-7, 1991 in Thornton, Colorado is read. The report recommends a continued contact with the Presbytery of the Dakotas. The report is gratefully received and it is decided to continue this contact.

Meeting Adjourned

The meeting is adjourned and it is decided to meet again at 9:00 a.m. the next day. The chairman asks that Ps. 87:1, 4 and 5 be sung and closes in prayer.

Opening

The chairman reopens the meeting, requests that Ps. 111:1 and 5 be sung, reads 1 John 4:1-12 and leads in prayer.

It is decided that Rev. K. Jonker be seated as an advisor in this classis.

Reports

Reports are read regarding church visitations to the churches at Winnipeg, Carman, and Edmonton-Immanuel. These reports are gratefully received.

Correspondence

The Church at Edmonton-Immanuel requests advice on the interpretation and application of Article 62 of the Church Order, specifically in the matter of a boundary between the two Edmonton congregations. Basically the advice given is that a definite boundary between the two congregations should be clearly defined and honoured.

The Church at Edmonton-Immanuel also requests for and receives advice on the matter of membership in secular labour unions.

Appointments

a) Next Classis

Convening church: Church at Edmonton-Immanuel. Date: Oct. 8 or Dec. 10, 1991. Place: Immanuel. Suggested officers: Rev. J.D. Wielenga, chairman, Rev. R.A. Schouten, vice-chairman, Rev. R. Aasman, clerk.

b) Observer OPC

Rev. E. Kampen is appointed as observer to the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC. Rev. G. Wieske is appointed as alternate.

c) Installation of Rev. K. Jonker

Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer is appointed to attend and speak on behalf of classis at the installation of Rev. K. Jonker, on June 16, 1991, in the Church at Winnipeg.

Question Period

Several questions are asked and answered. On the basis of one question it is decided to make an addition to the guidelines for church visitations: in case an office bearer cannot be present at a church visitation, he shall submit a written statement to the meeting with church visitors explaining why he cannot be present.

Closing

The chairman states that there is no need for censure ad Article 44 of the Church Order. The Acts of Classis are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved. The chairman thanks the brothers for their good cooperation and the sisters who supplied classis with excellent food and refreshments. He asks that Hymn 40:1 and 5 be sung and closes in prayer.

R. Aasman, vice-chairman

General Board Meeting of Anchor – the Canadian Reformed Association for the Handicapped, Inc.

The chairman read James 3 and opened with us in prayer. He welcomed all those in attendance. The minutes of the general board meeting of Feb. 22, 1991 were adopted and discussed.

Points from the annual membership meeting are dealt with. Should we have a system with a bi-level membership fee? No, the system will remain as is. Every effort will be made to encourage new membership, which will bring down the fee. Because we now have a speaker at our membership meeting, we will publish the reports of the director and the various committees in the newsletter preceding the meeting. This will avoid an overly lengthy meeting. The fee increases will be clearly indicated on the budget so that everyone will have the opportunity to consider before its approval. A system of payment using envelopes will be looked into.

The minutes of the executive board meetings of Feb. 1, March 1, and April 5 are approved.

There are three new staff members, two full-time and one part-time. They will take extra courses in order to better qualify themselves for their positions. Fred Ludwig is doing well in his work at Rosa Flora. It is emphasized that Anchor Association is not comprised of only the Anchor Home, but also concerns itself with many other handicapped brothers and sisters.

The committees and the treasurer give their reports. Summer Camp welcomes visitors July 1-12! The Supervised Independent Living Program is briefly discussed. Meeting is adjourned.

Hymn 51:4

*What is weak and mortal here,
Prey to illness and destruction,
Shall with glorious power appear
In the hour of resurrection.
What today is sown disgraced
In great honour shall be raised.*



Do you like to make pictures?

Do you like writing poems?

Send them in for our *big summer contest!*

Every year we have a Summer Quiz Contest.

Every year we have some winners!

Join in the fun! Today is the day!

Get your pen and pencil.

Use your story Bible if you want, or your Bible notes.

Need more help?

Maybe you have a Bible handbook, or a Bible dictionary – you can look it up.

Or ask your parents where you can find what you need to know.

Give it your best shot!

Send your answers to:

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

Quiz Time!

Quiz #1

REBELS

Each of the following people rebelled against someone. Match the rebel and the other person.

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Cain | a. his father, David |
| 2. Korah | b. king of Assyria |
| 3. Absalom | c. Abram (Abraham) |
| 4. Johoiakim | d. David |
| 5. Hezekiah | e. Hagar |
| 6. Saul | f. Abel |
| 7. Esau | g. God |
| 8. Pharaoh | h. Potiphar's wife |
| 9. Lot | i. Jacob |
| 10. Joseph | j. Nebuchadnezzar |
| 11. Sarai (Sarah) | k. Moses |

Quiz #2

SACRIFICES

Sacrifices are often mentioned in the Old Testament. God commanded that sacrifices be offered on certain occasions. Match the person with the sacrifice.

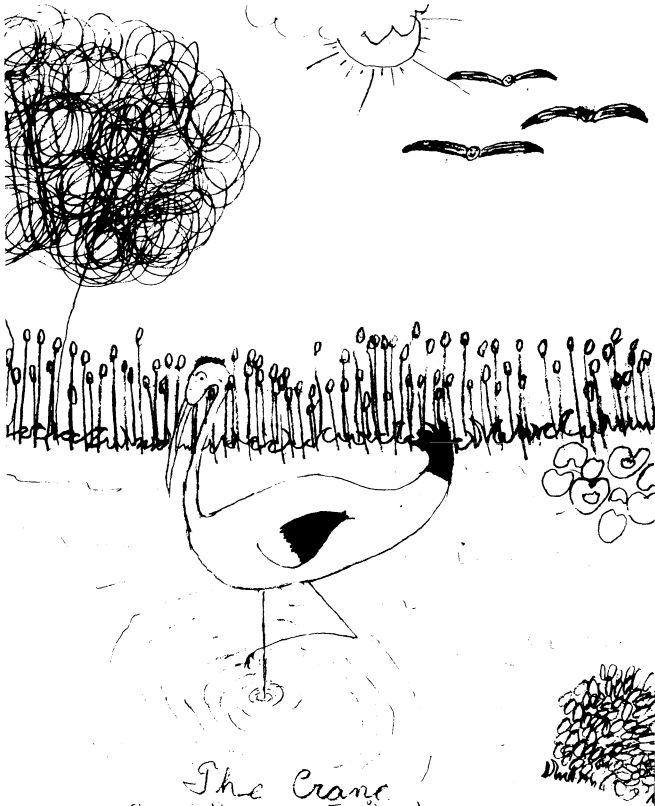
- | | |
|---------------|--|
| 1. Abel | a. offer bodies as living sacrifices to God. |
| 2. Noah | b. offered sacrifices in the Temple. |
| 3. Abraham | c. offered sacrifice before anointing David as king. |
| 4. Aaron | d. offered his life as a sacrifice. |
| 5. Solomon | e. offered the first of his flock. |
| 6. David | f. offered sacrifices daily as God instructed. |
| 7. Jesus | g. offered sacrifice before leaving his father-in-law. |
| 8. Christians | h. offered sacrifice for safety of his family after the flood. |
| 9. Jacob | i. went to offer his son for a sacrifice. |
| 10. Samuel | j. offered sacrifice for safe return of the ark of the covenant. |

Quiz #3

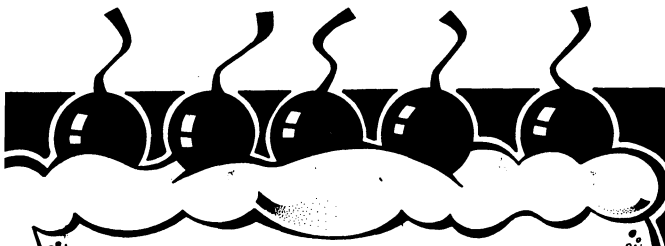
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Match each Bible name with its meaning.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 1. Ishmael | a. "the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me" |
| 2. Eve | b. "I have gotten a man from the Lord" |
| 3. Jesus | c. "God with us" |
| 4. Cain | d. "... this one shall bring us relief from our work" |
| 5. Noah | e. "because the Lord has given heed to your affliction" |
| 6. Sarah | f. "because the Lord has looked upon my affliction" |
| 7. Mara | g. "For He shall save His people from their sins" |
| 8. Reuben | h. "She shall be a mother of nations" |
| 9. Loammi | i. "because she was the mother of all living" |
| 10. Emmanuel | j. "for you are not my people, and I am not your God" |



The Crane
By Busy Beaver Erika Hopman



August

If you have an August birthday, all the Busy Beavers join in wishing you a very happy birthday and many happy returns of the day!

We wish you one super day celebrating with your family and friends.

May the Lord our heavenly Father guide and bless you all in the year ahead.

Adalia Dam	4	Emily Moes	20
Mary-Ann Moes	5	Trisha	
Heidi Siebenga	5	Van Woudenberg	20
Christine Lodder	6	Netty Sikkema	21
Florence Nijenhuis	8	Albert De Boer	24
Felicia Teissen	10	Derek Bouwman	26
Erinna Jansen	14	Shelley Groen	26
Neal Gelderman	16	Jocelyn Kamphuis	27
Sharon Heemskerck	16	Wendy Vandergaag	28
Alex Sikkema	16	Cindy	
Jocelyn t'Hart	17	Van Woudenberg	30
Alanne Jager	17	Edie Alkema	31
Christa Jansen	20		

Code

By Busy Beaver Margaret Nijenhuis

A = 1	E = 5	I = 9	M = 13	R = 18
B = 2	F = 6	J = 10	N = 14	S = 19
C = 3	G = 7	K = 11	O = 15	T = 20
D = 4	H = 8	L = 12	P = 16	U = 21
				Y = 25

13 1 25 20 8 5 12 15 18 4 2 12 5 19 19

25 15 21 1 14 4 11 5 5 16 25 15 21

1 12 12 20 8 5 4 1 25 19 15 6

25 15 21 18 12 9 6 5

Summer Crossword

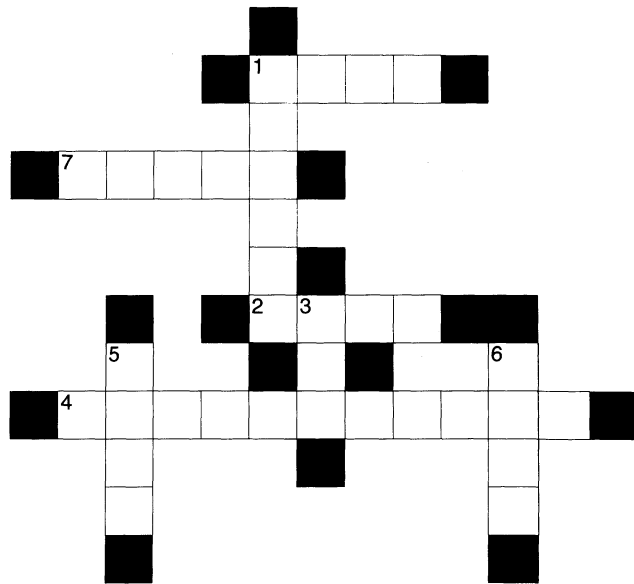
By Busy Beaver Sarah Vanderzwaag

Across

- birds nest in it
- the way to go in water
- you wear it swimming
- a small summer home

Down

- a racquet is used in this game
- the opposite of lose
- run against each other
- the "tweet," "tweet" animal



Take your time doing the quizzes, Busy Beavers.
No need to get it done in one day.
Lots of success!
And have fun!
I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty