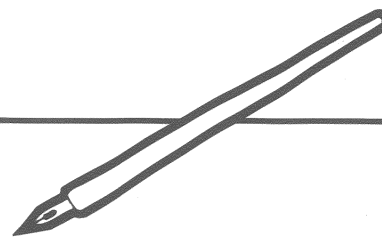




Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge”

A new study season lies ahead, not only for students in school, college and university, and in the catechism class, but also for the study societies in our churches. In this article I would like to stress the need for the continuing study of God's Word and the confessions of the church, both individually and together. The LORD shows us the need for this study in the words written above our article. They are found in Hosea 4:6.

In the Hosean context these words of complaint are part of a lawsuit. God, who is judge and prosecutor, has a “controversy,” that is, a lawsuit, against His people. He comes with His accusation, which is at the same time His complaint. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. The complaint and accusation in these words comes out with great strength because they begin with the claim of the LORD on Israel. He speaks about “My people.” It is *My* people which is being destroyed.

The part to which v.6 belongs is a separate segment within the whole of the chapter and, thus, within the divine lawsuit. We find God's accusation addressed to His people in the vv.1-3 and 11-19. The vv.4-10 contain an accusation addressed to the priests. The fact that the people are in such a terrible condition of not knowing the LORD is caused by the unfaithfulness of the priests. God's people are destroyed through lack of the true knowledge of the LORD, because the priests, the (spiritual) leaders, have rejected this knowledge.

It is a terrible thing when officebearers reject the knowledge of God's Word and, in that manner, deprive God's people from knowing the LORD, alienating God's precious possession from Him. The responsibility of all leaders is always great. In Ezekiel (33) the LORD warns that He will require the blood of His people from the hand of unfaithful shepherds. However, the situation is often so that the people like it when the leaders reject the true knowledge of the LORD. In Jer. 5:31 we hear God complain that “The prophets prophesy falsely and the priests rule at their direction; and my people love to have it so.” The people want teachers that reject the true knowledge of God's Word, because they do not want to hear and obey His will.

This was the picture of Israel in the days of Hosea, too. The priests were to blame, certainly. However, the people were of the same mind set.

This condition provoked God to great anger. With the rejection of the knowledge of the LORD also His grace and loving care was rejected. Therefore, in His anger He summoned Israel to appear in court. There He came to them with His complaint: “My people are destroyed through lack of knowledge.”

The meaning of this destruction is clear from the context. It stares us in the face from the entire chapter. The destruction is not, first of all, the coming captivity in which the Ten Tribes would perish completely. The destruction was a process going on at that very moment. It was Israel's destruction in its character as God's holy people. Israel had rejected and lost this

character. Israel's lifestyle showed it. The people lived just like the pagan nations around them, or worse.

The description of the destruction is presented already in v.1: “There is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land.” Instead “there is swearing, lying, killing, stealing, and committing adultery” (v.2). “Wine and new wine take away the understanding” (v.11). There is idolatry. The people seek their guidance and prosperity from the Canaanite idols (vv.12-13). This idolatry is linked with temple prostitution. Israel even receives its children no longer as a gift from the LORD, but as coming from the Canaanite god and goddess of fertility. Thus, in thinking and life God's people had become completely secularized. They acted in conflict with all God's commandments. This is the destruction about which God speaks here and which came about through lack of knowledge.

What is said here about God's people long ago can happen and is happening also today. And what is said here about the people as a whole can also happen in the heart and life of individual members of the church. Our personal life as children of the covenant can be destroyed through lack of knowledge. Such destruction, in the end, can be illness or other misery and temporal as well as eternal death. However, also here the destruction sets in much earlier. Lack of knowledge as the consequence of negligence and indifference regarding God's Word, with a resulting worldly life in which no place is given to God and His revealed will, is already destruction. It provokes God to anger, for it shows rejection of His love in Christ. Such destruction in the life of a church or of its individual members calls for repentance and for a return to the LORD and to knowing Him.

The biblical word for knowledge can have two related aspects. Knowing is always a matter of contents. It is clearly the main element. Knowing God means that one has knowledge about Him. It implies the true knowledge based on God's self-revelation. One knows God from His mighty deeds and from His words. Such knowledge is an active knowing which is the basis for trusting God. Knowing God in the true sense of the word implies acknowledging Him. One who truly knows God reckons with what He says. He lives with God in the covenant of grace, just as a child lives with his father and mother in a family relation.

This knowing is not only a matter of the mind, but also of the heart, just like loving God is a matter of the whole person. Especially when the object of knowing is a person, God or man, in a covenant relation, this second aspect is present. When David sings in Psalm 139, “O LORD, Thou hast searched me and known me,” this is a searching and knowing of God in His loving care for David. God knows everything (contents) about David as his heavenly Father. When it says that Adam knew his wife (Gen. 4:1), or that Joseph did not know Mary un-

til she had borne her first Son (Matt. 1:25), there is in this knowing the element of an intimate relationship. Accordingly, Peter can lay the blessing of the LORD upon the churches in the salutation at the beginning of his second epistle (1:2) with the following words: "May grace and peace be multiplied to you *in the knowledge of God* and of Jesus our LORD."

Thus we see our calling for this new season. God places His claim also on us: "My people" through grace in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore help and support each other as brothers and sisters to know the LORD, and to increase and grow in knowing Him. Let us encourage and exhort each other to know His Word and will with heart and mind; to know the

gospel of salvation in Christ Jesus. Let us diligently study Scripture and confession in thankful love for Him. In this way of knowing with heart and mind we may expect His blessing. The fruit of such faith will be a godly life in covenant with the LORD. This godly life is part of His grace and peace.

Let us remember, also this season, both the threat of the covenant: "My people are destroyed through lack of knowledge," as well as the promise: where the knowledge of the LORD is multiplied there His grace and peace will abound. Let us remember that this counts for the life of the church as a whole and for that of each member individually. We can build on His sure Word.



A book about Christian philosophy²

By N.H. Gootjes

Last time we saw that Dr. Plantinga in his book *Christian Philosophy Within Biblical Bounds* is working on a philosophy that is Christian in content. When a philosopher intends to develop a Christian philosophy it is not enough that he himself is a committed Christian. The Christian philosopher should use the Bible directly. In his book Dr. Plantinga sets the pattern by quoting from Scripture. And in the title he already comes out in the open by mentioning the Bible directly.

The next question is then, what role the Bible can play in philosophy. He says: "The most important Biblical teaching for Christian philosophy is the doctrine of creation" (p.58). We are thankful that Dr. Plantinga is not ashamed to apply the doctrine of creation. Many scholars have dropped this doctrine, or are so unsure about the historicity of Genesis that they do not dare to use the doctrine of creation. But Dr. Plantinga trusts the Bible and speaks freely of creation.

At the same time, I have my doubts about whether this statement is correct, or at least, whether it is sufficient. In this second article I would like to investigate whether the doctrine of creation is indeed the most important biblical teaching for philosophy.

Dr. Plantinga gives several examples to support his opinion. This doctrine is important for understanding the world. It shows that this world is not eternal, and that the world cannot exist on its own. It exists only because God has made it. The doctrine of creation is also important for the understanding of man, for it shows that there is a fundamental difference between man and all other beings. In the view of the evolutionists man is

an outgrowth of the animal kingdom. But according to the biblical account of creation man has a separate divine origin. The third result of the doctrine of creation concerns our understanding of order and regularity. This means that the processes in the world are not autonomous, but part of what God has wrought in creation (pp.58f).

So far so good. And it is good to see Dr. Plantinga speaking on the basis of

the biblical account of creation, and showing the philosophical implications of it. But is it true that the doctrine of creation is, philosophically speaking, the most important doctrine?

Dr. Plantinga himself indicates in his book that there are more important doctrines. He mentions the doctrine of sin and of redemption (p.58). And it cannot be denied that, for philosophy too, the doctrine of sin is very important. It is not



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enough to emphasize, on the basis of creation, the natural order (days and seasons) through which we receive everything we need for our daily life. For the world also has its abnormal events. It suffers from drought and earthquakes, and as a result many do not receive what they need for their daily life. They are the result of man's sin, and God's punishment of man's sin. The philosopher, in order to understand something of the world, has to take account of sin and its consequences.

And this is not all. Life and this world are not meaningless. Jesus Christ has come to pay the price for our sins. Therefore a lifestyle of "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we will die (1 Cor. 15:32) is out of place. The fact of Christ's death and resurrection makes every kind of existentialism impossible. Therefore not only creation is important, sin and salvation are equally important. And this applies to philosophy too.

But there is more. Dr. Plantinga said: Philosophically speaking is the doctrine of creation the most important doctrine. He also mentions in this connection the doctrine of sin and of salvation, but they are in his view less important. And he does not mention any other doctrine which is important for philosophy. Is that correct?

What about the doctrine of God? At first glance the doctrine of God may not look all that important for philosophy, at least as long as philosophy does not speak about God. (But at this point we have to realize that many philosophies do speak about God.)

However, the impression that the doctrine of God is not (directly) important for philosophy, is wrong. When someone says creation, he must speak about the Creator who made everything. Creation is, at least in the biblical sense, connected with the omnipotence of God. And not only with God's omnipotence. The world was made good, which is the direct result of the goodness of God. And, to mention another important doctrine, 'creation' in the biblical sense means that first there was no world, but that God existed and made the world. The eternity of God is connected with the creation of the world.

The conclusion must be, that not only the doctrines of creation, sin and redemption are important for philosophy, but also other doctrines. We gave examples from the doctrine of God, but it would be easy to give examples from other doctrines.

Now someone could come to the defense of Dr. Plantinga. He could point to the fact that Dr. Plantinga only said that the doctrine of creation was the most important one for philosophy, and

that also the doctrines of sin and redemption are very important. It could also be pointed out that doctrines such as God's omnipotence, His goodness and His eternity are only indirectly important when speaking about the world.

I can agree with this. Especially when it is emphasized that we speak only about the world, then the doctrine of creation is more central than that of God. But my point is: Can the philosopher do without the doctrine of God (or the doctrine of Christ, or the doctrine of the last things)? And my example wanted to show that we can emphasize, in a certain connection, one doctrine more than the other, but that we cannot miss any.

This was only to be expected. The doctrines of Scripture are not independent, standing each on his own without any connection. The doctrines are connected, and influence and mutually determine each other. God is omnipotent, therefore He could create the world. And everyone who looks at the world, sees in it how marvellous God's eternal power is (Rom. 1:20). If someone would deny God's omnipotence, what would be left of the doctrine of creation? None of the doctrines of the Bible can be omitted without damaging the other doctrines. The whole system of doctrine is needed to grasp the right meaning of a single doctrine.


Therefore I would like to ask Dr. Plantinga a question: Would it not be good to use the confession of the church in philosophy, in order to maintain this connection with the whole of biblical doctrine? Protected within the whole of e.g. the Belgic Confession the doctrine of creation could play a very important role in philosophical speaking about creation.

I have a special reason for bringing in the confession of the church here. Dr. Plantinga mentioned as the three important doctrines for philosophy: creation,

sin and redemption. There is a strong reminiscence here of the three words which were always emphasized in the Philosophy of Cosmonomic Idea (Wijsbegeerte der Wetsidee), founded by Dr. H. Dooyeweerd en Dr. D.H. Th. Vollenhoven in the first half of this century.

In this Philosophy of Cosmonomic Idea the three concepts of creation, fall and redemption were not connected with the confession. The reason was, that the confession was seen as something belonging exclusively to the church. A church confession had by definition nothing to do with philosophy. The confession of the church had nothing to say on the field of philosophy, was the general conviction in this Philosophy of Cosmonomic Idea. This separation of the three concepts from the protecting context of the confession of the church has done great damage to this philosophy.

In all fairness it should be noted that Dr. Plantinga nowhere indicates that he follows the Philosophy of Cosmonomic Idea in this connection. He says something else, when he brings in the confession: "In affirming these biblical teachings, Christian philosophy is free to appeal directly to the Bible. It does not need the permission of theology or creeds or confessions to proceed with its work, however helpful a knowledge of these resources may be" (p.59). I agree, the Christian philosopher does not need the permission of creeds or confessions, it can appeal directly to Scripture. But my question is: Do the biblical themes of creation, sin and redemption not need the protection of the confession? These doctrines, taken separately, can be bent in every direction, after the whim of the philosopher.

It is my conviction that the confessions are important for the Christian philosopher, not only to be a conscious Christian, but also to be a good philosopher. 

CHURCH NEWS



TIME CHANGE

REHOBOTH

Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington West

The worship services now start at 9:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.

Until further notice, the Canadian Reformed Church at Coaldale, Alberta, will congregate in the "Coaldale Christian School" building at: 20 Avenue and 9 Street Coaldale, Alberta 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

“Soft” pornography?

A reader of this column writes:

I would be interested in seeing an article on so called “soft” pornography, e.g., the occasional Playboy magazine, and what this could lead to later in life.

Allow me to say quite simply that any pornography, hard or soft, is unacceptable. There is a broad variety of pornographic magazines on the market running the gamut from soft to hard. I am not sure where *Playboy* is. I suspect it falls toward the soft end of the scale. However, whether the pornographic magazine is “hard” or “soft” makes little difference. It is only a matter of degree. What we must ask is whether pornography, of whatever degree or intensity, is ever acceptable. The question is: May we read or watch any pornography at all?

We must answer in the negative.
Why?

What is pornography? Pornography is the exploitive depiction of sex via any audio or visual media. You will not find chapter and verse in the Bible explicitly condemning pornography; however, the Bible does command us to strive for and to preserve purity of mind, heart and body.

The Lord Jesus condemned the lustful look as equivalent to adultery (Matt. 5:28). One could argue that a lustful look is “softer” than the softest pornographic magazine; yet, the Lord equates it with adultery, sin against the seventh commandment. Whether the object of a person's lust is a photograph of a person or a person in the flesh makes no difference.

The apostolic letters in the New Testament contain many warnings against lust. The apostle Paul said that no impurity or filthiness should be found among believers. He even warned that no person who persists in impurity has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God (Eph. 5:3-5). Paul wrote that we are to abstain from unchastity. We are to have nothing to do with the passionate lust of those who do not know God. For God has not called us to be his people

for uncleanness, but that we might be holy (1 Thess. 4:3-7).

Our Heidelberg Catechism understands well that pornography, soft or hard, is unacceptable. Lord's Day 41, Answer 109 says:

Since we, body and soul, are temples of the Holy Spirit, it is God's will that we keep ourselves pure and holy. Therefore He forbids all unchaste acts, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice us to unchastity.

Pornography entices a person to unchastity. He begins to desire the body of a person whom God has not given him. Sexual images and the depiction of erotic behaviour stimulate the imagination to sinful thoughts. One sees the other sex as a tool for personal sexual indulgence. There is no love, tenderness or respect involved. The sex drive perverts into a self-absorbed desire to gratify one's own flesh.

The apostle Paul warned that those who set their mind on the flesh are hostile to God and that doing so spells death. Rather, we are to set our minds

on the Holy Spirit which is life and peace (Rom. 8:6,7).

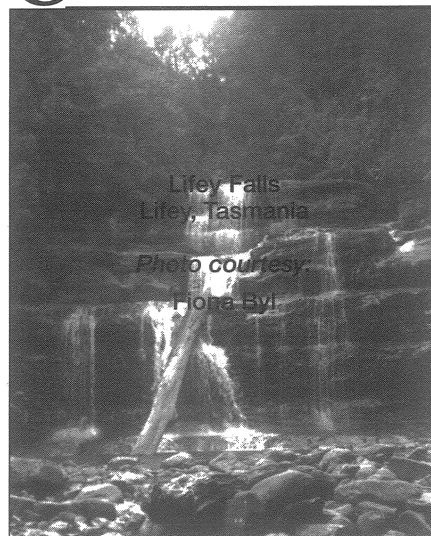
Not every thought or desire about sex is sinful. The point is that sex must be kept in its divinely appointed place which is within the context of marriage. I remember a minister explaining it this way in a sermon once when I was just a lad: He said that sex is like soil. In its proper context, the garden, soil is a beautiful thing. However, if you take it out of that context and throw it somewhere else, e.g., the living room carpet, then that beautiful soil become nothing but dirt.

The writer of the letter also asked what “soft” pornography, such as the occasional *Playboy* magazine, could lead to later in life. I would strongly suggest that it could later lead to “hard-core” pornography. Overstimulation brings diminishing pleasure which in turn creates the desire for more. You can see that with drug addiction. Someone addicted to drugs, e.g., cocaine or alcohol, will steadily increase his consumption. In order to achieve the desired “high,” he needs to take more and more. Pornography may even lead to rape.

This should not surprise us. James wrote that desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin (Jas. 1:15). As you think in your heart, so will you do. The apostle Paul, quoting Menander, wrote, “Bad company ruins good morals” (1 Cor. 15:33). Keeping company with pornography of whatever intensity will corrupt the good character of any person.

I strongly suspect that the writer of the above letter does not indulge in pornographic literature. Perhaps you are writing out of concern for friends or acquaintances who do pick up the occasional *Playboy* or watch the occasional blue movie on cable or satellite TV or rent the odd red hot video. Speak to them about it. Remind them of what the Lord requires – that we are to keep ourselves pure in body, mind and heart. The Holy Spirit longs to dwell in us, to make us His temples. But He will not share us with the filth of pornography. C

OUR COVER



A conversation continued

By J. Geertsema

(Introductory note: In Clarion of April 26, 1991 (Vol. 40, No.9) a discussion was begun between Rev. Jelle Tuininga of the Christian Reformed Church (hereafter CRC) at Lethbridge (Alberta) and myself. I received a reply. There was a delay in reacting. However, it follows here now in its entirety. Rev. Tuininga replied in a number of points. I shall follow this order. With him I hope and pray that our exchange will serve the purpose of unity.)

I am happy for this opportunity to exchange some thoughts in the pages of *Clarion*. I've always considered it a great pity that believers who together confess the Three Forms of Unity seem unable to come together in the same church federation. It is of utmost importance that the truth is upheld in the church, but our Lord also prayed for the unity of His flock. Truth and unity (Waarheid en Eenheid) go together. But unity will not come about if we do not discuss what keeps us apart. Hence, my thankfulness for this opportunity. I wish to reply to Geertsema's first response to my initial letter in a number of points. With Geertsema I wish to be frank and honest. And occasional bluntness does not in any way mean a lack of love and concern. To the contrary.

1. As a general remark, let me say that though I can appreciate much of what Geertsema writes, he does not really clear up a number of difficulties I have, and does not allay my fears. If I may say so, I detect an element of "bekrompenheid," something that I've detected too often in the "News Medley" columns. Everything must be so regimented, so air-tight that there's hardly room to breathe. One gets the impression that we are a kind of an "onder-onsje" church and we must keep it free from all kinds of influences that may affect it. I would say: open the windows and let in a breath of fresh air. Christ's church is much broader and bigger than we oftentimes realize. Let's have an eye for the world-wide church of God.

2. Geertsema admits that there can be more than one true church, and he refers to the O.P.C. But then he asks the question, "Must I conclude from this that

your demand and condition is that our coming half-way is that we declare that we are NOT the only true church?" I would answer: absolutely! That you are a true church of the Lord no one would deny. But you must publicly declare that you do NOT believe that you are the only true church. I'm surprised that Geertsema even asks this question. It seems such a foregone conclusion to me. This is one of the great stumblingblocks in the way of unity, not only for the CRC, but for other church communions as well. The Free Church of Scotland could not understand either how a recognition of being a true church did not include table and pulpit fellowship. Yes, at long last, after much investigation, the Can. Ref. Churches concluded that the O.P.C. was a true church of the Lord, but even that did not find unanimity among the Can. Ref. Even this communion doesn't quite seem to fill the bill. It is that attitude that I find hard to understand. The great reluctance to admit that there might be other faithful, true churches of the Lord.

3. About the possibility of two true churches in the same locality, Geertsema writes that the "cannot" does not mean it is not possible, but that it is not allowable. That is a helpful distinction, but many in the Can. Ref. Churches take "cannot" in the absolute sense: there simply cannot be two true churches in one town. The letters of response to Van Dam make that clear too.

I would go farther than Geertsema: though it certainly is not ideal to have two true churches in the same locality, and ought not to be so from a biblical point of view, yet it can and does happen repeatedly, even permanently. In a perfect world that would not happen, but we don't live in a perfect world or a perfect church. We live in a sinful world and church, and so things are not always as they ought to be. The practice of life is always more complicated than our theories. It could easily happen, e.g. that a Free Church of Scotland and a Can. Ref. Church would live side by side in the same town, and yet never get together. Differences of background, history, etc. would keep them apart. Ideal? No. Realistic, yes. To this date the Vrijgemaak-

ten and the Chr. Geref. have not been able to come together, nor have the Can. Ref. and Free Ref. Does that make one of them illegitimate? No it doesn't. Two true churches, yet living separately. That's the reality of church life in a sinful world. Let's not try to squeeze reality into our neat little categories. And the fact that the Chr. Geref. did not go along with the union of 1892 does not make them a false church. We have to stop pigeon-holing each other. Life doesn't always fit into neat categories.

4. The same is true with the true/false distinction. That is not quite as simple and black and white as many Can. Ref. people would like to make it. I would distinguish between an unfaithful church and a false church. I call the CRC an unfaithful church, but I would hesitate to apply the label "false" there immediately. One could say that the marks of a true church are more or less present in some church communions. No church has those marks in perfection, and some have lost them altogether. But it's not always easy to say when and where a once-faithful church becomes false. Here a quotation from a certain James M. Wilson is helpful:

"Her (the churches) constitution, as it lies in the Word of God, is perfect; but defects still exist in the best churches. And it is far from easy – is it possible? – to prepare a minute statement of the marks of a true church, which will render easy the task of deciding in every case, absolutely and at once, whether a society can be reckoned a true church or not. And yet, every intelligent Christian admits that a church, once genuine in its character, may become completely apostate. To draw the line and say, just here it ought to be abandoned, is not easy. The truth is, all questions of this sort must, as they occur, be left for decision, under the guidance of general principles, 1...to the enlightened judgment, pure hearts, and honest purposes of the faithful in Christ."

James M. Wilson

In the final analysis, of course, one must judge each local congregation by itself. It

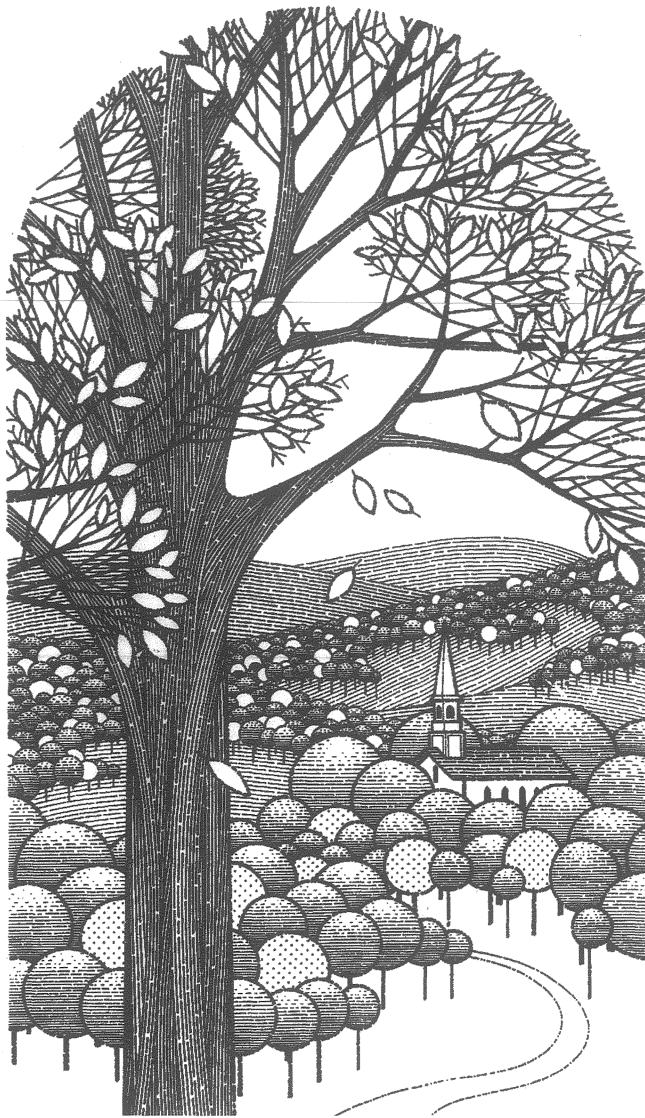
is possible that there are true, faithful congregations within a largely apostate federation. It's ultimately the local congregation that counts, even though we may not absolve ourselves of corporate responsibility.

5. The Can. Ref. Churches must realize that they are not the only option for concerned CRC members. There are also the Free Reformed and OCRC federations. They may legitimately claim the title of true church too. And what about the Prot. Ref.? Though I have some difficulties with some of their teachings, I certainly would not dare to classify them as false churches. Which just goes to show again that we must not be too quick with our labels.

6. The "details" (6 points) of my first letter were mentioned only as examples of something (an attitude) that is rather general and widespread in the Can. Ref. Churches. This kind of mentality has been (is?) fostered among the Can. Ref. people, also from the pulpit. I have correspondence from Can. Ref. consistories where they refuse to call us brothers, even though they will not deny that we are Christians. How is that possible? It is this mentality that must be addressed. It is too easy to say that this is not the official teaching of the Can. Ref. Churches. That may be true. But one runs into it time and again. A recent decision of a Can. Ref. synod with respect to the Rev. De Bruin did nothing to discourage this kind of thinking. I think it is time that a Can. Ref. synod speaks forthrightly on this matter of ecclesiology, and clears up major misunderstandings. It is a plain fact that many members (ministers?) of the Can. Ref. Churches misinterpret Arts. 27-29 of the Belgic Confession. For many of them the "one catholic or universal Church" of Art. 27 is identical with the Can. Ref. federation. I've heard that said to me more than once. Surely a misinterpretation of such major proportions ought to be addressed and cleared up once for all. The sooner the better. In this connection I would like to urge the reading of Dr. Faber's book on the church, and also two excellent books by the late Prof. C. Veenhof: *Om Kerk Te Blijven* and *Volk Van God*. The reading of these books among Can. Ref. people could be a great blessing. It is a fact that the disciples have often gone much beyond the master (Schilder) in their thinking about the church.

The above explains what I meant by "coming half way." I did not mean to imply any compromise at all. I only mean that some issues must be dealt with and cleared up.

7. With respect to a member leaving a Can. Ref. congregation for another



(non-Can. Ref.), it is one thing to say: He (she) has left the church of Christ at this place. But to say he (she) has left the church of Christ is altogether something else. That means the person is no longer a Christian, no longer a member of the body of Christ. Do you dare to say that? I certainly don't.

8. Finally, I think Geertsema's reference to Rev. 18:4 is illegitimate. That refers to Babylon, the city of this world, not to the church = cf. further Isa. 52:11; Jer. 50:8; 51:6,9,45.

J. Tuininga

An response to Rev. Tuininga

Ad 1) Rev. Tuininga finds that in our church life "everything must be so regimented, so air-tight." He is not concrete here, but let me take as possible example of such a regimented church life the fact that in our churches a minister cannot just arrange a pulpit exchange with a minister in another Reformed Church with which we do not have an official sister

church relation. Another example could be the closed Lord's Supper table. Since I dealt with this second example some time ago (*Clarion*, Vol. 39, No.24), I will leave it out here, and work with the first.

I start with exceptions under specific circumstances. About six years ago the consistory of the church at Langley allowed its minister to preach and administer the sacraments in the Reformed Church of Rippon, in California. It had seceded from the CRC and was in need of the help of a minister. The consistory gave this permission after having consulted the sister churches by means of a classis meeting. The decision, thus, was not just that of the minister, not even that of a consistory by itself, but the federation of the churches was involved.

I have no problems with a decision like this in such a specific situation. However, the point is that we find here the involvement of a consistory and the federation of churches, and not the individual deciding and acting of a minister just by himself. If we belong to a federation, we have to take this serious and must

act accordingly. If we, as ministers, just act according to our own feelings and views, we create chaos and set a bad example for the flock. The result will be that everyone does what is good in his own eyes.

The recognition of other churches or church federations is a matter of the churches together in a federation. Therefore a minister's official service outside his church and its federation is not up to the minister's own views and feelings. It is a matter of his consistory and church in the federation.

Are we really regimenting church life too much when we think and act in this way? Or is it simply Reformed thinking and acting? Let us dive again into the history of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands. It will be instructive. About a hundred years ago, the churches of the Secession (1834) and those of the Doleantie (1886) worked toward merger, simply because it was recognized as the will of the LORD and in accordance with the Reformed confession that those who are of the same faith (confession) should be visibly one.

One of the leaders in the churches of the Secession, Prof. L. Lindeboom, wrote a brochure in 1890 in which he warned against union.¹ His main ground was the reasoning and acting of Kuyper and others in the Doleantie churches. They were of the opinion that they did not separate from the Dutch Reformed Church (Nederlandse Hervormde Kerk) as a body, in its entirety, nor from its local churches, but only from its illegal and hierarchical governing system. They, therefore, allowed the so-called double membership. People could be a member of a local Doleantie congregation and a Dutch Reformed congregation, at the same time.

Behind it was Kuyper's view of the church. He saw the true church as all true believers together. This included the believers in the Dutch Reformed Church. Thus, Kuyper reasoned: we do not really separate from the Dutch Reformed Church (the believers in it) as a whole and in its local congregations; we only secede from the hierarchical governing bodies.

Lindeboom concluded that with this way of thinking one could not say that the Dutch Reformed Church as a body, in its entirety, was a false church. This is what the churches of the Secession had declared in the "Act of Secession or Return" in 1834. They had said that their act was that of seceding from the false church in obedience to the Word of God and in accordance with the Reformed Confession. Lindeboom's conclusion was that, in the Kuyperian or Doleantie view, the Secession was unjustified.

Lindeboom was not alone. In 1891, the synod of the Secession churches came to the synod of the churches of the Doleantie with a proposal for unity in which the latter were asked to declare, among other things, that

breaking of the ecclesiastical communion not only with the governing bodies of the Dutch Reformed

soned on the basis of his theory. Lindeboom spoke and reasoned in agreement with the confession in the Articles 27-29.

When, in 1918, the Rev. Netelenbos did preach in a Dutch Reformed Church he was deposed from his office, because his action was considered in conflict with the confession and in disobedience to

PSALM 52:5

*But like an olive tree I'm growing,
Safe in God's house and care.
His steadfast love He is bestowing
On all who sojourn there.
I trust in Him for evermore;
His greatness I adore.*

Church, but also with the members in a corporate and local sense, was commanded by the Word of God and the Reformed Confession, and was therefore necessary."²

The 1891 Synod of the Doleantie churches responded with accepting this proposal of the Secession churches. The Doleantie churches agreed that this statement was correct. Then the synod of the Secession churches declared to see no obstacles for union anymore. And Lindeboom wrote another brochure in which he, too, said that now his objection was taken away.³

I mention this part of the history of the Reformed churches in the Netherlands because of its relevance on the point in our discussion. The consequence of Kuyper's view would have been that ministers in the Doleantie churches would have been preaching in local Dutch Reformed churches without any problem, just as people could continue to be member in both the (local) Dutch Reformed Church and in the (local) Doleantie church. With the declaration of separation from that body in its entirety in accordance with the confession of the church, these things would not be possible anymore. Kuyper rea-

the Word of God. One of the men of the Doleantie, Dr. D.P.D. Fabius, professor of Law at the Free University, wrote a brochure in which he pointed out why the action of Rev. Netelenbos was ecclesiastically illegal and could not be approved.

I am aware that in my example I combine the preaching in a different church with which no official sister church relationship exists and preaching in a church belonging to a federation from which one separated. However, the two are closely related. In both the point is that we should act in good ecclesiastical order, that is, in accordance with the Reformed confession. Doing so builds up. Acting in an individualistic manner breaks down.

It is my firm conviction that I am reasoning here in line with the Reformed "Act of Secession and Return" of 1834, which became the line of the Doleantie in 1891, and is also the line of the "Act of Liberation and Return" in 1944. It is therefore also my conviction that concerned members of the CRC, wanting to be and remain Reformed, that means: wanting to act in obedience of faith and in accordance with the Reformed Standards, have to separate from the CRC in line with the "Act of Secession and Re-

turn” of 1834 and with the decision of the 1891 synod of the Doleantie churches. The separation from the CRC must not just be a separation from some modern ideas and decisions which deviate from Scripture and confession, and from a hierarchical governing body or bodies, but from a church which is on the way of apostasy and which shows more and more the marks of a false church. A separation on a different ground is unconfessional and un-Reformed. It is here a matter of obedience to the Lord of the church and His Word, as confessed in the confession about the church.

Ad 2) My colleague wants us to declare publicly in a synodical pronouncement that we do not believe that we are the only true church. I do not see the need of this at all. First of all, we have never declared that we are the only true church. Our confession does not speak this way. It describes the marks. Therefore, where the marks are found, there is Christ's true church, according to what we confess to be the norms of God's Word. My second reason is that such a pronouncement is not concrete and does not make sense. It speaks within the context of the reasoning: we are the only true church, which is not confessional. Further, if we say we are not the only true church, we are called to say which other true churches there are, otherwise the pronouncement is spoken into the blue sky.

Rev. Tuininga mentions in this context that the Free Church of Scotland did not understand that recognition as a true church did not include table and pulpit fellowship. First of all, I do not understand this reasoning. We have to acknowledge that we are not the only true church. In this recognition of the Free Church as a true church we give proof that we do not declare to be the only true church. And it is still turned against us.

In the second place, Rev. Tuininga is not clear and mixes things up. As far as I know, the recognition is made within the context of the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC). This does not mean an official recognition of the Free Church as sister churches by one of our synods. It has to lead to such a relation. For us, table and pulpit fellowship functions within such a mutual and official recognition of each other as sister churches. Therefore, in fact, this matter belongs to the preceding point: let all things be done in good ecclesiastical order.

Besides, I doubt whether my colleague is correct in his rendering of the situation. As far as I recall, it was especially one Scottish delegate to the ICRC meetings who expressed his frustration

on this point, while other delegates and members in the Free Church in Scotland understood and appreciated our desire to act in an ecclesiastical manner.

Further, what Rev. Tuininga says with respect to the reluctance of some of us with respect to the recognition of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), I do not want to deny, but neither do I want to discuss this here. Such a discussion would have to be about facts, and it can be known that there is quite a struggle going on within the OPC between those who want to join with the much more “evangelical” PCA and those who oppose that direction because they want to maintain and strengthen the Reformed character of the OPC.

Ad 3) In this third point we have the reasoning that what our Catechism confesses about Christians, namely that nobody is perfect, counts also for churches. This is declared to be the simple reality. The way Rev. Tuininga speaks holds the grave danger that, although not intended, yet in fact, the sinful reality becomes the norm for our actions, instead of what Christ commands and we confess concerning “maintaining the unity of the church” in Art. 28 B.C. What counts for individual persons counts for churches, too. With this way of reasoning of my colleague we easily accept the sinful *status quo*, and we walk away from the obedience of faith to the norm. In my first response I referred to what Dr. K. Schilder said with respect to the Dutch Christian Reformed Churches (Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken) which stayed on their own in 1892 and continued to avoid union up to now. Schilder said that the refusal to unite makes churches illegitimate. This is not the same as false. But it does stress the disobedience and the conflict with the own confession. Schilder fought for the unity of the church. The others did not and played lip-service to an ideal for the sake of maintaining their own typical denominational character. The reasoning of colleague Tuininga will do the same.

Esteemed colleague, the Secession in 1834 was considered a matter of obedience to the Word of Christ by those who separated from the Dutch Reformed Church. They spoke publicly in their “Act of Secession and Return” that they saw their act in the light of the Reformed confession, as stated above. At the same time they declared to be willing to unite with all those who were having the same faith. You find the same manner of speaking in the “Act of Liberation and Return.” It is in this line that I want to continue. Much of what you “discover” in our churches as regimentation and being too strict and not realistic is born from the

desire to be obedient to the Word of the Lord and to remain faithful to the Reformed confession, in line with the “Act of Secession or Return” and the “Act of Liberation or Return.”

If the sinful *status quo* as “the reality of life” becomes the norm for our speaking and acting in recognizing each other as true churches without confessional consequences regarding maintaining the unity of faith, we will in the end accept the sinful situation because it happens to be this way. We will say that it is too bad but that we cannot change the reality. In the end we will show that we can cooperate with all kinds of other denominations in all kinds of projects, while refusing to become visibly one, that is in one and the same church, at the same Lord's Supper table. What will be the result? It will be exactly the same situation as the one from which concerned members in the CRC want to secede: an ecumenism that does not maintain the norms of God's Word as confessed in the Reformed Standards and therefore even includes those who adhere to Roman Catholicism. It was and is this easy, normless ecumenism, this recognizing left and right, in the framework of the pluriformity concept of the church which drove the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and which is driving the CRC further and further on the road of apostasy.

My response is becoming too long for one article. I plan to conclude it in the next issue. The length is result of concern and of the desire that we find each other on the basis of Scripture and confession and in line with our Reformed fathers in the previous century. In line, also, with Schilder's struggle for the unity of the church in this century. In line with his struggle for obedience to our King and Lord also on the point of the church: gathering with Christ in the way of this obedience of faith.



¹L. Lindeboom, *Waar zijn wij en waar gaan wij heen? Wat dunkt U van de Concept-Acte*, Heusden: A. Gezelle Meerburg, 1891.

²L. Lindeboom, *Mag en zal de Vereeniging doorgaan?*, Heusden: A. Gezelle Meerburg, 1892, p.12. The Dutch text reads: “dat verbreking van de kerkelijke gemeenschap met de Besturen van de Ned. Herv. Kerk niet alleen, maar ook met de leden in corporatieven en plaatselijke zin, door God's Woord en de Ger. Belijdenis geboden en dus noodzakelijk is.” Cf. also J. H. Kok, *Uit de Geschiedenis van de Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland 1882-1892 en 1893-1902*, Kampen: Kok, 1939. Cf. Art. 184 of the Acts of the Synod of Leeuwarden, 1891, of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk.

³The brochure mentioned in note ².

Report on the Fifty-Eighth General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church

By P.G. Feenstra and
G.J. Nordeman

The 1991 General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church met at Geneva College in Beaver Falls, PA, from May 30 to June 6. During the course of the Assembly, fraternal delegates were received from the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Christian Reformed Church, the Presbyterian Church in America, the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin), the Reformed Church in the United States and the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Statistics

The report of the Statistician revealed a drop in the overall membership of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church. In 1988 the total membership of the OPC was 19,376. As of December 31, 1990 the total was down to 18,164. This is due in part to the fact that several churches and individuals have joined the Presbyterian Church of America.

Interchurch relations

With regard to relations with other churches the General Assembly adopted the following recommendations:

1. That the Assembly decline the invitation of the Reformed Ecumenical Council to send an observer to the REC Greece 1992.

2. That the Assembly cordially invite the Christian Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Free Church of Scotland, and the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland to enter a relationship of ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC.

3. That the assembly elect a committee of three members to examine the method of admission of guests to the Lord's Supper, and report to the 60th (1993) General Assembly, with recommendations if deemed advisable.

4. That the assembly direct the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch

Relations to consider the desirability and feasibility of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church adding the Three Forms of Unity (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort) to its present confessional standards (the Confession of Faith, the Larger Catechism and the shorter Catechism) and of the establishing of a common Presbyterian and Reformed Church order, so as to provide a basis for unity into one church body of those who are committed to one faith.

5. That the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations be authorized to appoint two observers, to serve subsequently as delegates if and when the OPC is received as a member church, to the 1993 meeting of the International Conference of Reformed Churches to be held in Seoul, Korea.

Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America

On Tuesday June 4th, a joint meeting was held with the Synod of the Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America. The topic discussed was "The Mediatorial Kingship of Jesus Christ." (For more information on the RPCNA see Acts of General Synod Cloverdale 1983, Article 150.)

Christian Reformed Church


No action was taken by the 58th Assembly with respect to the Christian Reformed Church. Nevertheless the report of the Committee on Ecumenicity and Interchurch Relations indicates that the Committee initiated the following action taken by the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC):

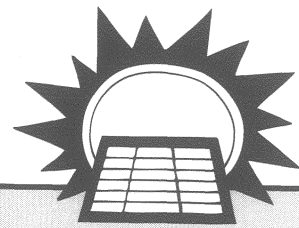
In harmony with the stated 'purpose and function' of the NAPARC to exercise mutual concern in the perpetuation, retention, and propagation of the Reformed Faith (Constitution III:3), the North American Presbyteri-

an and Reformed Council calls upon the Christian Reformed Church to reverse the action of the 1990 Synod leading to the opening of offices of minister and ruling elder to women, as contrary to the Scripture and the Reformed standards which insist that 'everything will be carried on in the church...according to the rule prescribed by Saint Paul in his Epistle to Timothy' (Belgic Confession of Faith, Article XXX). In 1 Timothy 2 and 3, in giving authoritative instruction regarding proper conduct 'in the household of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and support of the truth' (3:15), the Apostle explicitly disallows to a woman the exercise of teaching or ruling authority over men in the church (2:12), and grounds this command in the divine creation order.

Address to the Assembly

In the address given to the General Assembly your fraternal delegate thanked the Assembly for the invitation to extend greetings. He stressed that greeting one another as churches has its foundation in Scripture (cf. 1 Cor. 16). The Bible reveals, however, that these greetings were not merely a friendly, warm and polite gesture but an expression of a bond between two parties. The greeting was (and is) a sign of communion! Churches greet one another based on the common bond they share in the unity of the true faith.

The adoption of the above mentioned recommendations can be read as a move in the right direction. Only time will tell where this will lead. May the ecclesiastical contact we have with the OPC lead to a full sister-church relationship in the unity of the true faith so that on a local level and in the broader assemblies we may truly greet one another in the Lord. 



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

Therefore, since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is a beautiful thing, that we can be certain of that peace with God, because we know from His word that our Lord Jesus Christ paid for all our sins. He was the Lamb of God.

The people in the O.T. could only approach God through the priest. The priest sacrificed the lamb as a symbol that the sins were transferred from the people onto the lamb. Thus the people were cleansed from their sins, and God could forgive. This was a foreshadow of the N.T. Lamb, our Saviour Jesus Christ. The sins of all of us, believers, were transferred from us onto Him. Therefore He had to endure God's wrath. We cannot fathom what this involved. God's wrath is a consuming fire. It curses, it kills, and it causes eternal destruction. Christ endured for us exclusion from the presence of God, hell, being forsaken by His Father. His life on earth was one constant death, and that while He was without sin. He did all this because of His desire to reconcile us and to bring us peace.

Christ suffered for us, and we may believe in Him. However, faith in Christ does not mean the absence of suffering. "For it has been granted to you, that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in Him but also suffer for His sake." Phil. 1:29. We received our reconciliation "...but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation." Rom. 5:11 However, this does not mean that we are not called to endure whatever God gives us to endure: famines, wars, diseases, loneliness, handicaps, being rejected.

Faith in the Lord and suffering often go together. When we see our suffering as a testing of our faith, our love for the Lord will be intensified. Then we will be able to bring sacrifices for His sake. We will struggle with our sinful nature, and grieve about our sins. We will try to rid our life of everything that could deprive us of God's saving love.

We will suffer gladly because of the fact that God chose us and deemed us worthy of His salvation. Then we can handle being laughed at. It will draw us closer to Him. We can joyfully bear our cross - whatever physical, mental, or other difficulties He gives us to bear. God will not give us more than we are able to handle. He will strengthen us to complete our earthly journey. When we look at everything Christ suffered for us, what is our suffering compared to His?

We have the peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. We may now live in the sunshine of our Father's love, until we will live in everlasting peace never experienced before.

"What then shall we say to this? If God is for us, who is against us? He who did not spare His own Son but gave Him up for us all, will He not also give us all things with Him?"

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor power, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rom. 8:31,32,38,39

From the mailbox:

Jim Wanders moved into a smaller group home in Burlington. This home houses only six residents, and Jim feels much at home in his new surroundings. We wish him all the best.

Birthdays in October:

Alan Breukelman

Box 666, Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

Alan will celebrate his 25th birthday on October 17th.

Nelena Hofsink

"Bethesda Clearbrook Home"

32553 Willingdon Crescent

Clearbrook, BC V2T 1S2

Nelena hopes to be 31 on October 22nd.

John Feenstra

RR 1, Wainfleet, ON L0S 1V0

John hopes to celebrate his 33th birthday on October 25th.

Mary Ann De Wit

"Bethesda"

6705 Satchel Road

Box 40

Mount Lehman BC V0X 1V0

It is going to be Mary Ann's 35th birthday on October 28th.

Happy birthday to all of you.

Until next month,

Mrs. R. Ravensbergen
7462 Highway 20, RR 1
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

The Rebuilding of the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church Building

When, on September 22, 1990, the corner stones of the old and the new Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church were laid, it was a milestone in the rebuilding of the old church. The end was in sight.

After much preliminary work by the congregation and the building committee, we were finally building.



The Reverend and Mrs. G. Van-Dooren unveiled both the "old" cornerstone and the "new" cornerstone. Also present at this momentous occasion was the mayor of Burlington, the chairman of the consistory, the chairman of the building committee, and a few hundred interested members from all three Burlington congregations.

On January 26, 1991, an open house was held for all the neighbours of the church building and anyone interested in seeing the completed building before its first use by the congregation, January 27, 1991. The turnout and the words of joy were great. The building seemed to have surpassed all expectations.

On March 28, 1991, the congregation finally was officially given the use of its new building. Everything was complete and in good order. The chairman of the consistory, Br. G. Nordeman, welcomed everyone back to Dynes Road and opened with the reading of Psalm 92:1-4 and Jeremiah 7:1-7.

It was an evening of thankfulness and celebration. Thankfulness to our heavenly Father for His providence and faithfulness in providing for us again, a house of worship, and a meeting place for our Canadian Reformed community and its activities to the glory of His name.

original mandate of adding a few rooms, to clean up after the fire, to total construction of a new building. This committee and its members put in countless hours and meetings on behalf of the congregation to create a building to be suitably used by its members for all its functions. They seem to have achieved their objective. He thanked all those that were involved in the building in one form or another from the architect, to the builder, to the organ builder.

Br. Oostdyk at the end of his speech, presented to Br. Nordeman a wooden key as a symbolic turning over of the



After Br. Nordeman's warm words of welcome, he introduced the chairman of the building committee, Br. W. Oostdyk, and invited him to come up and speak a few words to us. Br. Oostdyk recounted the time – three years in total – it took to rebuild this church from the committee's

church from the committee to the council of Ebenezer Church. This key has special note also, in that it was made out of a pew end from the old building.

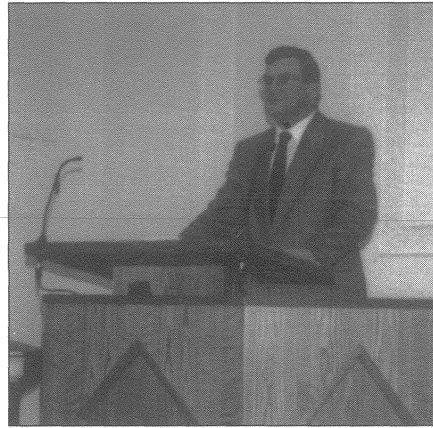
Br. Nordeman, after this presentation, asked all those involved with the building to come forward and speak a

few words. The architect, the builder, the organ company, and the mayor all took advantage of this.

Special note was taken of the new organ in the church, and we were treated to a few musical compositions.

The choir was also asked to sing a few selections and it was noted also in this respect – acoustics – the church was a good success, and the building had achieved its many objectives.

The two neighbouring Burlington churches were given a chance to speak at this official ceremony. Br. H. Buist spoke on the behalf of Burlington-South,



and Reverend Mulder was “jealous” on behalf of Burlington-West.

The last speaker on this occasion was Reverend G. VanDooren who reminded us that without people, it is just a building or shell. The church, he said, is the workshop of the Holy Spirit and He promises that He will be there and work faith in our hearts.

Rev. VanDooren closed this session with a prayer of thanksgiving, and afterwards everyone had a chance to roam and “inspect” the building again.

Great are the works of the Lord!

Peter Bosscher 

Annual League Day of the Womens' Societies of Manitoba

Carman “*Rejoice in the Lord*” and Winnipeg “*God’s Word as Our Guide*”

June 20, 1991, 9:30 a.m... the auditorium of our church building at 211 Rougeau Avenue in Winnipeg was beginning to fill up. All enjoyed a cup of coffee and some “gezelligheid.” At 10:00 a.m. the meeting was officially opened by our vice-all, Mrs. Betsy Kingma. We read Psalm 146 and sang from the same Psalm, stanzas 1, 2, and 3. We were then led in prayer. The minutes (including a summary of topics discussed last year) were read, adopted, and signed.

Our speaker for the morning, Mrs. Aaltje Hultink-Moes, was introduced to us. Her topic was the task of the government in relation to the ten commandments. Her presentation was entitled “Searching for the New Jerusalem.” She described several biblical perspectives that have developed with regards to the role of civil government and the flaws in these theories. She showed us how we could not draw a parallel between the nation of Israel (covenant nation) and the nation we live in. In conclusion she told us that the way to the restoration of society was most importantly through the preaching of God’s Word.

Following a brief intermission, we enjoyed an informative discussion, with many enlightening answers by Mrs. Moes. All too soon we had to close the discussion. Mrs. Kingma thanked our speaker for her excellent work and presented her with a \$25.00 certificate from Hull’s Bookstore.

We went on to sing a beautiful new League Day song composed by Mrs. Liz Buist especially for this day.

By this time it was noon. Mrs. Kingma asked the Lord’s blessing over our meal, and we sat down to a delicious lunch consisting of cold cuts, salads, buns, and fruit kebabs for dessert. Our vice-all then read Psalm 128 and closed in thanksgiving prayer.

We met in the auditorium again at 1:15 p.m., at which time Mrs. Frieda Snyder entertained us with a play called “Old Shep,” the theme of which was “A Dog’s Life Isn’t So Bad, After All!”

Our treasurer, Mrs. Liz DeVries, opened the afternoon session. She read Deut. 6:1-15, Acts 16:11-18, and Psalm 119:1-4. She introduced to us Mr. Heres Snyder, who spoke to us on “The Whole Language Approach.” He made it clear that his presentation was intended as a

springboard for fruitful discussion, not as the final word. He first expanded on a few different terms in order to form a framework with which to address the issue of “Whole Language.” He then showed us how “Whole Language” viewed change, content of subject matter, and children/teachers completely differently from the traditional views on learning. He concluded by stating that there is still much tension between the two views, and that there is still the question of whether effective teaching strategies based on one philosophy can be used on another.

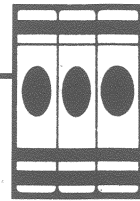
After a brief intermission, we enjoyed a lively question period. Again, we were soon pressed for time, and the discussion was closed. Mrs. DeVries thanked Mr. Snyder for her work and presented him also with a \$25.00 certificate from Hull’s.

We closed with the singing of Hymn 8:1 and prayer. League Day 1991 was officially over. Many stayed for refreshments, however, before going home physically and spiritually filled for another day.

Elsje Raap 

BOOK REVIEW

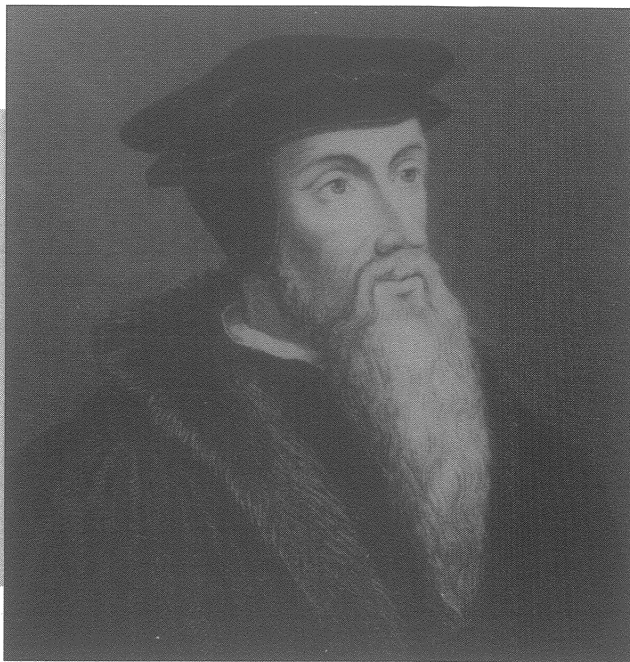
By G. Nederveen



Veldman, Drs. H., *De beeldenstorm in Groningen: reformatische vrijheidsbeweging in Stad en Ommelanden*; Oost-erbaan & Le Cointre, 1990, 224 pages.

1566 was the year in which many Romanist churches throughout the Netherlands suffered the ire of the followers of the Reformation. It was the year of the beeldenstormen, in English known as iconoclasm. In many places churches were purged of images.

Drs. H. Veldman has written an interesting study in which he traces how iconoclasm came to the city of Groningen and surrounding area. In an easy to read style he sketches the position of the early Reformers on the use of images. In the first part of the book he spends a chapter each on the views of Luther,



John Calvin



15th-Century St. Martin Church, Groningen, the Netherlands

Zwingli and Calvin. Veldman shows how Luther was still fairly tolerant of images in churches while Zwingli and Calvin have a more pronounced view on the matter and denounce the use of what the Heidelberg Catechism calls "the books for the laity" (Lord's Day 35). Even the humanist Erasmus felt that images had no place in the churches, especially when it came to the worship of these images.

The Roman response to the Reformers was formulated by the Council of Trent (1545-1563). Predictably it declared that there was much merit in having images in church.

The second half of the book is devoted to the situation in the "Stad en Ommelanden," i.e. in the city of Groningen and surrounding area. In this section the author investigates what major influences led to the clearing of images out of the churches in that region.

Veldman takes us through the steps how Rome tried to regain control of Groningen by making the city a bishopric and so establish a papal stronghold in the north of the land. The efforts to establish law and order by those sympathetic to Rome did not get very far at first.

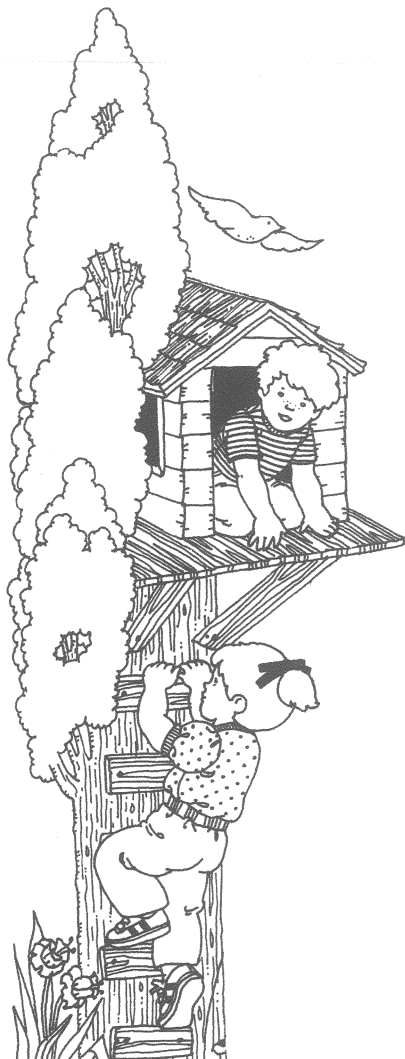
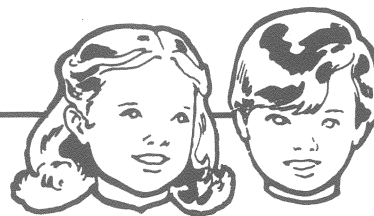
The reason why these efforts did not flourish was because the decision making process lay in the hands of people chosen locally. These locals had adopted an attitude of tolerance. People in Groningen and surrounding were given much freedom in religious expression as long as there was peaceful coexistence with all. The author shows how the freedom gained by the mid 1560s was lost in 1567. Not until 1594 did the much sought after freedom become a permanent reality.

The book contains numerous beautiful illustrations and also three appendices of in total 15 pages. Appendix I contains the list of names of the members of the consistory in the Reformed Church in Groningen. Appendix II gives an overview of the persons who were found guilty for their role in Stad Groningen. Appendix III gives the names of people who were involved in iconoclasm in the "Ommelanden" such as Garsthuizen, Loppersum, Winsum.

For those who read Dutch and like history this book is good reading and recommended.



By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

One Busy Beaver wrote me that she and her sister slept in a fort! Do you like to make a fort? Do you and your friend have a *secret place*?

In the story called *The Secret Hiding Place* by W.G. Vandehulst, two boys have a fort in the woods. They love their adventure. They are busy in their fort. Their teacher says, "Keep it a beautiful secret."

Mary has a beautiful secret, too, in *The Secret Garden*, by Frances Hodgson Burnett. She loves working in her secret place. Mary shared her beautiful secret with two boys (and others!).

You will find adventure and living in a secret place (!) in *My side of the Mountain*, too. The boy even makes pets of wild animals!

Forts are fun.

Reading and finding out about other people's forts and hiding places is fun, too!

Quiz Time!

ANIMAL WORDSEARCH

From Busy Beaver *Denise Hoekema*

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

FIND:

- | | |
|----------|------------|
| ape | lion |
| bear | pig |
| bird | pigeon |
| cat | porcupine |
| cow | rhinoceros |
| dog | seal |
| elephant | tiger |
| fox | turtle |
| giraffe | whale |
| horse | wolf |
| jaguar | zebra |

TELLING STATEMENTS

Match what was said with the *NAME* of the person about whom it was said.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Enoch (Gen. 5:24) | a. there is none like him in the earth |
| 2. Noah (Gen. 6:8) | b. in love with this world |
| 3. King Solomon (1 Kings 11:1) | c. walked with God |
| 4. John the Baptist (Luke 1:17; John 1:23) | d. Cephas, a stone |
| 5. Abraham (James 2:23) | e. found grace with God |
| 6. Demas (2 Tim. 4:10) | f. voice of one crying in the wilderness |
| 7. Peter (John 1:42) | g. he went away sorrowful |
| 8. Mary (Luke 1:30) | h. chose the good part |
| 9. Job (Job 2:3) | i. friend of God. |
| 10. A rich young man (Luke 18:23) | j. loved many strange women |
| 11. Mary (Luke 10:42) | k. found favour with God |
| 12. Judas Iscariot (Matt. 26:24) | h. would have been good if he had not been born |

The leftover letters form two words.



BRAIN TEASERS!

The Bus Driver

A bus driver was going down a street. He went right past a stop sign without stopping. He turned left where there was a "no left turn" sign. Then he turned the wrong way into a one-way street. And yet, he didn't break a single traffic law. Why not?

Hungry Horses

If five horses can eat five bags of oats in five minutes how long will it take a hundred horses to eat a hundred bags of oats?

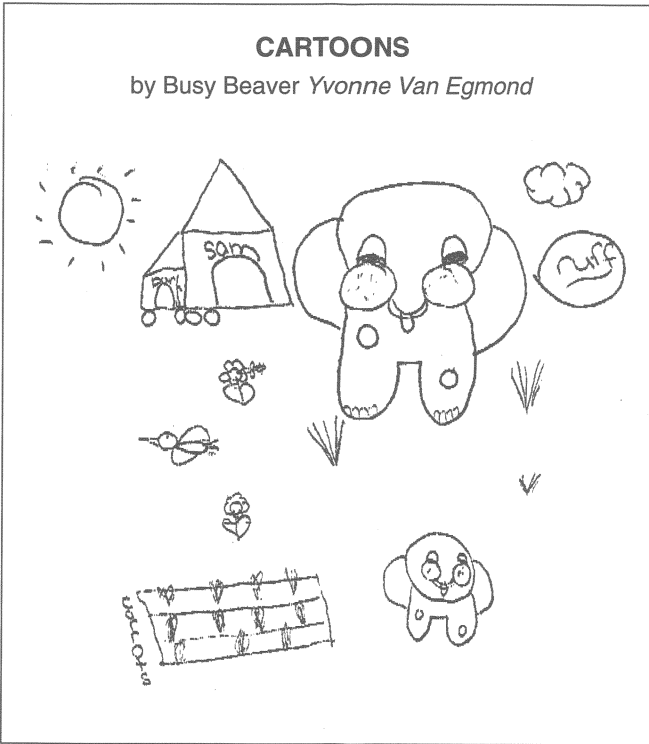
Leftover Sandwiches

Mrs. Martin made twenty-four sandwiches for a picnic. All but seven were eaten. How many were left?

(See answers)

CARTOONS

by Busy Beaver Yvonne Van Egmond



KNOCK, KNOCK! WHO'S THERE?

From Busy Beavers Elisa and Karen Vandergaag

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Gopher.
Gopher, Who?
Gopher a touchdown, rah, rah!

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Tuba.
Tuba who?
Tuba toothpaste!

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Ida.
Ida who?
Ida baked you a cake if I
knew you were coming.

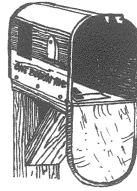
Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Oliver.
Oliver who?
Oliver town people are
telling knock knock jokes!

Knock, knock.
Who's there?
Author.
Author who?
Author any more
brownies left?

BIRTHDAY WISHES

To all our Busy Beavers celebrating the birthday in *October* we wish a very happy day and a very happy year ahead! May our heavenly Father watch over you and bless you and keep you in the year ahead. Here's hoping you have a super day celebrating with your family and friends!

Laura Harsevoort	2	Anne Van Laar	18
Alyssa Lodder	2	Amy Vander Hout	18
Arlene Winkelaar	3	Jenny Stroop	20
Gerard Van Woudenberg	5	Will Van Oene	20
Karissa Veldman	5	Laura Aasman	21
Vanessa De Jong	6	Mary-Lynn Lof	23
Krista Werkman	13	Sharon De Vries	26
Erin Siebenga	17	Bryan Eelhart	28
Yvonne Van Egmond	17	Denise Elliott	31



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Joshua Burger*. We are happy to have you join us. Thank you for a very neat letter.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Dorothy Ondersma*. I hope you get a pen pal soon. I'm hoping you'll share some of your drawings with us, Dorothy. Bye for now.

Welcome to the Club, *Sharalee Vanden Bos*. Are you good at playing baseball, too, Sharalee? Write again soon.

Congratulations on your twin brother and sister *Jackie Reinink*. I think your grandmother was excited, too, right. Have fun with your baby sister and brother, Jackie!

Hello, *Denise Hoeksema*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the puzzle, Denise.

Sounds to me as if you had lots of fun camping *Jaclyn DeHaas*. Thank you for your colourful picture. Was that your family camping? I'm looking forward to hearing from you again.

Thank you for the puzzles *Margaret Nyenhuis*. I see you have been busy. Are you glad to be back in school? How was your summer?

Pen pal needed for: Dorothy Ondersma (Age 12)

RR 1
Shelburne, Ontario
L0N 1S0

Answers for Brain Teasers

The Bus Driver didn't break any laws because it was his day off and he was walking. *Hungry Horses* it takes each horse five minutes to eat a bag of oats. Therefore, it will take only five minutes for a hundred horses to eat a hundred bags of oats. *Left-over Sandwiches* If all but seven sandwiches were eaten, then seven sandwiches were left, of course.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers!
Keep busy!

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty