



# Clarion

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# Remembrance Day – A Cult for the Dead?

By P. Aasman

The Encyclopedia Britannica describes “Remembrance Day,” or as it more universally known, “Veterans Day,” in close relation to various cults for the dead.<sup>1</sup> In the same paragraph in which it describes Remembrance Day it describes the festival celebrated in ancient Athens called the Anthesteria. The Anthesteria was a three day Spring holiday which celebrated the new season of growth and renewed life. But this festival also had a sombre side to it, for the Anthesteria ended with a ceremony by which the spirits of the dead were chased back to the dark world in Hades. It ended with the cry, “Out of the door with you, souls! Anthesteria is over!”

Will Durant, a well-known historian who describes the Anthesteria, significantly says in this connection, “In many parts of Europe, people still believe that the ghosts of the dead return to earth yearly, and must be entertained in a “Feast of all Souls.”<sup>2</sup> Durant here refers to the Roman Catholic feast celebrated on November 2 when many followers of Rome visit the graves of loved ones with their consciences burdened with all kinds of superstitions – such as are well-known about the church at Rome. The Encyclopedia Britannica describes All Souls Day just before describing Remembrance Day.

This raises for us various questions: what really is the nature of the Remembrance Day ceremony? Is it some kind of adaptation because of recent historical events of the Anthesteria? or a secularized All Soul’s Day? Does it fit the same classification as these ceremonies that commemorate the dead as the Britannica suggests? Is it, to put the question bluntly, a new cult for the dead? If this is the case, then surely, it is something we should have nothing to do with!

And there is some reason for thinking that we should have nothing to do with the Remembrance Day ceremonies. Many people think of this ceremony in mystical ways. It is thought that we owe it to those men and women who died to remember their sacrifice. They had given the greatest gift a person can give: their very life. We should gather to thank those people for such a gift, albeit, posthumously.

The gathering at the Cenotaph and the other solemn acts performed on Remembrance Day are often regarded as gestures based on the belief that these people had forged history. By their heroic fighting, even to the death, they had kept the world free of despotism such as had overwhelmed most of Europe during both World Wars in this century. These people had defended our ideals of peace and freedom and had been victorious.

If this is indeed what the Remembrance Day ceremonies are about, then the Britannica is quite right when it connects it to other pagan commemorations of the dead. And we should be warned by the Apostle John who closes his first letter by saying, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”

Of course, as Christians we must be wise and discerning, but we need not always be turning our backs and fleeing simply because the world perverts what was and should be good

and right. This applies in particular to the ceremonies of Remembrance Day.

Remembrance Day is for us a celebration of God’s clear activity in this world. It is a fine opportunity to observe and to confess that our God is carrying this world along to accomplish what He wants.

We should observe that nations will go to war just as Christ Jesus had foretold. We can expect nothing less either for the past nor for the future of human history. Christ has said, “You will hear of wars and rumours of war.... For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom” (Matt. 24:6, 7). This reinforces the ancient wisdom of the preacher who spoke of “a time for peace and a time for war” (Eccl. 3:8). We had better get used to war, for that is a part of sinful human reality.

However, it is also a time to observe God’s remarkable blessings upon us, for He brought something good out of the wars of this century: freedom for us to worship God. The Apostle Paul says that we should be praying for such freedom and peace (1 Tim. 2:2), therefore, when we enjoy it, we should recognize that God has answered our prayers.

Therefore, Remembrance Day ceremonies should be a time to thank God for the victories that have given such freedom to us. It is a time to thank God for filling men’s hearts with such zeal that they were willing to fight, even to die for this peace; for giving world leaders the wisdom to oppose tyranny and injustice even by calling their nation to war. Remembrance Day is clearly also a day in which we should earnestly petition God to restore wisdom to national leaders so that the peace we enjoy and which can today be enjoyed in places where it has been unknown for generations (as in Russia and Eastern Europe) may be preserved for the sake of the church.

But we know that it will not be preserved. “Nation will rise up against nation.” As we commemorate the death of many men and women our thoughts can hardly help but to turn to a new day when for a last time they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks; when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more (Isa. 2:4). But that cannot be done in a United Nations resolution, nor by an international superpower. It cannot happen in this world. For here we have no lasting city. We seek the city which is to come.

So, there is much godly reason for participating, indeed, for leading in Remembrance Day ceremonies. At 11 minutes past 11:00 a.m. on November 11, let us pause and think these things and offer such prayers.

<sup>1</sup>*The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (28 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago, 15th edition, 1988) 26, p. 855.

<sup>2</sup>Will Durant, *The Story of Civilization: The Life of Greece* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1939), p. 200.



# Some Thoughts on the Rivers of Paradise<sub>1</sub>

By N.H. Gootjes

## Important?

In the middle of Genesis' record of God's creation work we unexpectedly come across a passage about four rivers (Gen. 2:10-14). To be more precise, about one river, which divides and becomes four rivers. The names of all four rivers are given, and except for the last one, the countries where they flow are mentioned. Many readers of the Bible will have wondered why this passage is included in the story of creation. And connected with this, what can we do with it today.

We cannot brush off this part as unimportant. There are such rather unimportant side remarks in the Bible. When the Ziphites say to Saul: "Is not David hiding himself on the hill of Hachilah, which is on the east of Jeshimon" (1 Sam. 26:1) then this incidental mention of Jeshimon is not of great importance to us. It is no more than a geographical detail, historically correct but without special significance. But things are different in Gen. 2. Here we do not find a historical detail which is carried along in the stream of the narrative. The rivers are not mentioned in connection with another subject, they are the special subject of Gen. 2:10-14.

Actually, the river is the third main topic of Gen. 2.<sup>1</sup> In the preceding chapter the history has been told of the six days of creation, ending in the creation of man. Now everything had been created, and God rested, and made the seventh day a special day. Then, in Gen. 2:4, the story begins where the creation ended – man. Man was created of dust from the ground and made alive. Then follows the garden. A part of the created world was made into a garden for man to live in. And thirdly, a river was made to flow through this garden, and subsequently to divide into four rivers. The rivers from paradise deserve our special attention.

## Symbolical?

The identification of the rivers in this passage is very difficult. This could lead to the idea that the whole passage does

not refer to a real situation, but only speaks symbolically.

The name of the main river is not given. But the names of the four rivers which branch off from it, are mentioned. The first one is called: Pishon. The name is derived from a verb which means: "to leap," and so "Pishon" could be translated as "Leaper." What feature has given rise to this name, is unknown to us. The same applies to the second river: the Gihon. This name goes back to a verb meaning: "to break out," a rendering could be: "Outbreaker."

But we do not know what rivers they were. The names of these rivers occur nowhere else in the Bible. And since they sound fancy, are they not at the same time fantasy? Do we have here a description of an existing reality?

But the rest of the text denies such an explanation. The name for the third river is in Hebrew Hiddeqel. The same word occurs in Dan. 10:4. And there is no doubt concerning the identification with the Tigris. The same is the case with the fourth river: the river mentioned is the Euphrates. Actually, this river is so well known that no further information is needed. Therefore we have to think, not of four symbolical names, but of four existing rivers.

This is confirmed by the rest of the text. About the second river is said that it flows around the land Cush, and about the third river, that it flows east of Assyria. Both remarks intend to give geographical information. They refer to a reality which could be pointed out on a map of the world.



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## IN THIS ISSUE

Remembrance Day – A Cult for the Dead? — P. Aasman .....	490
Some Thoughts on the Rivers of Paradise <sub>1</sub> — N.H. Gootjes .....	491
Remember Your Creator – "No Base Thing" — R. Schouten .....	493
Press Review – Leaving the Christian Reformed Church <sub>1</sub> — C. Van Dam .....	495
Ray of Sunshine — Mrs. R. Ravensbergen .....	497
Getting Dressed for the Job — C. Van Dam .....	498
25th Anniversary as Servant of the Lord – Rev. C. VanSpronsen — Y. DeBoersap .....	500
School Crossing – Motivated Learners – Young and Old — A. Witten .....	501
News from the League of the Can. Ref. School Societies — M. Spithoff .....	502
Press Release .....	503
Our Little Magazine — Aunt Betty ...	504

As a matter of fact, the whole context does not speak symbolically. God really did create man, v. 7. God really did make a garden, v. 8. God did place man in the garden, v. 15. The passage speaking about the rivers must be taken just as literally as the passages about man's creation and the making of the garden.

### **Not historical?**

But when this passage is taken as historical, the problems really grow. The first river, the Pishon, is said to flow around the land of Havilah. "Havilah" is then a part of Arabia (Gen. 10:7, 29; 25:18; 1 Sam. 15:7). But we do not know of such a river in that part of the world.

The second river, Gihon, is said to flow around the land of Cush. In the Bible "Cush" usually denotes Ethiopia, south of Egypt. But again, we do not know of a river, called Gihon, there. The only river that could be meant, is the river Nile. But why is the usual biblical name for this river not used?

The third river is said to flow "east of Assyria." However, the Tigris does not flow east of Assyria, but through the country of Assyria. This problem can be solved by assuming that "Assyria" here does not denote the country Assyria, but the city Assur.

There is, however, another problem if this part of Gen. 2 is taken as historical. The Bible speaks about one river, which then divides into four. But that is completely impossible with the rivers given in this part. The greatest problem is the fact that Tigris and Euphrates do not flow out of one river, but that they at the end of their course, come together to form one river. The opposite of what the Bible says.

The problem is only aggravated by the Gihon. That river flows in Egypt. And there is no possibility to bring together in one stream the rivers Tigris and Euphrates in Mesopotamia, and the Nile in Egypt.

And therefore we are told not to search for the exact location of the rivers and countries mentioned here. Sometimes it is said that the writer of Genesis did not know any better. We today know about the world; we have accurate maps. But they did not have such maps. The sources of the Nile were discovered in the last century. What could the people at that time know of the real origin of the rivers they had only heard about? A geography in its infancy is speaking here, we should not try to find reality behind these childlike words.<sup>2</sup>

Another approach is to say, that the writer of this passage did not attempt to give geographical information. It is an attempt on the part of the writer to link

paradise with geography. He wants to show that the life arteries of all countries have their origin in the river that watered paradise. We should not spend much energy in trying to figure out how the four rivers can have been one. The text does not intend to give geographical details. The message is clear: All important rivers draw their water from the paradise river. That is why four rivers are mentioned. The number four indicates completeness. In all four directions the world receives its life from paradise.<sup>3</sup>

These solutions are not acceptable to us. They do not take into account that Scripture is not just the writing of a

problematic. For the river in Ethiopia is the Nile. Why is it not called by its usual name in Gen. 2? This makes it all the more acceptable that another river is meant, in another country.<sup>4</sup>

This means that the four rivers are now all more or less in the same region. The Pishon is in Havilah, somewhere in Arabia. The Gihon is in Cush, also somewhere in Arabia. And the Tigris and the Euphrates are in Mesopotamia. Of course the distance between them is considerable. But we can imagine one river which separates into four rivers and then flows through Arabia and also toward the Persian Gulf.

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## ***"In the exegesis of critical scholars Gen. 2:10-14 ends up as a message without fact. The Reformed approach is, to try to make sense of the geographical indications."***

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man with all his limitations, but that it is the Word of God. Whatever man may have known at the time, God would not have revealed something that is blatantly untrue.

And would it be true that the people at that time did not know anything at all of the map of the world? People in Mesopotamia will have known that the Tigris and the Euphrates did not come from the same stream. And those who knew of the Nile, will have known that this river, whatever its source, is located in a different country.

In fact these writers have to return to the symbolical meaning. They may deny it, but the explanation of the number four shows clearly that it is taken as a symbol for all the directions of the world.

In the exegesis of critical scholars Gen. 2:10-14 ends up as a message without fact.

### **Geographical?**

The Reformed approach is, to try to make sense of the geographical indications. In the first place, the problem of Cush can be solved. This name is usually taken as Ethiopia, and that is correct. The name refers in the Bible mostly to the country south of Egypt. But in some places (especially 2 Chron. 14:9) it seems to indicate a part of the Arabian peninsula.

At this point we remember that the identification of Cush with Ethiopia was

We can imagine such a river, but we do not know of such a river. And, as already said, the problem is too, that Tigris and Euphrates do not begin as one river, but end as one river. How can this problem be solved?

The solution is usually found in the fact that the situation as it is described in Gen. 2 will have changed considerably in the course of the time. It is not uncommon for rivers to change their course. We can also think of disasters such as hurricanes and earthquakes. And the disastrous consequences of the Flood should not be forgotten. The fountains of the great deep burst forth (Gen. 7:11) and the water covered the earth for about half a year. This will have caused innumerable changes in the surface of the earth.<sup>5</sup>

It is therefore quite possible that two of the four rivers have disappeared, and that the course of the other two have changed; or, that the latter two rivers are indicated by the names of their rough equivalents from the time after the Flood. In this connection it is noteworthy that the description of the two unknown rivers is more extensive than the description of the two known rivers.

Reformed theology can maintain the historicity of this part of Scripture. But what about the message? And here we are disappointed. Reformed exegetes have to maintain that this text is geographically possible. But this results in

an exegesis which concentrates on the location of paradise. Aalders writes: "In the light of the information presently available to us, the data given in the verses 10-14 [are] not sufficient to give us a clearly specified location for the district of Eden." And Gispén concludes: "We cannot say more than that it is probable that the garden of Eden should be sought in Mesopotamia."<sup>6</sup>

This is very disappointing. We had to say about the critical scholars: Here is a message without a basis in facts. But in these Reformed explanations we are left with facts without a message. What can we do with the location of paradise? What would it matter to our faith, if we could say exactly where the Garden of Eden was? What difference does it make

whether paradise was located in Mesopotamia, or in Italy, or, for that matter, in Siberia?

Actually, the passage is approached with the wrong question. The text does not say something like: the garden was located north of the Pishon, or: the two rivers Tigris and Euphrates flowed around the garden. To be sure, the text has geographical implications. From it we may conclude that paradise must have been located somewhere between Turkey and Arabia. But this location cannot be the message of this passage. When we approach the text with our questions before we have listened to what it says, we silence the message. Instead, we have to listen to what the text says to us.

<sup>1</sup>J. De Fraine, *Genesis* (Roermond en Maaseik: J.J. Romen & Zonen, 1963) p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>See e.g. H. Gunkel *Genesis* (2nd ed. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup>Cl. Westermann, *Genesis 1-11: A Commentary* (tr. John J. Scullion S.J.; Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1984) pp. 215ff.

<sup>4</sup>See G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis* Vol. 1 (tr. W. Heynen; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, St. Catharines: Paideia, 1981), p. 90.

<sup>5</sup>See e.g. Joh. Francke, *De morgen der mensheid* (Enschede: Boersma, 1974) p. 33; J.H. Kroeze, *Die tuin van Eden* (Pretoria: N.G. Boekhandel, 1967) p. 28.

<sup>6</sup>See G. Ch. Aalders, *Genesis* Vol. 1, p. 91; W.H. Gispén, *Genesis* Vol. 1 (Kampen: Kok, 1974), p. 120; see also J.H. Kroeze, who discusses this part of Gen. 2 under the title "the first lesson in geography," *Die tuin van Eden*, pp. 24ff.



## REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R. Schouten

### "No Base Thing"

*"I will not set before my eyes anything that is base."*

Last month, this sentence from Psalm 101 was flashed before our eyes on a huge screen at the Jubilee Auditorium here in Calgary. With a few other members of our church, I was attending a presentation by Mr. Robert DeMoss Jr., who goes by the label "Youth culture specialist." He works for the Focus on the Family organization which was started quite a few years ago by Dr. Jim Dobson.

#### Youth culture

Mr. DeMoss gave a very enlightening presentation about what is going on in the world of film, advertising and music, especially as this relates to young people. To be honest with you, it was a presentation that stunned and horrified most of the 3000 members of the audience. He acquainted us with the perverted lyrics and disturbing style of rock groups like "Guns and Roses"; he showed us some scenes from several recent horror shows – for example, the "Freddy" films. And he demonstrated that modern advertising aimed at young people (in youth magazines) would have been unacceptable even for a pornographic magazine in 1960.

No doubt it would be beneficial to go into the details of Mr. DeMoss's presentation about rock, film and advertising. Any person who views such a presenta-

tion cannot quietly go home and continue to indulge himself in mainstream youth culture. Or, I should say, anyone in whom the Spirit dwells cannot go home and still immerse himself in popular youth culture. The reality of the antithesis between Christ and the "world" becomes very clear in such a presentation.

#### Television

But it was interesting that Mr. DeMoss drew our attention to the above-mentioned verse not in the context of the theater or advertising in magazines and so on, but rather, in the context of television. Most of us will readily admit that a Christian should have nothing to do with the extremes of rock and roll, nor with the blatant transgressions of the theater. But we are not so quick to see the same danger in the television, together with its accompanying video player.

Lately, the pages of *Clarion* have given quite a bit of critical attention to television viewing habits. Allow me to continue that discussion. First, a quotation from DeMoss: "I once heard that 98 per cent of American households have at least one television set. Compared to the fact that only 96 per cent of homes have a working toilet, I think it's safe to say that for the first time in history, there's

more garbage coming into our homes than going out of them."

In order to minimize the negative effect of television in Christian homes, DeMoss gave a number of ideas. A few of them are: limit TV to one hour per day. Never allow a TV set in a bedroom. Analyze commercials carefully to see what message they are trying to bring. Watch TV as a family! Purge your cable channels (did you know that 35 million American households have MTV? You can ask your local cable company to have MTV dropped). Talk back to your idiot box when it communicates something inconsistent with biblical principles. "Is shouting at the TV during a commercial – "Forget it pal, I'm happy with what I have" – such a bad idea?"

Well, Mr. DeMoss is a funny person. But let's take a look at another piece of advice he gives us. He suggests that we tape Psalm 101:3 to our remote control devices or else make a poster of this verse and hang it above our television sets. The poet of this Psalm says: "I will not set before my eyes anything that is base." Well, let's have a look at this Psalm.

#### A throne speech

According to the words above this Psalm, David was its author. And if we

read the Psalm as a whole, we get the impression that it is a kind of "Throne Speech" in which David, like the new governments of BC and Saskatchewan, lays out the basic principles of his government. First of all, as a ruler, David knows the importance of personal integrity. One who is himself wicked and hypocritical cannot be a good ruler. So David insists on his personal integrity. He says that in his government, he will not be guided by personal interest. He will not, like so many rulers, present a public face completely different than his private face. David will be consistent in all of life.

He will also be diligent in his kingly task of punishing evildoers. People who live in uprightness have nothing to fear from David's government, but the wicked had better be careful. Deceitful people, liars, false witnesses, slanderers, etc. will not be able to continue their pernicious work. For "morning by morning," says David, "I will destroy all the wicked in the land, cutting off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD" (v. 8).

It is in the context of this "Throne Speech" that David also speaks the words of verse 3: "I will not set before my eyes anything that is base." The word "base" means "lawless" and therefore "disgusting." In the original Hebrew language, the word translated by "base" is "Belial." David will not set anything of Belial before his eyes. In the O.T., the word Belial is used to describe homosexuals, rebels against the rule of God's anointed King, drunkards, false witnesses, and people who promote idolatry.

David is saying that he, as king, will have nothing to do with such practices. How could he? For what does light have in common with darkness? And "what accord has Christ with Belial?" Yes, that last quotation from 2 Cor. 6:15 shows us that the word "belial" was eventually used by the Jews as a proper name for Satan. The ultimate in baseness is the devil, for he is a complete rebel and is therefore completely disgusting.

In Psalm 101, David is proclaiming the eternal opposition between God and Satan, between right and wrong, between purity and baseness. He wants to build his reign on the basis of that enmity. He will promote good. He will put down evil.

### Sharing Christ's reign

It must be said that King David did not fully carry out the inspired contents of his own "throne speech." For his heart was not perfect. He was not 100% successful in keeping base things from before his eyes. Think only of the matter of Bathsheba and Uriah the Hittite. We

need to realize that King David was only a shadow of the One who was to come, his own Great Son, Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus also has a kingly program for His government. Psalm 101 is His "throne speech," too. The Lord Jesus, however, was entirely successful in keeping all base things from before His eyes. Never did He yield to temptation as it came to Him from "Belial," that base and disgusting rebel against God.

And the Lord Jesus Christ has now ascended into heaven, there to sit at God's right hand until His enemies are made a stool for His feet. He will remove the wicked from the land. Only the meek, that is the righteous, will inherit the earth. Belial and all who like him are "base" will be cast into hell.

What does all this have to do with television and videos? Well, do you remember your Catechism, Lord's Day 12? You are called Christians. Why do you have that name? Because you share the anointing of Christ (remember: "Christ" means "Anointed One"). You share in His office of prophet, priest and king.

Yes, you share also in Christ's kingly office. Indeed, the apostle Paul says that by faith, we are already seated with Christ in the heavenly places! (Eph. 2:6).

Christ is Lord of lords and King of kings. We share in that kingly office. For we are one with Him by faith.

Well, this means that we have to work with Christ to fulfill the "throne speech" of Psalm 101. We are part of His government. We fight against Belial in

this life. We strive to put down the wicked (no, not by the sword, but by the truth). And hereafter, we will reign with Christ over all creatures.

Indeed, put Psalm 101:3 on your remote control device. Hang it in large print over your television set. "I will not set before my eyes anything that is base." Remember, base means "lawless." Well, does television not thrive in direct proportion to its lawlessness? The more of God's holy commandments it flaunts, and the more frequently it does so, the greater will be the number of viewers.

You have to understand that what you "set before your eyes" has impact on your heart. The constant influx of lawless images and words will transform your heart so that more and more you will look like Belial instead of like God. In one way or another, you will yourselves come to think and do the things you constantly set before your eyes as so called "entertainment."

Go ahead, write this kingly text on your remote control device. Mr. DeMoss gave even better advice than he probably realized. Hang it in large print over your television set. Above all, write it on your hearts.

What will happen if you do this? You will find that more and more the TV set is silent. The kingly rule of Jesus Christ will stifle its lawless noise and obliterate its disgraceful images. And, since the silly thing is now turned off nearly all the time, why not get rid of it? Such an act would be truly royal. C

## CHURCH NEWS



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 of Brantford, ON

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### CALLED AND DECLINED

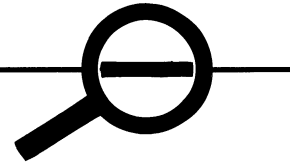
to Launceston, Tasmania  
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## Leaving the Christian Reformed Church<sup>1</sup>

The unrest in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) is not about to quietly fade away. Some congregations are on the way out. In this column we have at an earlier occasion mentioned the establishment of an Independent Reformed Church at Sheffield in Ontario, with the Rev. Jerome Julien as its minister. *Christian Renewal* and *The Banner* have since informed us of the earlier establishment of an independent congregation in Telkwa, B.C. whose minister is the Rev. Wayne Leigh. More recently, about twenty families left the CRC in Alymer, Ontario in October. This new congregation has no minister. Although the First CRC in Lethbridge, Alberta (Rev. Jelle Tuininga) had planned to be out of the CRC by the end of September, there were apparently some last minute hitches (concerning assets, etc. in the process of being resolved) to complete official independence (*Christian Renewal*, Oct. 28, 1991). Two other congregations are poised to depart. The Trinity CRC in St. Catharines, Ontario (Rev. Calvin J. Tuininga) is set to leave on November 3 and the CRC in Wellandport, Ontario (Rev. J. Gangar) is laying plans for their withdrawal on January 14, 1992. Other churches are reported to be preparing to quit the CRC as well.

Why are these churches leaving? In the midst of the struggle one can hear charges and counter-charges and in the ensuing smoke, the real issues can become blurred. Classis Niagara of the CRC decided on September 18, 1991 that the classis would meet in special session on October 3, 1991 in Fenwick, Ontario to discuss the question whether the differences constituted biblical, confessional, and pastoral grounds for separation. The discussion focused on two reports that were presented; one in favour of separation, the other against. Before a full house, Rev. Gangar as re-

porter presented the findings of the Classical committee that argued for the legitimacy of withdrawal. (Other members of this committee besides Rev. Gangar were Rev. C.J. Tuininga, elder H. De Vries, and elder P. Ellens.) Because this report put the concerns of those protesting the liberal trends in the CRC so well we will quote extensively from it. In this way also the readers of *Clarion* can appreciate as much as possible the issues that are involved.

### Is withdrawal an option?

The introduction of the report deals with the question whether withdrawal is inherently wrong. The answer given is no. At times it is the faithful option.

The Bible very clearly teaches that we must be on guard because the church is always under attack from outside and in. The Church needs to defend the truth. There are many passages which express this concern for defense (1 Cor. 11:13-15; Gal. 1:7-9; Phil. 3:17-19; Col. 2:6-8; 1 Tim. 4:1-6; 2 Tim 3:1-14; Titus 1:9-16; Jude, etc.). While we are not claiming that the situation in the CRC is exactly the same as in these passages or that the people we oppose can be described by these texts, we do maintain that these verses do verify our claim that at times churches must distance themselves from individuals, groups and organizations. Our confessions (Belgic Confession Art. 27-29) clearly teach this by saying we are to unite ourselves with the true church and separate ourselves from the false church which is described by its characteristics (Art. 29).

It is of interest to note a question that was raised during the discussion. If withdrawal is illegitimate, was the CRC's birth in 1857 as the result of separation

from the Reformed Church in America legitimate?!

The report continues by giving biblical reasons for withdrawal.

### Battle over the Bible

The report notes that if churches begin to question the infallibility of the Bible, then there is no other option but to withdraw. We cannot walk together if we are not agreed upon our doctrine of the Bible.

Our Forms of Unity quite clearly reveal this by emphasizing the inspiration, authority, sufficiency and infallibility of the Bible. In Art. 7 (Belgic Confession) we are called to "reject with all our heart whatsoever does not agree with this infallible rule."

The Bible very clearly teaches that it is God's Word and that this means the very words of the Bible are God's words. Paul clearly says in 2 Tim. 3:16, "all Scripture is God breathed...." The O.T. is full of phrases reflecting this: "Thus says the Lord," "God says," "The Word of the Lord came to me." The O.T. also shows that the very words are God's words when it prohibits the "adding or taking away" from God's Word (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:5, 6). Jesus also emphasized the actual words of the Bible as God's words (Matt. 5:17-19).

Now we see in the CRC a clear shift away from this foundational truth.

After some general examples of error in the CRC in this respect, the report focuses on three areas: Genesis 1-11, women in office, and the unity of the church.

### Genesis 1-11

The report shows that two CRC professors are tolerated at Calvin College

even though they do not accept the historicity of the first chapters of Genesis. According to one trustee report:

Both were unwilling to unequivocally accept Adam, Eve, and Enoch as real persons. One went so far as to say that even though the N.T. writers expressed a belief in the historicity of Adam, Eve, and Enoch, that does not mean that this is true and factually correct, nor a guarantee that Adam, Eve, and Enoch were historical persons.

Such professors are not disciplined.

### Women in office

The report notes that

People often seek to reduce this whole debate to merely different interpretations. However, we point out that different interpretations can be tantamount to rejecting Biblical passages. There are clearly passages which restrict the offices of the church to men (1 Tim. 2:11-15; 1 Cor. 14:34-36; 11:2-16).

The report mentions a variety of ways in which the obvious meaning and force of these passages is rejected. For example, some say these passages are culturally bound and therefore have no binding effect on us. After listing several strategies, the report concludes this issue by saying: "All these efforts must not be simply reduced to differing interpretations but must be seen as a challenge to deny what the church has long believed to be the teaching of the Bible."

### Unity of the church

About this point the report notes:

Some would seek to counter any Biblical arguments for withdrawal with the Biblical injunctions toward unity. Jesus very clearly prayed "that they may all be one" (John 17:21). We also recall passages which speak of the unity of the church (Eph. 4:3, 13; 1 Cor. 12:12-14; 1 Peter 2:4-10)....

When we examine this concept of unity we see that it is closely associated with purity and truth. Jesus in John 15 talks of the vine and the branches and that expresses our unity with Christ and fellow branches. However, we see in John 15:2, 6 the emphasis on purity and truth without which unity is lost. In John 17:15-20 we again see a focus upon sanctification and truth alongside the prayer for unity. In Eph. 4:5, 13-16, Paul also speaks of "one faith" and "unity in the faith, and knowl-

edge of the Son of God." In the Heidelberg Catechism (Q.A. 54) we again read of the holy catholic Church "being a community united in true faith." When we ask about true faith, the Catechism (Q.A. 21) says that it is firstly "a knowledge and conviction that everything God reveals in His Word is true."

So we maintain the balanced Scriptural teaching is that we are to be united, but not on compromised truth. In fact, when we seek to withdraw it is not seeking to ignore the Biblical command of unity, but rather to endeavour to enter into and pursue that unity with those who do maintain the truth.... So we maintain we are withdrawing in order to maintain unity with those who adhere to God's truth."

### Confessional reasons for withdrawal

The first issue that the report touches on here is the matter of elevating science and natural revelation beyond what Scripture and Art. 2 of the Belgic Confession teach. One result of such an approach is that in the name of natural revelation evolution is defended against the express teaching of Scripture. My colleague Dr. N.H. Gootjes has dealt extensively with this matter (*Clarion*, Oct. 26, Nov. 9, 1990).

The Canons of Dordt are under attack in the CRC. The report notes:

The Canons of Dordt reflect the very heart of the Reformed faith. This confession has been challenged in the past by such people as Rev. Harold Dekker (1962), Dr. Harry Boer (1977), and Rev. Neal Punt. It is good that the Synods of 1967 and 1981 maintained the church's confessional stance.

When we look around, however, we see that the influence toward deviation from the Canons of Dordt is prevalent. We saw about a year ago in *The Banner* [official publication of the CRC], under the letters section, a letter asking whether election was a doctrine of the church which must be believed. This letter was permitted...to be answered by none other than Dr. Harry Boer! Boer claimed that it was a doctrine of the church (Canons of Dordt) but only in theory because no one really believed it, or preached it.

Lack of preaching and widespread ignorance about the doctrines of this confession and a popular embracing of Arminianism are also mentioned. The result is that

we have in our denomination a shift from being Reformed to extolling evangelicalism. We are more content upon saying "all that matters is that a person believes in Jesus Christ" rather than seeing that an understanding of the basic truth of the Canons of Dordt is vitally important. Those who want to remain distinctively Reformed will have to rescue the Canons of Dordt.

Next the report comments that the biblical truths summarized in the Heidelberg Catechism are no longer systematically preached throughout the CRC and there is an experimenting with new confessions. In the conclusion to this section of the report we read: "We have shown that our confessions are not accepted as they should and, in fact, at times are rejected. This has broken our unity and hence withdrawal is necessary if we want to remain Reformed.

The next time, D.V., we will conclude our look at this report by noting church orderly and pastoral reasons for withdrawing and end with some final observations.

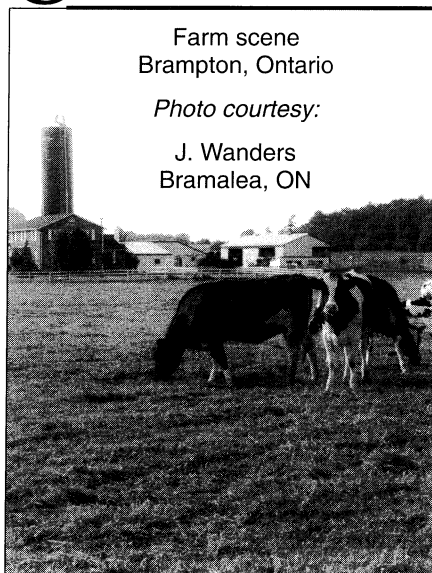


## OUR COVER

Farm scene  
Brampton, Ontario

Photo courtesy:

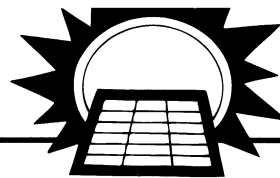
J. Wanders  
Bramalea, ON



### CORRECTION

The article *Reformed or evangelical?* No. 22 was not written by Prof. J. Geertsema but by Dr. C. Van Dam.





By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

*And without faith it is impossible to please Him. For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists, and that He rewards those who seek Him.*

*Hebrews 11:6*

## Dear Brothers and Sisters:

Last month we saw that the Lord uses Hebrews 11 to strengthen us in our faith. We talked about Abel, and how he received a good testimony from the Lord because of his faith. In the way of this faith also Abel has eternal life.

This time we will go on with the next person mentioned in Hebrews 11.

Like Abel, Enoch is a person about whom we know very little, only that he is a descendant of Seth. There must have been many people on earth already in his days. However, Enoch stands out among them all, because it says, "Enoch walked with God." He was a very special person, for we read, "Enoch walked with God; and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24). And in Hebrews it says, "Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God."

How beautiful is this testimony of God concerning Enoch: he pleased God! To us, sinners, it must seem to be a very difficult thing to do, to please God! We do so many wrong things, and we are prone by nature to hate God. How then can someone please God? Now Enoch was a very exceptional man. God took him up. This means: Enoch never died. In some special way the Lord took him to Himself. We do not know how. But the tragedy, the fear, the fight, the separation, all the things that can come along with death, Enoch did not experience. He suddenly vanished because God took him. For the people in Enoch's days, as well as for us, there was a message in this act of God. Hebrews 11 says, "Now before he was taken he was attested as having pleased God." Gen. 5:24 testifies that "Enoch walked with God."

In Enoch's days there were many people on earth. They lived wicked lives, without God and God's Word. Enoch lived a different life than the people around him. He did not follow the crowd. He had his own lifestyle, geared towards the Lord. The Lord had such an important place in his life that Enoch could stand on his own: with the Lord against everyone else. How could he do that? It was through faith that he could walk with God and so please God, for "without faith it is impossible to please Him."

Faith, that precious work of God Himself in the heart of His chosen children, faith a gift of God's grace, is also what God requires from us, and what He will reward as well. This faith means that we truly know God, and believe that He exists. It means that we seek the Lord, and rely on Him for our daily life and salvation. If we believe, God will look at us in favour, and be pleased with us. From ourselves we only deserve eternal death. However, we may flee to Jesus Christ. Through Him we will be rewarded with eternal life. We do not earn salvation through

our good works. God will reward His own work in us: faith in Him.

Enoch lived by faith, and so he pleased God. And God rewarded it. So Enoch can serve as an example for us, and be a comfort to us. Enoch had his own place in the history of redemption as recorded in the Bible. We never should say that we cannot live up to the same high level of a godly life. We have our own place and position in God's ongoing work. It does not have to be an important position, or a strong body, or a bright mind. In our own place and position we can do the same thing as Enoch did. Through grace we can walk with God, through faith, and so please God and receive His reward. Sure, we won't be taken by the Lord as Enoch was. We don't know when the Day of the Lord will be here. Most likely we will have to go through death first. But Christ overcame death, and reconciled us with the Lord. That reconciliation includes victory over death, and the gift of eternal life.

Let's then pray that the Holy Spirit will help our faith to grow so that we may "believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him."

## From the mailbox:

My birthday calendar for December is blank. But this time I have a special request. It is for

### ADRIAN DEJONG

RR 1, Site 6, Box 9  
Barrhead, Alberta T0G 0E0

Adrian's aunt sent me a letter, and I quote a paragraph from her letter: "My nephew, who is 6 years old, was operated on his liver because of a cancerous tumor which had also attached itself to the lining of his heart. He underwent a ten hour operation in which 1/2 of his liver was taken away and the lining was replaced with plastic netting. He has to have chemotherapy at least for 4 months. He and his mom have been in Edmonton hospital for over three weeks, but they hope to come home now. He will need to go to Edmonton for his treatments, which is a 2 hour drive from home. He should have started grade 1 in September."

Adrian will have his 7th birthday on November 27. Even if it is past his birthday when you read this, it still would be nice if we could cheer him up with cards from all over the world. We hope that Adrian in that way can experience the communion of saints, on the difficult road that he and his family have to go.

Until next month,

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

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# Getting Dressed for the Job

By C. Van Dam

*A slightly revised version of a speech given at Guido de Brès Commencement 11 Oct. 1991.*

Different occupations require different dress. If you want to become a member of the police force, you look forward to the day that you can put your uniform on. Then you are a policeman. Likewise if someone studies to be a pharmacist. You train to put on the white garment that is the trademark of that profession so that you can practise it. Or if you desire to train to become a landscaper, you yearn to get out of your school clothes and don the attire fitting for that work. Usually, your training is not finished once you have completed high school. You go on to an apprenticeship or college or university to further qualify yourself so that eventually you can arrive at that day when you can get dressed for the work that you want to do. One could say, you study in order to be able one day to dress for the job. And on a joyful occasion like this we wish very much for all of you that you will reach the goal you have set for yourself so that you too can put on the clothes of your life work.

While looking forward to all that is very much in the future, yet there is an important element of your training and your dressing up for the job that does usually come to an end by the time you graduate from high school. All of you have already either come to the point or will soon arrive at the moment that you decide who will be real boss in your life, whom you will be working for. After all, at this stage in life you have completed many years of Christian parental training, of listening to sermons, catechism classes and now Christian high school. By now you should know whether you want to serve the Lord our God or the great adversary, Satan. Choosing for the Lord is of course never to be regarded as an automatic thing; namely, that like anyone else you of course publicly profess your faith and become a communicant member of the church at a more or less predetermined time. There is nothing automatic about it. A conscious decision

needs to be made. You are deciding whom you will be working for the rest of your life! Who will be the overriding boss, Christ or the evil one! You are deciding how you will get dressed up for your life work that overrides all other work you will be engaged in. Whether you will be clothes in garments dictated by the Lord or by the devil.

Your teachers at Guido de Brès have been part of that process of your coming to a decision on this matter which is most decisive for you. For it concerns not just this life, but also the life hereafter. The Bible, therefore, also instructs us about getting dressed up for the job! These passages are undoubtedly well-known to you. Think of the admonition in Ephesians 6 which instructs us to

take the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done, all to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God (vv. 13-17).

What a stirring passage! Onward Christian soldiers! That's to be your uniform as Christians! Then you're dressed for the job as a child of God! Romans 13 puts it this way: "Let us...cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light!" (v. 12). In 1 Thessalonians 5 we are reminded that we as Christians are not children of darkness, the night but of the day. Therefore, "since we belong to the day, let us be sober and put on the breastplate of faith and love, and for a helmet the hope of salvation" (v. 8). Dressed as a warrior, a soldier in the service of our king!

This, however, is not all. Getting dressed for the task in this way implies several things that need to be spelled out. God's Word therefore says that we must undress with respect to the old na-

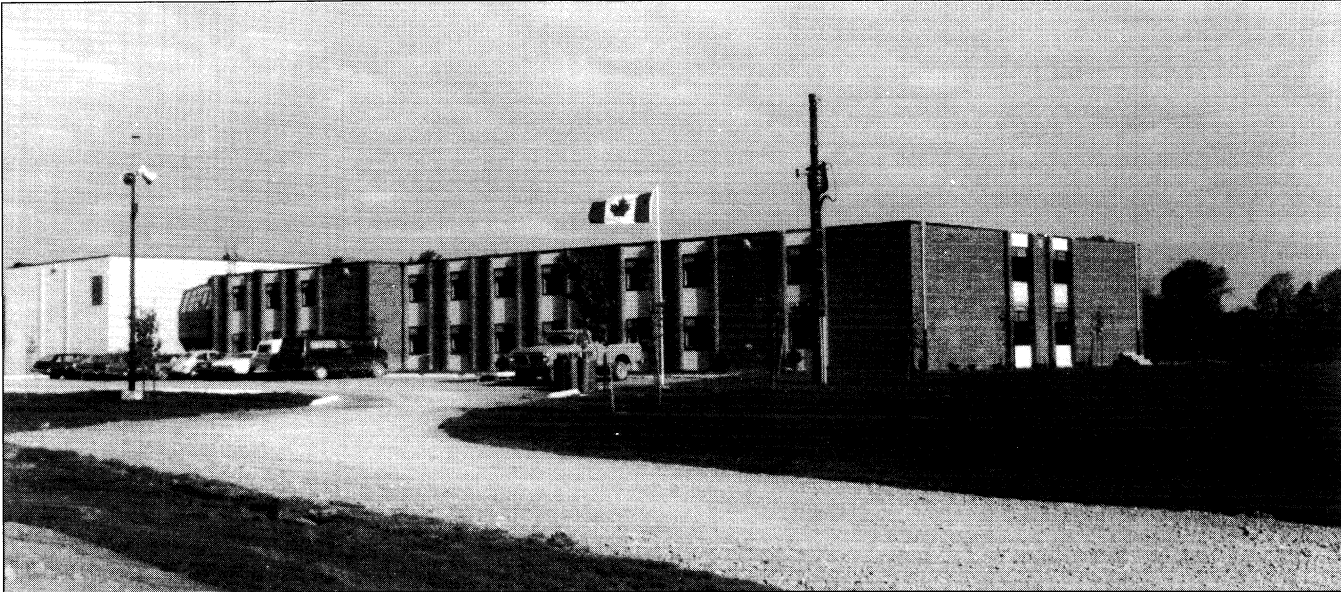
ture and dress up in the new nature. We read in Ephesians 4:22-24

Put off your old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

So, putting on the breastplate of faith and love and the whole armour of God is only possible if you dress up in the new nature ("dressing, putting on clothes" that is the verb used in Eph. 4:22 and also in a similar exhortation in Col. 3:10). Getting dressed up for service to God entails nothing less than putting on a new heart and a mind of holiness.

But there is more that we have to get dressed up in. If Scripture did not itself explicitly command this, I would hesitate to say it. God tells us in His Word that if we are to be dressed up properly for service to Him, then "clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 13:14 [NIV])! The same verb is used here as was used in the exhortation to put on the whole armour of God and the breastplate of righteousness (Eph. 6:11, 14). "Put on Christ! Clothe yourselves with Christ!" What an awesome demand. Only then are you and I properly dressed for our life task as Christians! Only in one other place is such graphic terminology used. In Galatians 3:27 Christians are characterized as those who "have been clothed with Christ" (NIV).

But, what does it mean to clothe yourselves with Christ, you may ask. Judging from the figurative usage of this verb elsewhere in the New Testament world, it means that you have such a close relationship with Christ that you are not only completely wrapped up in Christ so to speak, but that you think like Him, act like Him. For being dressed in Him, you are in a sense no longer yourself, but appear to be the one with whom you are clothed. To put it differently, "Clothe yourselves with Christ" means that you so closely identify with Christ that you have Christ's eyes and see the world and your



Guido de Brès High School – Hamilton

vision as Christ sees it; that you have Christ's mind so that you think through life's problems as Christ would think through them if He were in your shoes.

But how is one to achieve this situation so that you are clothed with Christ? For, it is a demand. "Clothe yourselves with Christ" God's Word says. The only way is to be separate from the world and to seek our everything in Jesus Christ. The context of the command "clothe yourselves with Christ" in Romans 13:14 makes this clear. The apostle, after encouraging his readers with the prospect of the great day of Jesus Christ, writes:

Let us cast off the works of darkness and put on the armour of light; let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires (vv. 12-14).

In order to clothe ourselves in Christ, we need a strong and close relationship with our Saviour. Christ must be everything for us. He demands all! All our heart, our love, our time, our priorities. Know the cost of being clothed as a Christian and taking the whole armour of God so that you can stand in the evil day. It means to become as nothing and that Christ becomes everything! If we fulfill our responsibility, for that is the context, and put on Christ, then He takes possession of us. It is remarkable that in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit could come upon His chosen servants and dress Himself with them and use them as His agents. (The verb "to be clothed"

is used; think, e.g., of Gideon, Judges 6:34; also see 2 Chron. 24:20.) In the New Testament, we are further in the history of redemption. Although salvation is of God (cf. in this context Luke 24:49), our responsibilities are emphasized when we are commanded to put on or be clothed with Christ. In this way Christ wants to fill us with His Spirit and so use us as His instruments in His service.

As I see it, one of the biggest dangers we are facing as Reformed community is a sense of having arrived. We basically have everything. We have our Reformed homes, churches and schools. All we need is a bit of fine-tuning and it will all be perfect. For the rest, things more or less go automatically. You go through the system, you can dream the chief contents of Scripture and eventually graduate from Guido as...? Yes, as what?! What is your identity as you graduate?

Undoubtedly you are busy preparing yourself for getting dressed for the job you hope to have in the future. That is good. God wants you to use your talents wisely. But, how far are you with dressing up in Christ, putting Him on and being totally governed by Him? Are you busy with that? It is not really fair to ask this only of the graduates. Let me rephrase it. Most of us have our task in life. We dress in the morning to go to work. The clothes lie ready. Do we also take time, day after day, to be clothed with Christ and to let our identity and outlook be totally determined by Him?

Graduates, and for that matter, all of us, if there is not that sense that we are naked and defenceless in a world of sin without being clothed by Christ, we are lost! If there is not that urgency that we need to get dressed with Christ, there is

little perspective. For only if we have the mind of Christ can we understand what being a Christian is all about (cf., e.g., Phil. 2:5). Knowing the bare facts of Scripture and being outwardly good at working with some well worn slogans and clichés will get us nowhere. We need the mind of Christ and to be clothed with Christ. There must be that close personal relationship with our Saviour so that we hate the sin of this world as He did and does; so that we yearn for the holiness of the Father in this world, as He did; so that we strive in everything to do the will of Father, as He did; so that we love the brotherhood, as He showed by example and taught us to; so that we reach out to share the gospel and what we have received by grace, wherever the opportunity arises as Christ would have us do. Yes to be so clothed with Christ that we can say with the apostle, it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me (Gal. 2:20)!

Graduates, that's what it's all about! You are to be congratulated on reaching this milestone. We rejoice with you. Study and work hard for your life uniform in the occupation of your choice. But don't forget to dress for the great job our heavenly Father gave us, viz. to be Christians, to share in Christ's anointing and work. Don't forget to be clothed with Christ. There's no better way to show your gratitude to your parents who have sacrificed much for you. And there's no better way to show your thankfulness to the teachers at Guido and above all to the Lord our God from whom we have received all this. Then there will also be great rejoicing in heaven!



# 25th Anniversary as Servant of the Lord

— Rev. C. VanSpronsen

By Y. DeBoersap



L. to r. Mrs. VanSpronsen, Sr., Rev. VanSpronsen, Mrs. VanSpronsen, and Mrs. Veldkamp

A 25th anniversary is always a good reason for a celebration, and a 25th anniversary as servant of the Lord is certainly worthy of more than just a handshake or a congratulatory card in the mail. Of course, we remember in this that we are not here to glorify the person involved, but to praise our God and Father for allowing His servant to do His work for 25 years.

Therefore, a committee was put together who had the task to organize an evening filled with speeches, singing, and entertainment.

The committee did a wonderful job, and together with Rev. VanSpronsen and his family, the Vernon congregation, delegates from other churches, and others who came as friends, we were able to celebrate the joyous occasion of this 25th anniversary.

The master of ceremonies for the evening was br. G. Kleine-Dieters – a logical choice since he was one of the first members of the Vernon congregation and therefore would know the most of its

history. Being FIRST is one of the special characteristics of Vernon, and as a result our pastor and his family fit right in – the first graduate from the “travelling”

Theological College; the first bachelor minister for Carman; the first missionary for Brazil; the first missionary for the Indians in Smithers; and once again, the first minister for the Vernon congregation.

After the opening and word of welcome by our M.C., br. Lodder, as representative of the consistory was allowed to speak a few words. Again Rev. VanSpronsen must have been reminded of FIRSTS – the first baptism he performed in Vernon was a child of brother and sister Lodder.

That evening Vernon was to continue in this trend of FIRSTS. The choir, which did not exist until preparations for this celebration started, performed for the first time.

Throughout the evening delegates representing the different societies or churches were given the opportunity to say a few congratulatory words. They all came, varying in form and style; from the lengthy (lengthy because they could reveal much about our pastor’s past!) to the “imitation” sermons with 3 points which coloured our pastor as handsome, fatherly, and orderly, to the short which sim-



The choir performing for the first time

ply but meaningfully said, "Thank-you!" Those congregations who were unable to attend in person sent their congratulations by letter. The Boys' and Girls' Club revealed some of Rev. VanSpronsen's past by means of a skit, after which they presented him with a medal.

The Vernon congregation had not forgotten that 25 years as servant of the Lord does tend to cause some wear and tear, especially for a well travelled minister as ours. A thoughtful token of appreciation was presented to our minister in the form of a leather briefcase. After accepting his gift and planning to return to his place of honour, Rev. VanSpronsen was asked to first take a look inside the briefcase, and there he found another

2 gifts – a pen stand, and calculator which, as was explained, could hold the entire church directory, as long as it remained under 700!

And yes, we did give the Rev. the opportunity to say a few words, but not until the end of the evening when everything else was said and done (and recorded)! He was, needless to say, overwhelmed, as his opening remark, "What shall I say?!" clearly showed. We gave him a moment to collect his thoughts, and then requested him to simply say, "Cheese" (we did need a picture for *Clarion!*).

In his reply, Rev. VanSpronsen thanked the congregations for what they had done for him and his family over the

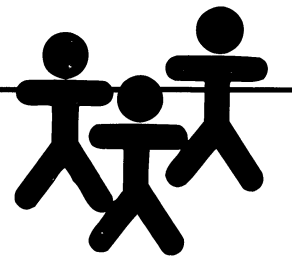
past 25 years. He also stressed that he received the much needed support from his own family; parents, wife and children. He has felt the prayerful support of all throughout the years, and how it is only because of the grace of God that his work, as servant of the Lord, has gone unhindered for 25 years.

It was an evening of celebration and thankfulness. An evening to be remembered by us all. It is our prayer that the Lord may grant our pastor many more years in His service. Maybe Vernon will get the chance to add another "first" to our minister's long list of "firsts" – the first minister to retire in the beautiful Okanagan Valley after many years of service (no calls please!).



## SCHOOL CROSSING

By A. Witten



# Motivated Learners Young and Old

When scanning the "back-to-school" issues it quickly becomes obvious, from the various reports, that many teachers have spent their summer preparing for the next school year by taking courses or otherwise getting their classrooms "ready." Among the various assignments for this year a number of Adult Education courses are available! Also Reformed school boards and their staffs are offering opportunities for on-going learning.

Learning is indeed a lifelong process. To remain competent at a task, a profession or a trade, one must continually be involved in some type of learning. Someone has suggested that the actual time spent in school, as a full-time student, makes up on the average only 9 per cent of an individual's life. This time spent in school is, therefore, important in order to become motivated for a life-time of learning.

As schools again open their doors and teachers welcome back their stu-

dents the enthusiasm and energy needed to motivate teachers and students seems apparent. One principal put it simply by stating: "we are ready!"

Other first day school assemblies, to which parents are often invited as well, set a biblical theme for the school year in order to be properly motivational, such as: "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all, and in all" (Col. 3:11).

In another September school bulletin the motivation for our work is captured with reference to Romans 12 with the words "help them achieve that renewal of their minds which the Bible promises will transform them."

Yet another "meditation" puts the year's learning in perspective by highlighting that "the only way to be really happy in such [a decadent, sorrowful]

world as this, is to be ever casting all our cares on God."

Not only the spiritual but the physical is also mentioned in looking forward to the next season. The means needed for schools to operate for another year, in recognition of the Giver of all things, is in many school magazines especially acknowledged with gratitude. Rapid advancement in areas of technology and knowledge results in facilities being spruced up as welcoming places to be.

Learners, meanwhile, old and young, at the beginning of a new season think about whether they know enough. Some adult learners seek out a computer course, or a modern history course, others an art course or small engines course or enroll in professional training programs. In southern Ontario and in southern B.C. the local high school is offering night courses. Have you enrolled yet?


Some educators suggest that for us all to continue to be learners everyone

should be part of a community of learners. Intellectual curiosity is not restricted to any age group. The more excited we are about learning, the greater the potential learning. Do we encourage each other?

Teachers have a tremendous task in shaping and molding the eagerness to learn. One of the ways to do that is to encourage ourselves and each other to learn by describing and understanding how we learn. By describing how we learn as adult learners, or as young students, we are helped to make continuous modifications of our learning. As teachers we make modifications to what happens in the classroom on the basis of

cues which students convey as they are learning. Adult learners in particular can do that themselves. After carefully observing and describing how we do things we can make adjustments and improvements in how we learn! Just think about how you master a new skill such as wind surfing or board surfing. Through much repeated effort we get the idea. Others may give us helpful hints and examples but you have to experience trying to keep your balance and catching the wind yourself before beginning to understand "how" and thus improve.

As we this year think about whether we are maintaining an enthusiasm for

learning and continuing to be competent learners at whatever our task, we will recognize that we need vision, wisdom and sound judgment in order to be humble and faithful in obedience to God's Word. Every Sunday again, as learners with a clear head and an open heart, we go to church to be nurtured by faithful preaching. It is only living from this source that we can bring a biblical perspective to our daily efforts. Learning about God's mighty works gives us as young and old a never ending responsibility and joy. May this motivate us for also this "back-to-school" year. 

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# News from the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies

*By M. Spithoff*

The first meeting of this school year was held September 27, 1991 at the Teachers' College in Hamilton.

## League activities

**League Workshop:** On Friday, October 18, the League will present a workshop at which various aspects related to "Board-Staff Relationships" will be presented and discussed. After the introduction, participants will be given the opportunity to show ideas on establishing and maintaining good Board-Staff relationships.

**Annual Board League Day:** As a result of a request by an education committee member for guidance and specific guidelines in carrying out the duties of classroom visits, the League plans to have a workshop on this matter. The function of the classroom visit and how it should be conducted would be important aspects of the discussion of this workshop to be held at the Annual Board League

Day. The exact date of this February 1992 day will be announced next time. All board members and interested people are invited to attend this event.

## Teacher training

The training of teachers is an ongoing concern of the Teachers' College. In the past, they have asked the League for advice on various aspects of teacher training. What kind of training would the boards welcome is one such concern. School boards have had ample opportunity to discuss this over the past year. The League proceeded to adopt the following motion.

a) That the Kampen report recommendation to encourage changes to the Teachers' College program be rejected at this time, but that boards be encouraged to promote the one-year program among prospective teachers.


b) That, with the continuing shortage of teachers, it is not presently recom-

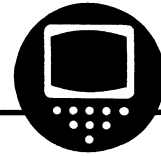
mended to put in place a two-year program beyond a B.A.

c) That the Teachers' College be commended for the work done to date.

d) That the whole issue of teacher training continue to have the attention of the League and its member schools.

## Staff development

The executive of the Canadian Reformed Teachers' Association has made a proposal to the League to establish a committee to develop an agenda for professional staff development in our schools. It was suggested that boards become more insistent that teachers continue to develop professionally on a regular basis either by in-service workshops, courses, conventions, etc. That the League set up such a committee is also an item in its new constitution. This will have further discussion at the next League meeting. 



## Classis Pacific, October 8-9, 1991 in Langley, BC

On behalf of the convening church at Port Kells, elder P. Jansen requests the brothers to sing Hymn 36:4, 5, reads from Rom. 8:1-17 and leads in prayer. He welcomes all of the brothers, especially Candidate W.M. Wielenga and the Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O. the Revs. P.K.A. DeBoer and E.J. Tiggelaar. Furthermore he makes mention of the following highlights: the Rev. C. VanSpronsen celebrated his 25th anniversary as a Minister of the Word; the Rev. M. VanderWel, who has served the churches for more than 29 years, has requested to be relieved of his official duties and to enter his retirement years; the Church at Langley continues to grow rapidly and has divided into two wards; the Church at Port Kells remains vacant; the Church at Surrey called the Rev. E.L. Van't Foort as missionary to Brazil but he declined and the Rev. P.K. Meijer has decided to stay on the mission field for an additional year.

The church at Lynden reports on the credentials. All the churches in Classis Pacific are represented. The primi delegates from the church at Abbotsford have been delayed temporarily due to a funeral and are represented by an alternate (they enter the meeting later). Several churches have instructions. Classis is declared constituted.

The suggested officers are appointed and take their place. They are: chairman - Rev. G.H. Visscher; vice-chairman - Rev. J. Visscher; clerk - Rev. C. VanSpronsen.

The chairman thanks the convening church for the preparatory work done for this classis. He welcomes the guests present and makes particular mention of the presence of the Rev. L. Bilkes, pastor of the Free Reformed Church at Aldergrove. Later on he will welcome the Rev. A. VanDelden, pastor of the Free Reformed Church at Bedfordale, Western Australia, and students from the Credo Christian High School. The agenda is finalized.

The first major matter on the agenda deals with the Peremptory Examination of Candidate W.M. Wielenga, who has accepted the call to the church at Lynden. He presents his sermon proposal on Acts 6:8-15. Classis discusses it and decides to proceed with the exam.

The Rev. C. VanSpronsen examines the candidate on Daniel 1 and Psalm 23. The Rev. G.H. Visscher examines him on Matthew 1 and Hebrews 2. The Rev. W.B. Slomp examines him on his knowledge of Holy Scripture. The Rev. B.J. Berends examines him on Church History. The Rev. J. Moesker examines him on Ethics. The Rev. M.H. VanLuik examines him on Church Polity. The Rev. J. Visscher examines him

on Diaconiology. The Rev. M. VanderWel examines him on Doctrine and Creeds. After each subject an opportunity is given to the members of classis to ask pertinent questions.

After the examination the classis evaluates the results in closed session. Upon hearing the individual examiners, the members of classis and the Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O., classis decides to admit Candidate W.M. Wielenga to the Ministry of the Word in the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches.

The chairman informs the candidate about the result of the exam. The documents pertaining to the call of Candidate Wielenga to the church at Lynden are read and approved. The call is approbated. The chairman asks the candidate to sign the Form for Subscription. He congratulates the candidate, comments on the long line of ministers in the Wielenga family of which the candidate represents the fifth generation, requests that Psalm 134:3 be sung and leads in prayer. The brothers receive an opportunity to extend their felicitations.

The church at Abbotsford requests Classis Pacific to approve the retirement of the Rev. M. VanderWel. The appropriate documents are read. After having discussed the matter and receiving the concurring advice of the Deputies of the Regional Synod ad Art. 48 C.O., classis decides to grant the request. The Rev. M. VanderWel will commence his retirement as of Dec. 31, 1991. The Chairman speaks some fitting words of thankfulness for all the work that the Rev. M. VanderWel has done in the church at Abbotsford, the region of Classis Pacific and the Canadian Reformed Churches in general. He wishes the Rev. VanderWel and his wife the blessings of the Lord in their retirement years. The Rev. M. VanderWel in turn expresses his thankfulness for the years that he could serve Classis Pacific and for the brotherly harmony that he has always experienced.

Various reports are received. The Committee for Needy Churches reports on the support given to the church at Vernon. Classis decides to continue the support to the church at Vernon with an amount of \$20,144.00 (\$12.00 per communicant member) for the year 1992. This represents a decrease of 20%. The Committee is thanked for its work. The Church Visitors report on visits made to the churches at Smithers and Surrey (Maranatha). They are read and received. The church for the Auditing the books of Classis Pacific, the church at Vernon, reports that the books are in good order. The work which the treasurer, br. A.H. Lubbers, does for classis is noted with gratitude. The Committee for Needy Students reports on its financial dealings for the year 1990-1991. Its books

have been audited and were found to be in good order.

A number of appeals were received, declared admissible and dealt with in closed session.

A number of churches request advice in matters of discipline and advice is given.

Classis busies itself with the matter of appointments. The church at Smithers is appointed to convene the next classis in Langley on Dec. 3, 1991 or if there are no matters for the agenda, on March 10, 1992. The suggested officers are Rev. J. Visscher as chairman, Rev. C. VanSpronsen as vice-chairman, and Rev. B.J. Berends as clerk.

The Committee for Examinations is re-appointed, with the following changes being made: Organizing Deputies - Rev. C. VanSpronsen and Rev. J. Visscher; Exegesis O.T. - Rev. W.B. Slomp; Doctrine and Creeds - Rev. J. Visscher; Knowledge Holy Scripture - Rev. W.M. Wielenga; Diaconiology - Rev. C. VanSpronsen.

The Church Visitors are re-appointed with the following changes: Organizer - Rev. G.H. Visscher; new church visitor - Rev. J. Moesker; new alternate visitor - Rev. M.H. VanLuik.

The Committee for Needy Churches is re-appointed with the following changes: Rev. J. Moesker in place of the retiring Rev. M. VanderWel.

Appointed as Deputies for Classical Preaching Arrangements are the Revs. C. VanSpronsen and J. Visscher.

Appointed to represent Classis Pacific at the ordination of Candidate W.M. Wielenga is the Rev. M. VanderWel and at the retirement ceremony of the Rev. M. VanderWel is the Rev. M.H. VanLuik. He is also appointed as counselor of the church at Abbotsford when that church becomes vacant.

The churches at Abbotsford, Lynden and Port Kells request to receive preaching supply for one Sunday per month. This is granted.

Personal question period is held and used. Questions are asked about the frequency of church visitations and the time period allotted for the subject called Diaconiology. The delegates from the church at Vernon thank the classis for the financial support received.

Censure ad Art. 44 C.O. is deemed to be unnecessary.

The Acts and Press Release are read and adopted.

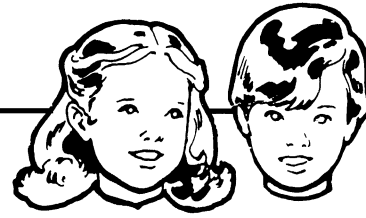
The chairman requests the brothers to sing Hymn 40:1, 4, leads in prayer and closes the meeting.

For the classis,  
J. Visscher, vice-chairman



# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



## Hello Busy Beavers,

Colourful cover, fun pictures...no wonder this book *caught my eye!*

"How to Make *Pop-ups*" it said. I was in the library when I saw this *fun* book.

You will find it fun, too!

It shows you how to make:

- cards with a rocket that moves
- cards with pop-up animals and cars
- cards with doors and mouths that open
- cards with flowers in a basket
- a pocket, fold-up zoo!

What do you do now that it gets dark early?

If you enjoy making pictures, this book will help you make wonderful, *pop-up* cards for your friends and your family.

The book is called *How to Make Pop-ups*. It was written by Joan Irvine, and published by Kids Can Press.

It's easy to read. And fun to *use!*

I saw it in our library. It will be in yours too! So get those markers ready!

## WING IT?

Wings on ski poles?

Really? Yes, really!

Did you read how some kids in New Mexico were trying nylon wings held in place by their arms and ski poles?

What a way to soar lightly over the snow!

Some of you Busy Beavers live where you can ski.

Some of you *don't*.

So what *do* you do?

Skate? Swim? Play hockey? Join a gym class?

Let's hear how *you* keep moving!

## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Rachelle Van Veen*. Thank you for your letter. I hope you will write again soon. What song are you playing on your piano now, *Rachelle*?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Heidi Beukema*. I see you enjoyed camping last summer. What do you do to keep busy now, *Heidi*? Do you like making pictures? Did you read about making *pop-ups*? Bye for now!

# Quiz Time!

## WHAT SHALL I DO?

When in trouble, people often say, "What shall I do?" Can you match the person with the question?

- |                                       |  |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Jailer<br>Acts 16:30               | a. "Then what shall I do with Jesus...."   |
| 2. Rich young ruler<br>Matt. 19:16    | b. "What shall I do? I will send my beloved son; it may be they will respect him."     |
| 3. Pilate<br>Matt. 27:22              | c. "What then can I do for you, my son."   |
| 4. Rich man<br>Luke 12:17             | d. "...what then shall I do when God rises up? ...what shall I answer Him"?            |
| 5. Lord of the vineyard<br>Luke 20:13 | e. "If Jacob marries...one of the women of the land, what good will my life be to me"? |
| 6. Paul<br>Acts 22:10                 | f. "What shall I do with this people"?   |
| 7. Isaac<br>Gen. 27:37                | g. "What shall I do, Lord"?  |
| 8. Moses<br>Ex. 17:4                  | h. "What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops"?                            |
| 9. Job<br>Job 31:14                   | i. "Teacher, what good deed must I do, to have eternal life"?                          |
| 10. Rebekah<br>Gen. 27:46             | j. "Men, what must I do to be saved"?  |

## COMPUTER RIDDLES

1. What did the proud mother computer say to her smart baby?
2. What happened to the computer that stayed up all night working on a problem?
3. What did the computer say when the dinosaur told him to hurry up?
4. What did the computer say to the penny?
5. What's an astronaut sandwich made of?
6. What do you get when you cross a lobster with a computer?



# FALL WORDSEARCH

from Busy Beaver Anya Malda

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

**Look for:**

LEAVES  
 RAKE  
 ORANGE  
 RED  
 BROWN  
 WIND  
 PUMPKINS  
 THANKSGIVING  
 FAIRS  
 COOLED  
 HALLOWEEN  
 FROST  
 HARVEST

## FIND THE HIDDEN SENTENCE

We did a puzzle like this before. Do you remember the directions?

1. Start with the \* letter.
2. Make a continuous pencil line going up, down, left or right, but *never* diagonally.

If you did it right you can read the sentence.

I	H	D	U
S	T	O	O
G	E	C*	Y
A	M	A	N

Solution: \_\_\_\_\_

I	R	P	R
S	E	*S	U
O	Y	E	L
U	R	S	F

Solution: \_\_\_\_\_

## ANSWERS

*Find the Hidden Sentence*

1. Can you do this game? 2. Surprise yourself.

*Computer Riddles*

1. "DATA girl" 2. It finally dawned on him 3. "Pronto, Saurus;" 4. "Let's get together and make some cents;" 5. launch meat  
 6. a snappy answer!

Just about time to say "Good-bye," Busy Beavers.

If you have a *Christmas* puzzle, story, or picture you want to share with the Busy Beavers, would you please send it? Here is my address:

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

Love to you all,  
 Aunt Betty