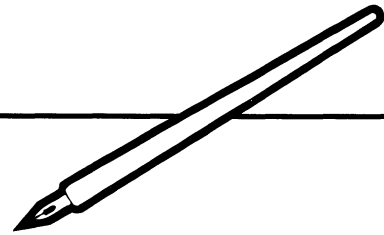




Clarion
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Reformed or evangelical?

October 31, Reformation Day, is a good time to ask ourselves what it means to be Reformed. After all, our identity as Reformed churches goes back to the days of Luther and especially Calvin, instruments of the Lord to lead His people back to the Word in its rich fullness! In its simplest terms, being Reformed means living out of and according to that full Word of our God, as we by God's grace may also confess the truth of Scripture in our confessions, the Three Forms of Unity (Belgic Confession, Heidelberg Catechism, and Canons of Dordt).

A question

The question could be raised whether we are still as self-consciously Reformed as we should be. From time to time you hear of members of a Canadian Reformed Church skipping a service in their home congregation in order to visit an evangelical assembly of one kind or another. Sometimes such visits eventually result in their leaving the Reformed church to become members of such an evangelical congregation. When you ask about it, a glowing and positive testimony is given of the faith, joy, and love in the Lord that is found there. There is no reason to doubt such praise of evangelicals. Do we perhaps not stress personal piety and the work of the Holy Spirit enough? When one asks further about evangelicals then one discovers that they accept the Bible as the inspired and infallible Word of God, and that they are serious about being Christians. We are not dealing with members of a sect, such as Jehovah Witnesses, but with those who maintain orthodox Christian doctrines, confess Christ as their Saviour and have a burden for the conversion of their neighbour for Christ. Precisely the type of things that should characterize a Reformed church. So what is the difference between being Reformed and evangelical?

Distinctives

There are some fairly significant differences that we do well to remind ourselves of, for evangelicalism has some rather severe weaknesses which detract from the fullness of the gospel. Indeed, the difference between being Reformed and evangelical has been stated thus. Both acknowledge the authority of Scripture alone (*sola scriptura*); but, only the Reformed faith lays claim to the full content of Scripture (*tota scriptura*).

Modern evangelicalism has its roots in the revivals of the previous two centuries. This background helps us to understand the stress on personal piety and the "simple gospel" of personal salvation through Christ. However, this stress on "what Christ has done for me" usually means that the full depth of that salvation as God has revealed it, for example in His

electing love, is by and large ignored. The topic of predestination makes most of them uncomfortable. Remembering the revival background of today's evangelicalism also enables us to understand the individualism that one encounters among evangelicals. Such individualism often means having a great concern about personal salvation and finding the church where one feels most comfortable and having less interest in issues pertaining to church deformation or reformation. The way evangelistic crusades are organized and run reinforce this mind-set.

Although modern evangelicalism is not a homogeneous movement, yet the features sketched above are characteristic. Related to the emphasis on certain basic fundamentals of the faith and the stress on the individual are other weaknesses. Let us briefly deal with two.

Baptism

Among evangelicals a great deal of ambivalence and uncertainty about the sacrament of baptism is found. There is much resistance against infant baptism and little understanding or complete ignorance of what the covenant relationship of God with His people entails. Needless to say, evangelicals with their stress on personal faith in Christ as a condition for belonging to the Lord, are left with little Biblical basis for a real comfort when an infant of Christian parents dies. It is truly a pity that individualism among evangelicals works hand in hand with denying the corporate aspects of God's work through the generations. God's salvation is seen too small. Rather than only working with loose and unrelated individuals God works through the generations in realizing his saving purpose. This does not mean that children of believing parents can take their salvation for granted on reaching the age of discretion. No. But stressing God's corporate work does give them a sure identity within the family of God. After all, they may know for certain that God has made a covenant with them too and that His promises of the forgiveness of their sins and of life eternal are also given to them. These promises were pictured and sealed in the baptism which they received as infants. Only when God's coming to us first in the covenant of His grace is seen and appreciated does God receive the thanksgiving and glory due to Him for His salvation.

The church


A second weakness is the evangelical view of the church. The church as an institution is of secondary importance for evangelicals. It is of course a pity that Christians are divided into so many different "denominations," but this is not the worst disaster for ultimately all Christians are in any case united in their love to God. If one breaks with a church and

seeks fellowship elsewhere, such an action is of secondary importance for that does not affect the (invisible) unity of the church. Furthermore, churches exist to promote the piety of her members, and questions such as what is the most Biblical form of church government or what does the Bible teach about the offices are often discouraged for such discussions introduce conflict which is not fitting for Christians. When it comes to the point, evangelicals often see the focus of the church's origin and continued existence in the religiosity of converted Christians. This approach is far removed from the Biblical and Reformed view that stresses Christ's initiative and perseverance in the calling and gathering of His church. Where Christ works there the church comes into existence. Christ's initiative is decisive, not that of Christians. Christ is the origin of the church and He therefore also expects His directives to be honoured. The evangelical emphasis on the individual rather than on Christ's church gathering work can also promote the idea that the church is a gathering of like-minded people with similar goals and interests. Such an approach can easily make the church into a social club or the like. But, we must stress that the church is in the first place not our business and activity, but Christ's.

Being Reformed

Is there a difference between being Reformed and evangelical? There certainly is! The term evangelical sounds warm and inviting. Undoubtedly many of us have met and interacted with evangelicals and been impressed with their sincerity and faith. I do not wish to call any of this into question. That too is the work of the Lord who sends His Spirit where He wills. However, when we now compare evangelicalism and the Reformed faith it must be affirmed that evangelicalism lacks the depth of the Scriptures and of the Reformed faith. One who was Reformed and becomes evangelical is regressing. Both the Reformed faith and evangelicalism desire to be true to Scripture alone; but the gift of God in the Reformed faith is that it also confesses that we must be true to *all* of Scripture. The entire Word must be studied and the consequences applied to life.

Evangelicals are presenting a challenge to Reformed believers. Scripture enjoins us to be watchful (1 Cor. 16:13), and also not to quench the Holy Spirit (1 Thess. 5:19). If members of our families and congregations are attracted to the joy in the Lord and zeal for Christ in evangelical circles, we must speak with them in love, appealing to them not to leave in view of the weaknesses of evangelicalism. But we must also ask ourselves, "What is wrong with us? Do they not find this happiness in our midst?" The phenomenon of the continuing attraction of evangelicals for Reformed believers is reason for reflection, concern, and self-examination. It is also reason for humble prayer to God that we may not only confess to be true church of Christ, but that this identity may be obvious not only to the outsider, but in the first place to the insider! If it is clear to the insider, those without will also notice it.

In a real sense evangelicals by attracting Reformed believers into their circles are issuing a challenge to us, – a challenge precisely on the point of our walk with God and the joy of faith. Such a challenge can be seen as opportune. It reminds us that only the Holy Spirit can give us life, the true life with God. Let us pray that God have mercy on us and may that life in Christ flourish in our midst. It should not be the result of our half-hearted faith if someone leaves or even thinks of going evangelical. Leaving means abandoning the beauty and depth of the full Biblical gospel as articulated in the Reformed faith. 



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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — Reformed or evangelical? — C. Van Dam	470
An "Election Theology" of Covenants? — D. Engelsma	472
The Covenant and the Children of Believers — A Reply ² — J. DeJong	473
Remember Your Creator — I wasn't there! — G.Ph. van Popta.....	475
News Medley — W.W.J. VanOene	476
Farewell Evening for Rev. and Mrs. P. Kingma	479
Credo Christian High — Graduation '91 — J. Visscher and H. Moes	481
Press Release — Classis Ontario North	484

An “Election Theology” of Covenant²

By D. Engelsma

In this editorial, I begin to respond to Dr. DeJong's defense of the “Liberated” doctrine of a conditional covenant against my charges that this teaching “conflicts with cardinal doctrines of the Word of God, doctrines which are precious to every Reformed man and woman.” Although I will be summarizing Dr. DeJong's defense at every point, I can do so only very briefly. The reader, therefore, should refer to DeJong's defense in its entirety in the previous issue of the *Standard Bearer*.

One charge against the “Liberated” covenant doctrine was that a conditional promise to all the children necessarily makes the saving grace of God dependent upon the work and worth of the child. The fulfillment of the promise in the actual saving of the child depends upon the child's believing. DeJong supposes that the “Liberated” escape this charge by maintaining that, although faith is a condition, it is not a “meritorious” condition.

Reformed theologians in the past have sometimes referred to faith as a “condition,” meaning by this that faith is the necessary means by which God realizes the promise in the elect sinner. The “Liberated” doctrine of a conditional covenant means something radically different. Inasmuch as “Liberated” doctrine maintains that God makes the promise of the covenant to all the children alike, its teaching that faith is the condition necessarily makes of faith a work of the child upon which depends the saving grace of God. To make faith a condition *in the context of a promise to all the children* is to fix faith as an act of man that precedes, grounds, attracts, and renders effectual the grace of God.⁽¹⁾

The “Liberated” cannot escape this charge by merely denying that faith is “meritorious.” For there is another way to compromise the sovereignty of grace in salvation besides teaching that faith *earns* salvation. This other way is to teach that man by his act of faith *distinguishes* himself from others as a worthy recipient of grace and that man by his act of faith *makes the offered grace of God effectual* in his soul.⁽²⁾ A man's marital love for a woman is not gracious if the woman bought it with a large amount of money. But neither is it gracious if she attracted it by her irresistible loveliness. Jehovah's covenant love for Jerusalem was gracious, not only because Jerusalem did not earn that love, but also because that loathsome girl, daughter of an Amorite and a Hittite, polluted in her own

blood, neither attracted the love of Jehovah nor did anything to make His love effectual in her salvation (Ezek. 16:1ff.).

The Canons of Dordt defend the sovereignty of grace in salvation, not only by repudiating the profane notion of merit, but also by condemning the more subtle error that maintains that faith is man's act of distinguishing himself from others as a worthy recipient of grace and man's act of “appropriating” grace.

The Synod (of Dordt) rejects the errors of those...who teach...that (God) chose out of all possible conditions...the act of faith which from its very nature is undeserving...as a condition of salvation (I, Rejection of Errors/3).

The Synod (of Dordt) rejects the errors of those...who use the difference between meriting and appropriating, to the end that they may instill into the minds of the imprudent and inexperienced this teaching that God, as far as He is concerned, has been minded of applying to all equally the benefits gained by the death of Christ; but that, while some obtain the pardon of sin and eternal life, and others do not, this difference depends on their own free will, which joins itself to the grace that is offered without exception (II, Rejection of Errors/6).

To the charge that a conditional promise to all the children is a denial of the graciousness of salvation within the sphere of the covenant, the “Liberated” respond by affirming that it is God who enables certain children (the elect) to fulfill the condition. Dr. DeJong writes, “We also confess that such faith is a work and gift of the LORD, according to His sovereign good pleasure and electing love.”

This response fails for four reasons.

First, it commits the “Liberated” to the very same “election theology of covenant” that they criticize in the PRC. If this response is seriously meant, it teaches that God all along intended the promise for the elect children alone and that God realizes the promise in the elect children alone. But this is exactly the doctrine of the covenant so vigorously rejected by the “Liberated.”⁽³⁾


Second, this response plays fast and loose with language. “Condition” means an act of one party upon which depends the act of another party. Everyone understands perfectly well that a nation's offer of a cease-fire on the condition that the enemy lay down

its arms means that peace depends upon an act of that enemy. The act of the enemy is decisive in the matter, regardless of the overwhelming superiority of the nation that stipulates the condition. It is precisely in order to express this that one speaks of a “condition.” From the point of view of the integrity of language alone, one may not defend his deliberate use of “condition” by insisting, when “condition” is challenged, that it is after all God who fulfills the condition.⁽⁴⁾

Third, even the explanation that God fulfills the condition in the child fails to rescue the “Liberated” doctrine of the covenant from its teaching that the grace of God depends upon the act of the child. For now it is only asserted that the work of the child upon which the grace of God (the covenant promise) depends is a work that the child is enabled to do by the help of God. But the grace of God still depends upon the work of the child!

I remind Dr. DeJong that also the Roman Catholic Church is willing to acknowledge that the works of the sinner upon which, according to Rome, depends his justification are performed by the sinner with the help of the grace of God. But this in no way relieves Rome of the heresy of teaching that righteousness depends upon the works of man himself.⁽⁵⁾

Fourth, although the “Liberated” are ready to ascribe the fulfilling of the condition to God in controversy, this is strikingly lacking when they are developing and applying their doctrine of the covenant among themselves.

This is seen in the September 15, 1990 issue of *Una Sancta*, magazine of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia. The editor, Rev. C. Bouwman, presents the “Liberated” view of the covenant in an article entitled, “Not Saved by the Covenant.” He writes, “We and our children do not receive the content of the promises God gives in the covenant *unless* (his emphasis – DJE) we answer to the obligation of that covenant.” Editor Bouwman then refers to the covenant demand in the Reformed baptism form, namely, that “we cleave to this one God,” etc., and describes it as “a demand for regeneration, for being born again.” Thus he teaches, as “Liberated” doctrine, that reception of the content of the covenant promise, i.e., salvation, depends upon the baptized child's regenerating himself.⁽⁶⁾ 

The Covenant and the Children of Believers – A Reply²

By J. DeJong

Readers will recall that Engelsma's first charge against the doctrine we defend was that it makes the saving work of God dependent upon the faith and work of the child. The fact that we have insisted that the condition is not to be taken in a *meritorious* sense is of no significance for Engelsma, and he continues to assert that our view of the covenant deviates from Scripture. I will then respond to his reiterated charges at the numbered points.

Radically different?

1. Engelsma insists that our view of the covenant is radically different from that of "Reformed theologians in the past." In his view, the fact that we assert that the promise of God is for *all* the children of believers *necessarily* implies that we make the faith of the child a work on the basis of which the grace of God depends. For Engelsma, one can only say that the faith is a 'condition' or 'means' if one restricts the promise of the covenant to the elect. As soon as one extends the promise of God to all the children, faith is no longer a means, but a cause; no longer a gift of God but a work of man.

This opinion that we necessarily assert the cooperation of man in God's work of salvation has its foundation in the strict logical scheme with which Engelsma approaches both the Canons of Dort and Scripture itself. In this logical scheme, Engelsma contends that only the elect receive faith, and therefore only the elect are called. It is only on the basis of this strict logical scheme that Engelsma is convinced that we compromise the position of Dort.

However, this scheme of thought has been superimposed both on Scripture and the confessions. Basically it represents a scheme in which the Canons of Dort and the teaching of Scripture itself is made subject to the logical categories of human reason. But if one takes Scripture as his guide, then that which Engelsma

asserts *necessarily* must follow does not necessarily follow at all!

It is then entirely contrived to assert that our view is radically different from "Reformed theologians in the past." Which theologians is Engelsma referring to? Our view is not a new invention, but goes right back to the times of the Reformation. The view of Engelsma is a vestige of the period of *scholasticism* in Reformed theology, in which the teachings of Scripture were unduly pressed into rigid logical categories. His is the view radically different from what the early Reformers taught! I may refer here to the introduction to the Dutch State translation.

Does man distinguish himself by his faith?

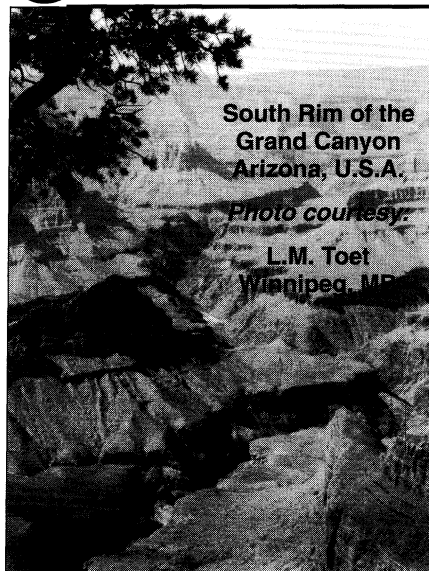
2. Engelsma's additional charge against us is that we assert that man by his act of faith distinguishes himself from

others as a worthy recipient of grace, and that man by his act of faith *makes the offered grace of God effectual* in his soul. On the basis of Engelsma's superimposed logical scheme, our assertion that the promise goes to all the children must also necessarily imply that we make the act of faith one with which the believer distinguishes himself, and with which he makes God's grace effectual in his soul. Engelsma's reasoning is: if all the children receive the promise, but only some of them are saved, then it is their act of faith which determines whether the promise will be effectual in them or not.

Here again Engelsma only compounds his charge against us without offering one shred of evidence. He also illustrates to what extent he lacks a comprehension of our position. Where did I write that man by his act of faith distinguishes himself so as to make himself a worthy recipient of the grace of God? What is this but another doctrine of meritorious faith? And that was exactly the doctrine which I rejected. Essentially I asserted that through Christ the condition is not only restored to us, but also fulfilled for us. For God so works in the hearts of the elect that through His power and grace *alone* the condition is fulfilled.

Here Engelsma's appeal to the Canons of Dort is also entirely misdirected. For our assertion that the promise is given to all the children in no way implies that we make the act of faith, although underserving in itself, into a condition of salvation in a causal sense. Neither does our view imply that we make a distinction between meriting and appropriating in this sense that it depends on the free will of some if they appropriate salvation. The assertion that all the children are included in the covenant simply implies that God uses the means, and incorporates human responsibility into His decree. And the relation between God's electing work and human responsibility cannot be pressed into a logical scheme.

OUR COVER



Not enough?

Still, our denial of *all* merit of man in the work of salvation is not sufficient for Engelsma. Even when we assert that in Christ the condition is not only restored to us but also fulfilled for us, Engelsma insists that this response, too, fails for four reasons. We will consider them briefly.

3. His first reason is: if this is our view it does not differ from that of the PRC. For this means that we teach that God “all along intended the promise for the elect children alone and that God realizes the promise in the elect children alone.” But this is a caricature of our position determined entirely by Engelsma’s superimposed logical scheme of thought. And what Engelsma supposes must follow does not necessarily follow. For God also realizes His covenant will with those who break the covenant. The promise is not to be restricted only to the elect, for that places all the speaking of God in the realm of uncertainty. Although we know that the Church is the elect people of God, we do not know who is elected individually. As the Spirit says through Moses, “The secret things belong to the LORD our God; but the things that are revealed belong to us and our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law.” Deut. 29:29.

4. Engelsma’s second reason is... “this response plays fast and loose with language.” For in his view, condition implies that a certain prerequisite must be fulfilled before the promised good is actually given. But here it is Engelsma and not I that is playing with language. For he restricts the meaning of the word “condition” to a *pre-requisite*, i.e. a condition upon which a matter depends before it takes effect. But any good dictionary will tell him that “condition” can also refer to attending circumstances, and that a certain good is not only given on condition that a requirement is fulfilled, but also may be given *with* the provision that a requirement is fulfilled (See the Oxford Dictionary). Everyone knows that the word “condition” is sometimes used in a broader sense. Engelsma himself (rightly!) points out that many Reformed theologians used it in this broader sense. And if he looks up the Acts of Synod 1954 (pp. 64-68) of his own churches, he will find a report which gives a host of examples proving my point. Why then close one’s eyes to simple facts?

5. The third reason which Engelsma brings forward to dispel my arguments is beating the air. For he feels constrained to remind me that the Roman Catholic Church also teaches that man can only do any work with the help of the grace of God. What? Why am I accused of presenting a

*He is the LORD, our God
unfailing,
His judgments everywhere
prevailing.
He will remember and
uphold
His covenant made in days
of old.
The steadfast words He did
command
A thousand generations
stand.*

PSALM 105:3

Romanist view in disguise? Where did I state in any form that our works are and our faith is a result of our own input and the help of the grace of God? I attributed the *whole work* to the grace of God. Engelsma fails to read what I have written, and consequently only adds to the charges against the Canadian Reformed Churches. Now those whom Engelsma somewhat one-sidedly calls “the Liberated” are said to harbour Roman Catholic teachings in disguise!

6. Then Engelsma comes with a fourth reason, which unfortunately only adds more fuel to his unfounded charges. For he says that the “Liberated” are “strikingly lacking when they are developing and applying their doctrine of the covenant among themselves.” And he quotes from an article by Rev. C. Bouwman of Australia in the paper *Una Sancta*.

Now I have not reproduced all of Engelsma’s references on this point. As far as I am concerned, this kind of argumentation takes the debate beyond the point of

fairness. For here the PR dogmatician decides to leave what I had written and to find his ammunition from a different quarter.

I do not intend to speak for Rev. Bouwman, who is well able to speak for himself. But I think that a few quotations without their context hardly does justice either to what he wrote or to what his main intentions were. But this is not the point. My point is: why does Engelsma not deal with the arguments I brought forward? I think this whole reference only clouds the issues, and is not germane to the discussion.

In sum, Engelsma’s defense of his allegations receives an unproven intensification. When we maintain that salvation is pure grace through God’s sovereign election in Christ, Engelsma cannot accept this from us because of his logical system of reasoning with which he reads us. I think that the reader can see that Engelsma’s charge that our teaching “conflicts with cardinal doctrines of the Word of God” remains unproven. C

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

I wasn't there!

A young member of one of the churches wrote asking why the LORD God holds us responsible for the sin of Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve took and ate the forbidden fruit. We didn't. We weren't even there. It seems unfair to hold us responsible for something we didn't do.

What is at stake here is the question of original sin and how it is imputed (attributed or ascribed) to us. In article 15 of *The Belgic Confession* we confess what we believe about original sin. We say:

We believe that by the disobedience of Adam original sin has spread throughout the whole human race. It is a corruption of the entire nature of man and a hereditary evil which infects even infants in their mother's womb. As a root it produces in man all sorts of sin. It is, therefore, so vile and abominable in the sight of God that it is sufficient to condemn the human race. It is not abolished nor eradicated even by baptism, for sin continually streams forth like water welling up from this woeful source. Yet, in spite of all this, original sin is not imputed to the children of God to their condemnation but by His grace and mercy is forgiven them. This does not mean that the believers may sleep peacefully in their sin, but that the awareness of this corruption may make them often groan as they eagerly wait to be delivered from this body of death....

In order to understand the question of how we can legitimately be held responsible for Adam's sin, we should first understand that Adam was the head or the representative of the whole human race. He acted for us. You can compare it to how the head of a nation acts for the citizens of his country. Imagine our prime minister, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Brian Mulroney, visiting a third world country and offering it financial aid. He might say: "We, the people of Canada, promise to give you twelve million dollars of aid next year." In such a case Mr. Mulroney acts for each citizen of Canada, whether or not we like it. In the same way Adam acted on our behalf, whether or not we

like it. He represented the whole human race when he sinned.

We want to object to that idea. We want to say: "I wasn't there! I wasn't in Paradise! I didn't commit that original sin!" We want to say that, but we shouldn't. For the Bible teaches that as Adam is our representative when it comes to original sin, Jesus Christ is our representative when it comes to salvation. We were not in Paradise – true enough. But neither were we on Golgotha. And yet Christ represented us on Golgotha. We were "in Christ" as he hung, nailed to the cross. In Rom. 5:18,19 the apostle Paul wrote:

Then as one man's trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one man's act of righteousness leads to acquittal and life for all men. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by one man's obedience many will be made righteous.

In 1 Cor. 15:22 Paul wrote: "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive." In the same way as Adam is the head of the human race unto sin and death, so Christ is the head of a *new* human race unto life for all who believe in him.

The Bible teaches that we do share in the guilt of Adam. Because he represented the whole human race when he sinned, we are all guilty of that original sin. However, the great comfort we have is that God sent another Adam, a second Adam, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is our new representative. He is innocent, sinless. Because he now represents all who believe in him, God declares believers *not* guilty.

The Bible also teaches that Adam's sin pollutes us. As Job said in Job 14:4: "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? There is not one." Because Adam and Eve become unclean by the original sin, they could not produce clean (sinless) children. As we confess in article 15 of our confession, the sin of our first parents is a hereditary evil which infects even infants in their mother's womb. Some diseases can be passed on from parents to children. E.g., if a parent has Huntington's disease, each child


has a 50 percent chance of developing the disease as well. The disease called Original Sin is even more virulent. Each child has a 100 percent chance of developing it. Original sin is an evil root which causes each of us to sin our own personal actual sins. Original sin is a woeful source which gushes forth only contaminated water.

But there is good news. Our Lord saves us from our actual sins as well. Not only does he save us from the guilt of sin; he also saves us from the pollution of sin. You see, the Holy Spirit can do something that men and women cannot do. Men and women cannot bring a clean thing out of an unclean (Job 14:4). But the Holy Spirit can, and did! He brought the clean Jesus out of Mary. By faith we are grafted into Jesus Christ. In John 15 the Lord Jesus says that he is the vine and that we are the branches. By faith we become part of him. We become one with Christ. Just like the branches of a vine receive life from the vine itself, so we receive new life from our Lord Jesus. His life flows to us. The holy and perfect life of Jesus Christ flows towards us and through us. The Holy Spirit makes this happen. We can only have it by faith.

There is bad news and there is good news:

First, Adam was our representative when he sinned. We are guilty of his sin. But Jesus Christ was our representative when he was perfectly obedient. We are innocent in him.

Second, the sin of Adam pollutes us. It turns us into sinners. But, by faith, we are grafted into Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ begins a process of sanctification in us. The Spirit makes us begin to hate our sin and to love serving God in obedience.

And he makes us look forward to the day when Christ shall deliver us forever from the ugly chains of sin. 

CORRECTION

The article *More and More* in Volume 40, No. 20 was not written by G.Ph. van Popta but by R. Schouten.



When one travels and visits several congregations, there is the opportunity to renew acquaintances, to meet again brothers and sisters one did not see for a long time. There is also the opportunity to renew the request for bulletins. Having picked up a few here and there, I may also report that the request for resumption of sending them has borne fruit. Our readers may benefit from this in future medleys.

There are other surprises and pleasant experiences as well and sometimes more is being picked up than bulletins. About this, however, I'll make some remarks under a separate heading. Neither book review nor evaluation of cassettes belongs in a medley. Thus we proceed to news from the churches.

We start in the east.

The Grand Rapids bulletin told us that "Rev. Kingma has returned from some days with members of the house congregation in Boulder, Colorado. Rev. Kingma and Rev. Stam served to advise the Rev. Pollock and members of this congregation as to matters relating to affiliation with the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. This house congregation, the Lord willing, shall be instituted this Lord's Day; they thus seek to present themselves to the next Classis of Ontario South with a view to affiliation with our federation of Churches."

From the Watford bulletin we glean the following: "Because a number of things had to be cleared up first, such as, whether this church should affiliate with Classis Ontario South or Classis Alberta/Manitoba, classis deemed it wise to appoint a two-member committee to investigate not only the legitimacy and feasibility of this request, but also the proper processing of it."

I am happy with this classical decision. Although it is quite understandable that, with a view to previous contacts with Grand Rapids, a request for affiliation is directed to the region to which the Grand Rapids church belongs, one look at the map shows us that Boulder, Colorado lies almost due south from Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Thus it appears to be much more logical that affiliation is sought with the churches in Alberta/Manitoba. We'll see what the committee comes up with.

Another point that draws our attention here is the term "house congregation." Gradually this term seems to receive some legitimacy among us as if it were a firm and accepted concept. There is, however, no substance to this idea. Sometimes one could read that a group, meeting at a remote place for worship purposes, was granted "the status of house congregation." Whatever this expression may be supposed to entail, the whole expression as such is wrong. We do not have any ecclesiastical "body" of that nature and consequently it cannot be granted any official status either.

Contacts with others are being maintained in various places. In Ancaster, the "clerk is requested to draft a letter that is to be sent to the Independent Reformed Church of Sheffield, Ontario, a congregation which broke away from the Christian Reformed Church quite recently. The purpose of this contact is to seek and promote the unity of all believers."

Contacts with others are also being maintained in Ottawa, Calgary, Houston, and other places. Ottawa, as was mentioned before, did (does?) have contact with the Eglise Reformee du Quebec. Now I read in the Burlington South bulletin: "A report is presented regarding the Reformed

Church of Quebec (est. 1988) which has requested financial support for its congregations, of which there are eight in Quebec and one in Ottawa. Through the Canadian Reformed Church at Ottawa support could be given. This report is received for information and will be reviewed in the context of the 1992 collection schedule."

I find this a strange thing. Surely, there was some contact with the Ottawa church and Rev. VanPopta wrote about it, but we do not have any official ties with those churches. Why, then, should we extend support? I also receive requests from the Salvation Army and other very worthwhile causes, but as long as there is no official bond, I think we should not be bothered with requests for financial support. What "bugs" me most is that, as soon as our name is known to people or groups we receive a request for financial support, as if the churches were an easily-milked cow that is always prepared to give more. Are those outside aware of the burdens our people are carrying? Let me mention something, and let us then ask those who come with requests for support whether they are making the same sacrifices. If they can match this, they may come back.

I do not know how much each family is contributing for the maintenance of the ministry of the Gospel, but when I look at the budgets and financial statements that are often enclosed with the bulletins, I come to a respectable amount. It appears to me that an average of some twelve hundred dollars per year is not too high an estimate.

Then there are the schools. Of one congregation I know that parents whose children are attending just the elementary division pay a tuition fee of over five thousand dollars per year. And the Lincoln bulletin makes it known that "the cost of sending your children to both Christian schools (=elementary and high schools, VO) is \$700 per month." This amounts to over eight thousand dollars per year. Lincoln was right when adding: "The cost of not sending them is even higher." Absolutely correct. In the meantime, however, the money has to be there, and it is good when we pay attention to this. We should be very careful with adding to the burdens and do so only when it is necessary. If a church within the federation needs support, let's give it by all means. It is our "sisterly" obligation. But if others approach us with a complete package, including financial support, I am very wary of such a request. After all, the total number of members within our federation is only about thirteen thousand.

We were quoting from Burlington South's bulletin. Let's stay there for a few moments. The consistory "decided to advise the church at Burlington East to discontinue our involvement in the Dutch services." These services are still organized, as far as I know. We can sympathize with the difficulty of some of our elderly members whose command of the English language is disappearing slowly, but, on the other hand, we should not overlook the possibilities there are. I am thinking here of the Luisterpost (address can be found in Year-book), which every year receives hundreds of new cassettes with complete services recorded on them. In addition to these tapes, there are cassettes with choir performances, concerts, and so on. Our consistories receive a new catalogue every year and I am afraid that the membership is not sufficient-

ly aware of what is available. If someone cannot pay, there is no charge: everyone donates what he is able to give. I am aware of it that also the possibility of video-cassettes containing recordings of worship services is being investigated. The difficulty is that in the Netherlands there is a different system of recording and that video cassettes from there can not be played on our equipment. In the meantime, there are possibilities also today.

In Fergus the "Videotaping of services (is) looked into — cost — camera and lights — approximately \$3,000.00." These services are in English, of course, but members who are ill or cannot attend the services for another valid reason will be happy that they can follow them in this manner. There are also possibilities for cable broadcasting, so that others are reached, too.

Nearby Elora has purchased a church building. "In all this the committee has been kept busy. They have as well videotaped the building at its old location and plan to tape more as we go along." They were not counting on a setback: "Regarding the moving of our building, the mover was not granted a permit for the two centre sections of the building as these are too high. These two sections will have to be taken apart and set up again on site." When we drove past it, we saw that the site was being prepared and by now the building will be resting on its new foundation, we're sure.

I was not happy with the expression "membership transfer received," that I saw in the consistory report. We do not know of a "membership transfer" and should not introduce such terms either. They can so easily lead to wrong practices.

For the encouragement of sisters in other congregations we mention that the Ladies' Aid of Grand Valley exclaimed: "We have just received word that we have been accepted as a fundraising group under the Third Sector Marketing Incorporated. Therefore, we have just sent out our first refund claim." It was a modest beginning: it was for just \$50.00, but the beginning is there.

Let's return to Ancaster for a moment. "The building committee reports on its investigation of alternate building sites. Since nothing suitable has been found, the committee will continue its efforts to obtain permission to build on the Shaver Road property."

In Brampton the Committee of Administration "recommended to rent out the parsonage at this time and look into building a manse behind the church."

The Brampton consistory also adopted the recommendation to set "\$0.25 per k.m. for travel expenses for visiting ministers." This decision is to be applauded. It is customary among us to give remuneration for conducting the worship services, but there is a serious inequality in this respect. If all ministers came from next-door, just the amount set for remuneration would do. Travelling expenses would then not have to be taken into account. But it is unfair towards ministers who have to travel a total of 160 or 200 kilometers back and forth not to remunerate them for the "kilometerage," and to give them just the same remuneration the next-door minister receives. For this reason Brampton's decision appears fair and should be followed by every consistory. Otherwise, I am afraid, ministers will tend to stay close to home on Sundays, since they have to carry the cost of travelling farther away themselves. They may not say so openly, but let me say it then for them.

When a congregation is smaller, this has its advantages. Not everywhere will it be possible to do what Ottawa is doing. "At the last consistory meeting we talked about ways in which we could improve the functioning of our communion. The consistory supported a proposal to institute "Midweek Fellow-

ship." Midweek Fellowship will meet every other Wednesday evening starting Wednesday September 25, 8 p.m.... We plan to do some coffee drinking and chatting as well as some learning, e.g. I have a number of cassette tapes on various topics to which we could listen."

Herewith we take leave of Ontario and move on to Winnipeg. "A letter from Carman requesting a combined church directory." This is the sequence to negotiations to come to a combined bulletin. There are strong bonds between Carman and Winnipeg, there are also many family-relations and this works in favour of combining both bulletin and directory.

In the same matter we quote from Carman's bulletin: "Letter from the Church at Winnipeg with a request to investigate the possibility of a joint bi-weekly bulletin for both congregations. The consistory decides in favour in principle."

"It was mentioned just a few months ago that a member in the Church at Winnipeg benefitted from the action that was previously taken concerning labour unions. A number of members in our congregation who have taken up nursing were recently granted the same freedom from joining and supporting the labour union."

Chilliwack, too, had a joyful announcement. A sister belonging to that congregation also took up nursing. She, too, received her exemption. "Although it was feared that it might be a difficult hearing, hotly contested by the union, instead everything went quite easily and the exemption given very quickly." Labour laws differ, it was stated, and "in B.C. the labour law is not concerned about the stand of your church, but they are concerned about your own personal convictions. Therefore it is important for everyone who becomes involved in a workplace where there is a union, to take an immediate and consistent stand against the union."

We are not yet through with the Prairie Provinces. We now turn to Alberta.

"You will be happy to know," we read, "that the letter sent by our church requesting help from the sister churches with respect to our Building Fund has so far resulted in donations of \$1,000.00! Also, several churches have promised to hold a collection in the near future. And many churches have not yet indicated a response."

A later bulletin told us that "The Building Fund began the year with \$8,252.00 in the Bank." In response to the letter to the churches "over \$1,000.00 was received in August, and more than \$1,000.00 in September (bringing our Fund to nearly \$14,000.00!...Maybe \$20,000 by the end of 1991 is not unrealistic."

The above two quotations are from the Calgary bulletin, as attentive readers may already have understood.

Coaldale has been without a church building since they sold theirs. They are meeting at present in the school auditorium. Meanwhile they have been busy with trying to have the property registered in the name of the church and to receive building permits. No fewer than four parties had to sign the subdivision plan before it could become effective. "Acquisition of the land is reaching its conclusion. Separation of title should be complete very soon and purchase of the property and registration for our use should be complete in the next two weeks."

The lowest bid for building the church building was \$200,00 above the budget. "The contractor who submitted this bid was contacted to see what can be done to bring down the price of the building." Reports from the Netherlands show that "the organ should be ready to be installed by April 1992." Hopefully not under an open roof.

At the consistory meeting "a discussion was held whether the prayers by the consistory before and after the worship services still have a meaningful place or should be abolished. It

is decided to give this matter further thought and not to make changes at this time."

The consistory also decided "to discontinue the singing of the alternate melody of Hymn 1A before the worship services because, after several trials, there is an increasingly negative response from the congregation."

Nearby Taber has its congregational singing still accompanied on the piano. This will change within the foreseeable future, for the consistory decided to authorize the committee of administration to purchase an organ for \$9,900.00.

The Houston church built a new manse, and the Slomp family moved in on September 10. It will have been a pleasure after residing in a temporary shelter.

Port Kells has been trying to find suitable property for a meeting place of their own, but thus far they have not been successful.

In Vernon, on the other hand, the "Roof is roofed, allowing the various subtrades to do their part." The consistory received "an offer from a lighting company in the Fraser Valley to donate all the needed light fixtures, etc. for the new building. This is gratefully accepted." Who would not!

The Vernon consistory also conveyed its heartfelt gratitude to all the visitors who donated liberally to the building fund during this past summer. As not all visitors who did so will have come from the Fraser Valley, we gladly pass this item from the *Church News* on to our readership in general.

The overcrowding of Langley's church building has resulted in the decision to split the congregation into two wards and to institute four services per Sunday, the two wards alternating every month between 9 and 2, and 11 and 4. We are wondering how long this will last.

An item in the Abbotsford consistory report made my eyes bulge with amazement. I simply could not believe what I saw. "The Church at Lincoln ON, informs us that our letter to Synod-Lincoln 1992 re: Art.160, Synod-Winnipeg, will not be put on the synodical agenda because it was deemed inadmissible. In the opinion of council, making a decision with regard to the admissibility of letters to Synod is not the matter of the convening church, but should be left to Synod itself. A letter will be sent stating as much."

Of course, it is up to synod itself to decide whether a letter is admissible or not, and this upon due consideration. A convening church is not more than a collection agency for matters sent for synod. It may organize the incoming mail by topic, but it is not more than a preparatory body which is to facilitate the work of the coming synod. I cannot understand this hierarchical decision by a convening church. It would be the same as when my mailman should decide not to deliver a letter addressed to me, because he was of the opinion that I should not receive it. Sometimes I wished he would do so with all the junkmail I get, especially the requests for financial support that abound because my name and address seems to be known to a wide circle of worthwhile causes.

What was being rumoured about for a long time has become an official fact: The Rev. M. VanderWel is going to retire by December 31, 1991. It was officially announced in the *Church News*, and this means that there will be another vacancy by the first of next year.

New vacancies will also be "created" by the institution of more churches. This is an ongoing matter not only in Canada but also in Australia.

Our readers will be familiar with the name Rockingham, at present a section of the Byford church. The Rockingham membership has grown in the meantime and now numbers one hundred. No wonder that "contact has been made with the Lands Department in view of land for church and manse." We

have no news about Bunbury, but this most likely will be the next place.

Also in the Armadale area, however, something seems to be going on. "From two members of the congregation — a suggestion relating to church boundaries and possible institution of a new congregation. To be passed on to the Church Development Committee. The brothers will be advised to canvass this matter among members in their area."

The Armadale consistory also received "comments on proposed alternative melody for the Apostles' Creed. A preference is expressed for the melody presently in the *Book of Praise*. Comments received are forwarded to the Deputies for the *Book of Praise* along with a melody proposal originating from a brother of our congregation."

I do not quite understand the last few words: "a melody proposal." It definitely is not so that either the rhymings or the melodies in our *Book of Praise* are subject to periodical revision or change. Neither our Deputies nor our general synods should be bothered every time anew with suggestions for change. It is of utmost importance that both older and younger church members become thoroughly familiar with both the melodies and the words of our *Book of Praise*. Constant changes do not promote but rather hinder such becoming familiar. Unless there is compelling reason to bring about a change in either the melody or the wording, we should declare any proposals to that effect inadmissible. Such "declaring inadmissible" should, of course, be done by the general synod and not even by the Committee for the Book of Praise!

This past summer we were in the Netherlands for about three weeks. They have a Psalter that is completely different from the one we were used to some forty years ago. Honestly, we did sing along with the congregation, but the words did not "speak" to us. In fact, they meant little to us as they were totally unfamiliar and the language had changed considerably. We should prevent something like that from happening among us. During all the years our definitive Book of Praise has been used I have never heard any substantial objection to either melody or contents, just preferences and wishes. These are not sufficient reasons for the churches to bring about changes. There will always be differences of opinion and of evaluation, but we can live with that. Regular changes, however, prevent the membership from "appropriating" the contents of our Psalmbook. Ask the parents how frustrating the previous (necessary) changes were when their children had memorized the first or second rhymings!

The Australian churches are pondering which direction to choose with respect to the mission work. Our readers know that they had a missionary in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. The Rev. Koelewijn had to return to the Netherlands for health reasons. In the meantime the situation has changed. A church has been instituted in Port Moresby, and we cannot speak of mission work in that region. For this reason the Australian churches have come to the conclusion that the character of the work they are doing in Papua New Guinea has to change. From "mission work" it has to become "support work," support namely given to an autonomous church. It is clear that the brothers and sisters in the Reformed Church of Port Moresby do need help for the upbuilding of their church life and more specifically for the training of indigenous ministers.

All the churches agreed with Albany's proposal "that the Australian churches recognize that the work in Port Moresby has entered a final stage, which is characterized by offering support to an autonomous church." The support work will have to have as "its aim that this newly instituted church should in every way become independent and self-reliant." They will have to look elsewhere for the fulfilment of their missionary task.

In addition to this, I was very surprised to receive an envelope from Papua New Guinea with a letter from the consistory and two church bulletins. The letter gave some information about the church and the work that is being done in the congregation. And in the bulletins the congregation is

being instructed in the Reformed doctrine. For the instruction of the young people they are using I Belong by Dr. J. Visscher.

Although our readers will be somewhat familiar with the situation from what we mentioned before, it might be good to quote a few lines from the letter.

"We are sending you a copy of our Church's Bulletin (the Reformed Church of Papua New Guinea) as a means of information to you and the other brothers and sisters in Christ of the Canadian Reformed Church. As an information for your acknowledgement, the Reformed Church of P.N.G. has been formed by the West Papuan Refugees (i.e. Formerly a colony of the Kingdom of the Netherlands) who have been granted political asylum by the government of Papua New Guinea. This is the first time that the Reformed Church is established here in P.N.G."

The brothers promised that they would continue to send their bulletin so that we may be able to keep abreast of the developments there and also can remember them in our prayers. Thus far the contents of the bulletins is impressive. The title of their bulletin is Syaloom.

The brothers are very active. A "Reformed School Association" was formed already with an organizing committee. And "The congregation may also be pleased to hear that our proposal to have a Reformed Pre-School for our children

here in Port Moresby is now being considered by the Free Reformed Education Committee in Albany, W.A."

Attention is also given to possibilities in the border camps, those are camps along the border with Irian Jaya. "A number of Irian Jayanese refugees, with a considerable Reformed background, live in these camps, and have set up a church committee under the leadership of a.o. John Wafumelena. The Reformed relief organization ZOA has also had a presence in these camps."

Another group of Reformed believers are "holding services every Sunday up on the Koiari mountains." Although this last-mentioned locality will not mean much to us, we take grateful note of the development as such and the attention paid to it.

The bulletins are in English, which is one of the official languages of Papua New Guinea. We are certain that our readers will want to hear more about the church there in the future.

For this time, however, we have to come to a close. At our meeting of the editorial committee that we had a few weeks ago it was remarked that the news medley sometimes is too long, and should cover not more than two pages in all. It was just a remark, not a decision that I should cut it down to smaller size. I'll do my best to make it shorter, but this time I had quite a few bulletins to read through and quite a few points to pay attention to. If it is too long for one issue, I am certain our editor will advise the publisher to divide it over two issues. Once I am chatting with my readers it is difficult to break it off. Now, however, I am going to do it, wishing you a very fond good evening.

VO 

Farewell Evening for Rev. and Mrs. P. Kingma

On May 28, 1991, the congregation at Grand Rapids commemorated the 35 years of faithful service of their minister, Rev. P. Kingma. He and his wife had laboured in the service of their LORD with in the congregation of Grand Rapids for the past 13 years, from which he may now retire as an active minister.

The evening was opened by the chairman of the consistory, br. M. Verhey Sr. We were invited to sing Psalm 108:1, 2. The chairman then read from the same Psalm, following this with prayer. He extended a welcome on behalf of the consistory of Grand Rapids to all those present, and especially to members of

the Kingma family, and friends from our sister churches in Canada.

On behalf of the consistory of Grand Rapids, the chairman thanked the LORD for the years of faithful service, noting that this had not been without difficulties, especially in the past several years of service. But, the chairman continued, the minister as well as the consistory recognized and confessed that the LORD gave the necessary strength to have maintained the workload. In addition to the regular congregational work, the Ministry-at-Large Project required that the minister maintain contacts with those who had expressed interest in the Reformed faith,



On October 17, 1991, Rev. and Mrs. P. Kingma hope to celebrate their 35th Wedding Anniversary. We wish to take this opportunity to congratulate them on this milestone in their lives.



A gift from the children's choir of the American Reformed School — a book about Michigan

and had sought the help of the American Reformed Church and its minister.

The chairman noted that some correspondence had been received regarding the retirement of Rev. Kingma. The chairman and br. J. Kooistra then read letters of congratulations from various sister churches, among which was one from the congregation in which Rev. Kingma first served, Noord Bergum, the Netherlands. Present were delegates and visitors from Carman, Chatham, London, Fergus/Guelph, and Attercliffe (Smithville), many of which in turn briefly related a word of congratulations.

The children's choir of the American Reformed School next sang a number of brief biblical songs, after which they presented to Rev. and Mrs. Kingma a gift book of Michigan. Following this, br. H. Kooistra, on behalf of the Board of the American Reformed School Association made some remarks, especially noting with gratitude the dedication shown by Rev. Kingma for his active participation in support of, and teaching in, the School.

The next item on the program was the presentation of gifts from the congregation at Grand Rapids. These included a photo album containing pictures of all families and members of the congregation. A gift in the form of a cheque was as well given to the Kingmas, with an ac-



A presentation from the congregation

companying note stipulating three suggested uses for the money, among which was a trip to the Netherlands.

Following this, the Ladies Society "Forward in Faith" reflected in song on

the various stops on the way of Rev. Kingma's journey from his days in the Theological College in Kampen to the present in Grand Rapids. On a lighter tone, the Young People's Society "Bea-



The Ladies Society — the Kingma's journey in song

con Light" performed a number of humorous skits. Finally, the extended Kingma family presented a skit centered

on the theme: a Saturday night and Sunday at the Kingma residence.

The adult choir concluded the

evening with a number of selections, including, "The LORD Bless You and Keep You." The chairman of the consistory then permitted Rev. Kingma to "have the last word." Rev. Kingma thanked everyone present for the words spoken, and offered some reflection on the past 13 years as minister in Grand Rapids. He expressed gratitude to the LORD, who had upheld him in his calling as minister of the Word of God, and he acknowledged the faithful support of his wife throughout his ministry. He encouraged the congregation to stand firm in the faith. The program was concluded with the singing of Hymn 65:1, 2 and prayer. After the program, all were invited to enjoy refreshments in the school building for some time of fellowship.

A Member of the Congregation



Credo Christian High School Graduation '91

Another important milestone in the life of 41 graduating students from Credo Christian High School was celebrated on June 25, 1991 at Central Heights Menonite Church in Abbotsford, B.C.

A capacity crowd of over 1200 parents and community supporters came to witness this most joyous event. On behalf of the students, Caroline Aikema welcomed all those in attendance.

In his opening remarks Mr. E. Vanderboom, principal, reminded the students of the theme text that had been chosen for that school year.

"Make me to know Thy ways O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy truth, and teach me, for Thou art the God of my salvation; for Thee I wait all the day long. (Psalm 25:4,5)"

He went on to illustrate that their "days in Christian schools during the past 12 years have been characterized by the show and tell of Psalm 25." The Bible may contain all the ultimate answers of life and yet we see through a glass darkly and therefore the "show me" of Psalm 25 needs to be



Principal E. Vanderboom speaking to the graduates

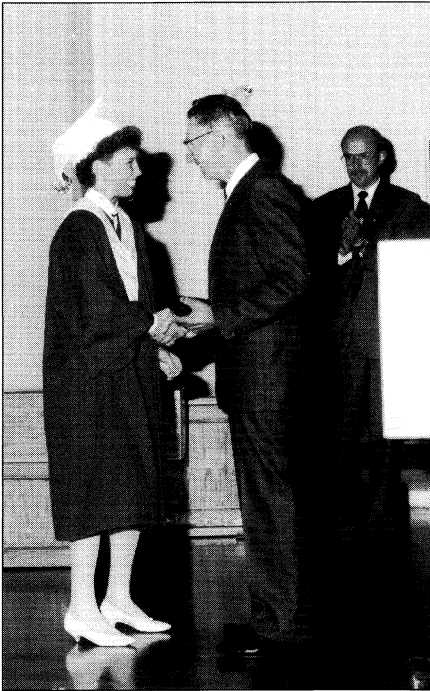
continually nurtured. To that end the parents and teachers have tried to provide the tools of critical thinking by which to test the spirits. And, while the formal schooling at Credo is complete, the lifelong daily struggle in learning to walk with the Lord continues. Students, parents and teachers were reminded that "He who began a good work in you is faithful to complete it."

Rev. J. Visscher addressed the students on behalf of the parents. He urged the students to "look back and be thankful, to look forward and be resolute and to work upward and to be fearful."

The diplomas and board presentations were presented by Mr. Vanderboom and Mr. VanLaar (chairman). A brief introduction to each student was provided by Mr. H. Moes. Senior teachers Mr. S. Koat and Mr. W. Schon read an appropriate text for each student as they proceeded to receive their diplomas.

The students responded by singing "Thank You Lord" (written by student Ron Koning) after which the valedictorian Phil Van Dyke carried the audience through a historical journey. This was followed by another grad song "Pray For Me."

The scholarships and awards granted to this year's graduates were in excess of \$35,000. The Governor General's Bronze Academic Medal was presented by Mr. Jacob Vanderhorst ("pioneer" in Christian Education in the Fraser Valley) and was given to Andria Vanderpol for achieving the



Andria Vanderpol receives the Governor General's Bronze Academic Medal from Mr. J. Vanderhorst

highest academic standing in the graduating class.

Graduation is surely a calendar highlight and as the final number sounded forth, those in attendance couldn't help but express their deepest gratitude to God who enables us to continue to teach and learn about His world and His work.

We praise Thee, O God, our Redeemer, Creator;
 In grateful devotion our tribute we bring.
 We lay it before Thee, we kneel and adore Thee;
 We bless Thy holy Name, glad praises we sing.

Hymn 59:1
 An Observer.

From the parents...

It gives me great pleasure to be able to say a few words to you graduates on behalf of the parents. But what shall I say? "Oh, oh, here comes a sermon," you say. No, maybe a sermonette, although I am under strict instructions to keep it short. A hard thing to do! In any case, there are basically three things that I want to say to you this evening – three things that point to three different directions.

The first direction is revealed in the words LOOK BACK. What do you see when you do that? Is it not so that then as graduates, you see 12 years of education, for many of you 12 years of **Christian** education, and for some of you even 12 years **together** as classmates. During these

years you have learned much, grown a great deal, done a wide variety of things together. It has been like a moving sidewalk of differing experiences.

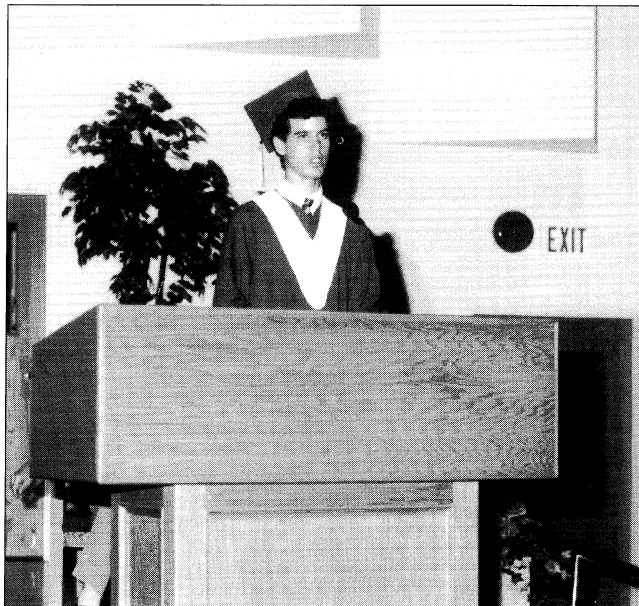
But much of that is coming to an end tonight. You will still see each other from time to time, some more than others. Only now life will begin to take you into different directions and occupations and places. Tonight is therefore a night to reminisce and to look back. Only as you do so, it is our hope as parents that your dominant mood will not be one of sadness, even nostalgia, but of thankfulness: thankfulness for all the years together, for all the shared events, for all the discoveries and highlights.

I may tell you that as parents we are thankful. We are thankful to the Lord for entrusting you to our love and care. We are thankful that He has made it possible for you to receive a Christ-centered education. We are thankful for the teachers who have helped to teach you and shape you. Their dedication and devotion has warmed our hearts. Finally, we are also thankful for the fact that you have gotten along so well together as a class. You have always cared for each other and helped each other. You have been a class that can serve as an example to those who follow you. Of course, you have your faults too. My, my, can you ever socialize! And my, my, can you ever talk! But tonight all is forgiven and forgotten.

that as the years go by you will come to appreciate more and more where you have been and what you have learned and who has taught you. Be thankful to God for your blessings – we are!

The second direction is revealed in the words LOOK FORWARD. In the coming days and weeks you will be heading towards different colleges and working places. You will enter a new stage of life. You are standing on the threshold of adulthood with all of its choices and demands. More and more of you will be going off on your own. The family dwelling will become less of a nest and more of a launching pad. A time of great transition is coming.

What advice shall we give you as parents? Perhaps this one piece of advice will suffice, namely **be resolute**. What does that mean? It means that you are to take your talents and continue to develop them to the fullest. God demands responsible stewardship from us, and that applies not just to our handling of material things, but also to the handling of ourselves, our talents, our abilities, our gifts. He has made us. He has blessed us. He has instructed us. And He expects us to use His blessings to the fullest. Half-measures simply will not do. Laziness is out. Selfishness is sin. Self-centeredness is heresy. You have all been given something by Him and He wants you to run with it. If you have received the gift for teach-



Valedictorian address by Philip Van Dyke

In any case, we trust that each of you will be able to look back over the years spent at Credo with **thankfulness**. Maybe at this moment you are relieved that high school is over and that it is on to bigger things. Nevertheless, bigger is not necessarily better, as you will find out. I am sure

ing, then develop it. If you have received gifts for being a housewife, then may you receive the opportunity to develop them. If you have gifts for doctoring or accounting or designing or nursing or building, then make the most of them. Whatever it be, work on it with determination.



The graduating class of Credo Christian High School '91 front row (l to r): Julia Byl, Alice Blom, Roland Klos, Caroline Aikema, Ken Schouten, Kelli Veldman, Yolanda VanEgmond; second row: Nicole deHaas, Belinda Bergsma, Jacqui Vandergugten, Jerome Lengkeek, Mike deHaas, Sean Vanderpol, James Bredenhof, Christine Kleefman, Andria Vanderpol, Sylvia Admiraal; third row: Pauline VanDriel, Patricia Howard, Erika Veldman, Ronald Koning, William Smit, Harold Dykstra, Geoff Hoogstra, Perry Kruithof, Derrick deBoer, Chandra Meerstra, Debbie Visscher, Tara VanGorkum; fourth row: Monica Werkman, Joanne Flokstra, Mike Tiessen, Philip VanDyke, Paul Super, Matthew Jagersma, Jeff Bontkes, Randell Jansen, Joss deRaadt, Darren Geurts, Jennefer Blanken, Elaine Flokstra.

In God's world there are many different occupations, but no higher and lower ones. We all have a calling. We all have a duty to discover and to develop and to demonstrate our gifts. As parents our basic concern is not, "How much money will our children make in the future? What sort of positions will they have? What kind of power will they wield? What type of car or house or wardrobe will they own?" It is, and it should be, "what are they doing with their God-given talents? Developing them or squandering them?" Our desire is that you may do the former. Take what God has given you and be the best that you can be. Do not settle for second best.

In short, as you go forward in life be resolute. Strive for excellence. Avoid mediocrity.

The third direction is revealed in the words LOOK UPWARD. As you look back today and move forward tomorrow, do not forget to look up as well. Too many people in this world are horizontalists and that ultimately makes them materialists and hedonists. You, however, have a calling to be verticalists as well. Why? Because you

only see God on His throne if you look up, if you raise your eyes, if you set your sights higher. And you need to do that. For God is the source of it all, your life, your future, your success, your happiness. He, through Jesus Christ, has claimed you as His children and He calls upon you to do everything and to be everything that conforms to His will.

Excuse me for saying it, but youth has a certain arrogance and bravado about it. A young man or young woman has very little idea of the quickness of life, very little tolerance for failures in life, very little understanding for the frailty of life. You are at an age when you have a natural tendency to think that you do not need anyone. You can do it. You will fix it. You will make it happen. You have within you all the resources you need to be a smashing success. Nevertheless, as parents we would warn you about these natural biases. In spite of what you may feel or think, you do need God's help, God's guidance, God's care, God's Word. You need Him constantly!

You need a healthy and continuous dose of **fear** in your life. To say it in words

that are part of your graduation text, "fear the LORD." "Fear" – it is a common word but for many people it is a disabling word. They are fearful of this and of that, of this idea and of that trend. Some people's lives are governed by fear. But that is not what the Bible means by "fear." There it is not a disabling word but an enabling one. "Fear" means showing loving reverence for God. "Fear" means submitting to His Lordship. "Fear" means obeying His will. "Fear" means confidence in His ways. It is all positive, constructive, life-enriching and life-consuming. As Eccl. 12:13b puts it, "Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man."

Therefore, graduates, as you continue on your life's journey, look back and be thankful, look forward and be resolute, look upward and be fearful.

Rev. J. Visscher

Update on scholarships and awards...

The class of '91 exceeded the expectations of parents, teachers, and perhaps

even students in securing scholarships and awards.

Over \$9,000 was awarded through the provincial Passport to Education program.

In addition, District Scholarships and Awards valued at \$1000 each were awarded to Alice Blom and Jerome Lengkeek. Three students (Harold Dykstra, Philip Van Dyke, Andria Vanderpol) were recipients of Provincial Scholarships (\$1000 each) for placing in the top three percent of the province. Two President's Entrance Scholarships were awarded:

- \$9,000 to Andria Vanderpol – Trinity Western University
- \$10,000 to Philip Van Dyke – Simon Fraser University

The Fraser Valley Scholarship Foundation announced the winners of \$6000 presented to this year's grads (Sylvia Admiraal – \$450, Philip Van Dyke – \$600, and Andria Vanderpol – \$800) and others who previously graduated – \$4150.

Other scholarships and awards were made available through various community support programs:



Julia Byl receives the McCallum/McIntyre Scholarship from Mr. Allan McCallum. Mr. J. VanLaar (board chairman) and the graduating class are seen in the background

- Fort Langley/Aldergrove Social Credit Constituency Scholarship – \$200...presented to William Smit
- First Heritage Savings Credit Union Scholarship – \$800...presented to Harold Dykstra

- Kwantlen College Entrance Scholarship – \$1000...presented to Chandra Meerstra
- Staff Bursary – \$450...presented to Harold Dykstra
- Science Council of B.C. Award presented to Harold Dykstra
- School Board Technical Award – \$200...presented to Derrick DeBoer
- McCallum/McIntyre Scholarship – \$500...presented to Julia Byl

The final award presented by Mr. J. Vanderhorst was the Governor General's Bronze Academic Medal for the student who achieved the highest academic standing. This year's recipient was Andria Vanderpol.

As a school community we have so much to be thankful for. Not only have we been blessed with the financial means to do our daily work but more than ever we are seeing young men and women express an interest and desire to use their God-given talents through post-secondary studies.

To God be the glory!

Mr. H. Moes



PRESS RELEASES



Classis Ontario North of September 13, 1991 at the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church building in Burlington East.

1. Rev. den Hollander of the convening church of Orangeville opens the meeting in the Christian manner.
2. Classis is constituted with the following officers: Reverends P.G. Feenstra as chairman; P. Aasman as vice-chairman; W. den Hollander as clerk.
3. With regard to memorabilia, the chairman notes that the vacancy in Burlington East has been filled by Rev. Nederveen, and vacancies have been created by Rev. Nederveen's departure from Brampton and by Rev. Mulder's retirement. The chairman commends these and the other vacant churches in the classical region to the Lord's care. Since this classical meeting is now being held in the Burlington East church building, he expresses gratitude for the good service rendered at classical meetings in past years by the church at Burlington West.
4. The Agenda is established.
5. Classis receives the following correspondence:
 - i. from the Committee of Needy Churches. Classis decides to support the churches at Ottawa, Lower Sackville and Elora (should they receive a minister), and to assess the churches at \$28.70 per communicant member;
 - ii. from several members of the church at Burlington South supporting the appeal of a member (see #6).
6. A member appeals a decision of the church at Burlington South to re-open the discussion regarding the possibility of women voting at congregational meetings. This appeal is denied since this member does not prove that the decision of the consistory was in conflict with the Word of God, the Confessions of the Church or the Church Order.
7. Classis received the following reports:
 - i. from the church for Financial Aid to Students for the Ministry. This fund has remained inactive over the past year;
 - ii. of an audit on the books of the Fund for Needy Churches indicating that the books are in good order;
 - iii. on visitations to the churches at Guelph and Orangeville.
8. The question period according to Art. 44 C.O. reveals that the judgment and help of the Classis is needed. The church at Orangeville indicates that the house congregation in Chatsworth is growing to the extent that it has become desirable to elect an elder from their own midst to serve in this congregation. Classis is gladdened by this news and encourages the consistory of Orangeville in this matter. Two churches request advice in matters of discipline.
9. Classis grants the request of Burlington West to appoint Rev. Mulder as their Counsellor. Burlington West also requests to be relieved of the task of maintaining the archives and to charge the church at Burlington East with this task. This is also granted.
10. The following appointments are made:

- i. for the next classical meeting, the date is set for December 13, 1991, with Ottawa as the convening church. The suggested officers are: Pastor Gleason as chairman: Rev. den Hollander as vice-chairman and Rev. Feenstra as clerk;
- ii. the committee for examining candidates for the ministry of the gospel:
 - Coordinator – Rev. Feenstra
 - Exegesis OT – Rev. Huijgen
 - Exegesis NT – Rev. Aasman
 - Doctrine and Creeds – Rev. Gleason
 - Knowledge of Scriptures – Rev. Feenstra
 - Church History – Rev. VanPopta
 - Ethics – Rev. Gleason
 - Church Polity – Rev. Nederveen
 - Diaconology – Rev. den Hollander
- iii. church visitations:
 - Brampton:
 - P. Aasman, R.N. Gleason
 - Burlington East:
 - R.N. Gleason, P. Aasman
 - Burlington South:
 - J. Huijgen, W. den Hollander
 - Burlington West:
 - W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra

- Elora:
 - P. Aasman, W. den Hollander
- Fergus:
 - W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra
- Grand Valley:
 - J. Huijgen, B. Nederveen
- Guelph:
 - R.N. Gleason, G.Ph. VanPopta
- Lower Sackville:
 - G. Nederveen, G.Ph. VanPopta
- Orangeville:
 - P.G. Feenstra, J. Huijgen
- Ottawa:
 - W. den Hollander, R.N. Gleason
- Toronto:
 - P.G. Feenstra, B. Nederveen
- church for taking care of the archives: Burlington East;
- v. church for inspecting the archives: Burlington South;
- vi. classical treasurer: br. J.J. Poort;
- vii. church to audit the books of the classical treasurer: Burlington West;
- viii. church for financial aid to the students for the ministry: Guelph;
- ix. church to audit the books of the fund for financial aid to students: Fergus;
- x. Committee for Needy Churches: brothers J. Kottelenberg; G. Lodder and J. VanBodegem;

- xi. church to audit the books of the Fund of the Needy Churches: Orangeville;
- xii. delegates to Regional Synod of November 13, 1991: from the ministers: W. den Hollander, P.G. Feenstra, J. Huijgen and G.Ph. VanPopta with R.N. Gleason, P. Aasman and B. Nederveen as alternates; from among the elders are: J. Gelderman, E. Kampen, F. Westrik and K. Knol with H. Faber, L. Jagt, P. Van der Schaaf and J.J. Medemblik as alternates.
- 11. In the personal question period, it is noted that Rev. Feenstra has been called to the church in Burlington South. He is congratulated and wished wisdom in weighing this call.
- 12. Christian censure according to Art. 44 C.O. is not needed.
- 13. The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is approved for publication.
- 14. The chairman closes the meeting in prayer.

For Classis Ontario North
P. Aasman, Vice-Chairman e.t.



With thankfulness to the Lord, who made everything well, we wish to announce the birth of our third child,

CHRISTINE DEBORAH

Born September 16, 1991

Proud Parents:

Oebele and Elaine Spriensma
(nee Schoon)

A sister for *Gregory* and *Steven*

334 Queen Street West
PO Box 2962
St. Marys ON N4X 1A6

With thankfulness to God, the Creator of life, we announce the birth of our son, His child,

WESLEY PETER

Born October 10, 1991

Herman and Janice
VanBarneveld (nee Lof)

64018 Wilford Road, RR 1
Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

With thankfulness to the Lord, who brought us together, we

ANITA BOSSCHER

and

MICHAEL VAN DASSELAAR

joyfully announce our engagement.

September 13th, 1991

507 Woodview Road
Burlington, ON L7N 2Z9

With thankfulness to the Lord who brought us together we

KAREN BOS

and

JOHN BOS

joyfully wish to announce our engagement.

August 9, 1991

RR 1
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

With thankfulness to the LORD, who has entrusted us with another one of His covenant children, we announce the birth of our son

HERMAN JONATHAN KAMSTRA

Born September 29, 1991

A brother for *Leanne Bernadine*

Pete and Sheila Kamstra
(nee Ludwig)

340 Enfield Rd.
Burlington, ON L7T 4E8

15th grandchild for
Herman and Grace Kamstra
3rd grandchild for
Ed and Ann Ludwig

With thankfulness to the Lord who brought us together, we are happy to announce our engagement.

JENNIFER LINDE

and

RON BOVERHOF

October 5, 1991

RR 2
Canfield, ON N0A 1C0