

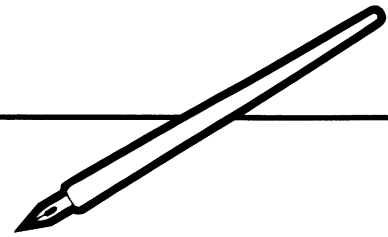


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The Year of our Lord 1992: “All or Nothing”

In Matthew 13:12 we read these words of Christ: “For to him who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away.” These words seem contradictory. How can one who has not still lose what he has? He has and he has not. What does this mean?

These words are spoken in the context of Christ’s speaking in the form of parables, the first one being the parable of the Sower. There is judgment here, and sovereign grace. To the disciples is given (it is purely a gift) to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven. To others, the unbelieving and unrepentant Jews, it is not given. Thus, the disciples have, and more will be given to them, so that they will have abundance. But the people who refuse to repent in response to the gospel, even what they have will be taken away.

This context throws light on the meaning. Christ spoke these words in the framework of the covenant. It is in the covenant that one can speak about this not having and having, at the same time, and a losing even what one has. The people of Israel, as before, so in those days, had great privileges. They were children of God. God had spoken, and still maintained to them His word of the Law: You shall not have other gods before Me, because He had said first: “I am the LORD your God.” This “I am the LORD your God” held everything. It included all God’s covenant promises. Full eternal salvation was included. The people of God could say: Since God gave Himself to us as our God, He gave us everything with Him. He who has God, has everything for ever. This is present and future reality.

But it is a reality in Christ. One can also say: it is a reality which, at the same time, bears the character of promise. With this, “I am the LORD your God” – with this having all salvation as gift from God with having Him – comes the demand of faith. Through faith God’s covenant children are called and commanded by God to appropriate personally what they have from Him. If they do not do this and refuse to make what God has given them in the covenant their own through faith, they will lose what they possess.

It is evident how this appropriating takes place. In the preaching of God’s Word the treasures are presented to God’s people. In the preaching they are shown what they have from God in Christ. Now God wants His children to hear and take, and keep taking, what they have and is offered to them, always again, in faith. We are here not denying the command of God that the free gospel offer has to go out to those outside the church as well. The petition, “Thy kingdom come” contains the prayer, “Preserve and increase Thy church.”

In all this we can see our calling for the new year, the Year of the Lord, 1992. This year, undoubtedly, will bring its own hardships and troubles, physically and mentally, financially and in human relations, as well as otherwise. But the need that dominates it all is that of the coming of God’s kingdom. It is that of “Preserve and increase Thy church.” Both is done through the preaching of the gospel, the sowing of the seed of God’s Word. By being preached, this Word, shining as a lamp in a dark place, has to bring into the open what kind of soil we are for the seed. The preaching has to reveal whether we are good soil, or soil that is trodden, thin, or filled with the root systems of choking thorns and thistles.

Therefore, the need that dominates all others is the need for the Word of God and its proclamation. It is, also for 1992, a matter of “all or nothing” through the preaching of the gospel. This places a great responsibility on those called to preach God’s Word. They are to preach the whole truth, the fullness of salvation, the full counsel of God. This salvation is through Christ’s blood and Spirit. It is both forgiveness and renewal, justification and sanctification. It is a matter of having died and having been raised with Christ. This preaching will have to sound the call unto faith, which always includes the call unto repentance from everything that is sinful.

Thus, let us continue to support the preaching of God’s Word to the world in the context of evangelism at home and mission abroad. It is through God’s Word that all the riches of salvation come to all who hear it. The promise is that every one who believes will be saved. At the same time, let us work and pray that the preaching to those who have a place in God’s covenant already does not diminish.

In his second letter to Timothy (2:10), the apostle Paul, writing about his missionary and pastoral ministry, says that he endures all his sufferings coming with his ministry “for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus.” Faith and salvation remains pure gifts of God. Yet, Christ stresses our responsibility when pointing out that those who have not will lose what they have, while those who have will have more. They will have abundance. The rich will become richer. But the poor will become poorer. Christ emphasizes this responsibility also with the other warning in the same context (Luke 8:18, “Take heed then how you hear. For to him who has will more be given, but....”


In the church, in the covenant, we, believing parents and children, have the triune God as our God because He gave Himself to us in Christ. We are God’s children, since God

says: "In Christ I am your God." The treasures of God's kingdom are ours, in Christ. But we must be aware of it that this is in promise, and that God commands us: what you hear, make that your own. You can lose what you have.

What will happen in 1992? Will our world bring itself in greater financial debts yet? Will we, economically, become poorer yet? Will there be a further increasing economic regressing in the world, in our own country, and in our own life? We do not know. But if this becoming poorer economically means a becoming richer through an appropriating by faith of the riches which we have in Christ, we

can give thanks to God also in 1992. But whatever happens, God's rule remains, and we are all subject to it: To him who has will more be given; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away."

What will happen in 1992? So much is uncertain. Certain is that in the way of the preaching of the Gospel God will continue to gather His elect. These elect are those who have and, through the Holy Spirit, appropriate, so that they will have abundantly.

I wish all the readers a truly rich and happy 1992. 

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

The antithesis and marriage

An issue that does not want to die in the churches is the matter of mixed courtships and marriages, i.e. dating and marriage between a believer and an unbeliever. Few consistories, if any, are spared this problem. So alive is this issue that the consistory of our sister church in Kelmscott felt compelled to make an eight point decision in which it states that it "...is of the strong conviction that mixed courtships are contrary to God's revealed will and should be terminated" (Press Review: "Mixed Courtships," *In Holy Array*, vol. 39, no. 2).

Strong language. Are mixed courtships contrary to God's revealed will? Should they be terminated? Yes they are, and yes they should be.

The testimony of the Scriptures is unanimous in this. God has placed a wall of separation between believers and unbelievers. We call that wall of separation "the antithesis." This does not mean that we may not do business with unbelievers. This does not mean that we must live in communes withdrawn from the world. What it does mean is that although we live *in* the world we may not become part of the world. Above all it means that we may not join an unbeliever in the primary relationship of life, marriage. Above all the antithesis means that we may not cleave to an unbeliever, we may not weave a life with an unbeliever, in marriage.

Let's take a walk through the Bible and discover this once again.

In Genesis 3:15, after Adam and Eve fell into sin by obeying Satan, God

said to the devil, "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed." God drew the line of separation. God established the enmity, the antithesis, the line between followers of the devil and the children of Eve. This line cuts between believers and unbelievers, children of the church and children of the world. We must maintain this antithesis. The history recorded in the Bible shows what happens when God's people do not maintain the antithesis and marry unbelievers.

Genesis 6 is the first record of the devastating consequences of intermarriage. People of God paid no attention to the line God had set between them and people of the world. They married whomever they desired. The result was that the whole human race, except for Noah and his family, ended up rebels against God. God was sorry that He had created man. He wiped man off the face of the earth with the universal flood.

In Deuteronomy 7:3, 4, as the people of God stood at the entrance to the Promised Land, Moses forbade the people from marrying Canaanites. Moses said that if the people would allow intermarriage, the inevitable result would be that the Israelite young people would turn away from God and begin worshipping the gods of Canaan. The final result would be the judgment of God.

History proved Moses right. After God had established Israel in the

Promised Land and after Joshua and the generation of his time had died, the new generation intermarried with the Canaanites still left in the land. They ignored the antithesis. Judges 3:6 says: "...and they took their daughters to themselves for wives, and their own daughters they gave to their sons; and they served their gods."

The inescapable result of marriage between the people of God and the people of the world was that the people of God ended up serving heathen gods. Of course! They had lost the battle when they ignored the antithesis. They were defeated the moment they compromised and embraced in marriage someone on the other side of the line God had drawn.

The sin of intermarriage has never been far from God's people. We read about it again in the last two chapters of Ezra. The Jews had spent 70 years in exile in Babylon. God had driven them away from his land. This was God's judgment against their sin of idolatry largely due to intermarriage. After 70 years God allowed them to come home again. Before long, many of the men had taken wives from among the heathen people who were living in the land. Ezra called them to repentance. They were a "holy race" which may not mix with "the peoples of the lands" (Ezra 9:2). The people recognized what they had done as sin before God.

The N.T. is consistent with the O.T. in this. The people of God is no longer restricted to one race, the Jews; how-

ever, God still has His people whom He calls holy. We are a chosen race, a holy nation, God's own people (1 Peter 2:9). Believers form the holy race. And the people of that holy race may not marry unbelievers.

In 2 Corinthians 6:14, Paul writes: "Do not be mismated with unbelievers." There is no more basic mating than marriage. Marriage is the primary relationship in life besides the one we have with the Lord Jesus Christ. A believer cannot marry an unbeliever because they have nothing in common.

You will submit the argument: "Who knows? Maybe I'll win her for Christ. Maybe God will use my relationship with her to bring her to the church." The problem with that argument is that it is based on "maybes." We don't build relationships on

"maybes." We don't build relationships upon what we hope the hidden will of God might be. We build relationships on the revealed will of God, the Bible. And the Bible forbids believers marrying unbelievers.

You will say: "But I can name you a dozen examples of cases where a believer married an unbeliever, and the unbeliever became a Christian. And today he's a strong member of the church. Some are even elders." So can I. Praise God for His sovereign mercy and grace! But we can both mention a dozen examples where it went the other way. Again, we do not build upon the unknown. We build upon the clear teaching of the Word of God.

Don't overestimate your ability to stand strong in the Christian faith while married to an unbeliever. Nehemiah, a

contemporary of Ezra, pointed out to the people that King Solomon, a king endowed with the wisdom of God like none other, was led into the gross sin of idolatry by heathen wives. The command of Paul is appropriate: "Let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall."

My young brothers and sisters, please maintain the antithesis in your lives. The line of separation which God has placed between you and the world demands that you make serious choices. You must make choices about how you are going to dress, what kind of work you are going to do, what you do for entertainment, who your friends will be. It certainly demands that you make a careful choice whom you will marry.



An "Election Theology" of Covenant⁵

By D. Engelsma

The basic charge against the Protestant Reformed doctrine of the covenant of grace by Canadian Reformed ("Liberated") theologian Dr. J. DeJong is that it is an "election theology" of the covenant. In his letter in the March 15, 1991 issue of the *Standard Bearer*, Dr. DeJong wrote:

Engelsma is only perpetuating the same kind of "election" theology which refuses to entertain the Scriptural teaching of faith as the way or condition to salvation and the notion of God's wrath against covenant breakers.

He lodged the same charge in other words when he alleged "the typical Protestant Reformed interpretation that makes election dominate all other doctrines."

To the accusation that theirs is an "election theology" of covenant, the PRC enthusiastically plead guilty.

By an "election theology" of covenant, we understand, first, that God's establishment of His covenant with a people is due to His eternal election of that people. In harmony with this, secondly, eternal election determines who

they are to whom God makes His covenant promise. Accordingly, in the third place, by His Spirit and Word God brings into His covenant, and gives the blessings of the covenant to, those men, women, and children whom He chose. Election is decisive for inclusion in the covenant. Therefore, fourthly, faith is not a condition unto membership in the covenant, or unto the salvation enjoyed in the covenant. Rather, faith is the way in which God unites elect sinners to Himself in the covenant, the means by which God's covenant friends both embrace the blessings of the covenant and perform their part in the covenant, and the gift of God to the chosen in fulfillment of the covenant promise....

It is the clear, pervasive, and massive testimony of the Bible that God's covenant with Israel and the church is due to, based upon, and wholly determined by God's eternal election. Moses said to Israel, "The LORD Thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto Himself, above (Hebrew: in distinction from) all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deut. 7:6). Paul tells the

New Testament church the same thing at the beginning of the outstanding New Testament book on the church: "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him; in love having predestinated us..." (Eph. 1:3-5). The church's covenant position, covenant members, covenant blessings, and covenant responsibilities are determined by divine election in Christ.¹

This testimony of Scripture is made the creedal position of the Reformed churches in the Canons of Dordt. Although the Canons do not often mention the covenant of grace, the doctrine of the Canons is an "election theology" of covenant. For the saving of sinners is a matter of God's making His covenant with them (Is. 55:3); and the Canons ground the salvation of sinners squarely upon election (cf. I/7).

At one crucial point, however, the Canons make this explicit. This occurs in the second chapter, "Of the Death of

Christ and the Redemption of Men Thereby." The central article is Article 8. This article sets forth Christ's death as a covenant death: He died as Head and Mediator of the new covenant in order to redeem to Himself a covenant people out of all nations. As regards its purpose to gather particular persons and as regards its securing all the benefits of salvation for these persons, including faith, the cross of Jesus Christ was due to, based on, and strictly controlled by God's eternal election:

It was the will of God, that Christ by the blood of the cross, whereby He confirmed the new covenant, should effectually redeem out of every people, tribe, nation, and language, all those, and those only, who were from eternity chosen to salvation...should confer upon them faith...should purge them from all sin...(and) should...bring them...to the enjoyment of glory in His own presence forever.

What makes this "election theology of covenant" of the Canons even more forceful is the Canons' repudiation of every attempt to cut the covenant loose from election. The Canons guard against the error of separating covenant from election in the "Rejection of Errors" section attached to the second chapter, especially Articles 2-5. Specifically, our Reformed confession condemns the notion that anyone has been accepted "unto the state of reconciliation and unto the grace of the covenant" except the elect. The creed also rejects that view of the covenant that sees it as nothing more than a conditional means unto eternal life, man's own faith being the condition.²

Against this powerful witness of the Canons themselves to an "election theology" of covenant, the "Liberated" cannot appeal to Canons I/17 as though this article teaches that all the children of believers without exception, those who finally perish as well as those who are saved, are in the covenant. Dr. DeJong makes this appeal: "All the children are explicitly included in the covenant (in Canons, I/17)."

Surely Dr. DeJong sees that his appeal to Canons, I/17, in support of the "Liberated" doctrine that all the children are in the covenant in the same way, proves far too much, even for the "Liberated." For this article speaks of our children's being comprehended in the covenant of grace *in the sense that the children are elect and saved*. Does Dr. DeJong want to contend that all the children of godly parents alike are com-

prehended in the covenant of grace as *elect and saved*?

Canons, I/17 is not speaking of all the children of godly parents without exception. The article refers to a specific, limited number of covenant children: "(those) whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy." If this pastoral statement were to be formulated as a doctrinal proposition, the proposition would run thus: "All of the children of godly parents who die in infancy are to be considered elect and saved by virtue of the covenant of grace." So far is this article from supporting a doctrine of the covenant that pits membership in the covenant against election that, on the contrary, the article expressly grounds our children's comprehension in the covenant in election. "Godly parents have no reason to doubt of the *election*...of their children," who die in infancy.³

Above all else, the PRC are constrained to hold an "election theology" of the covenant by the ninth chapter of Romans. The Holy Spirit here addresses the exact issue that divides the covenant theology of the "Liberated" from the covenant theology of the PRC. The issue is decided by this chapter of Holy Scripture.

Romans 9 is not a theological treatise on predestination in general, but

apostolic doctrine concerning God's covenant of grace. The great concern of the apostle is to demonstrate that the Word of God has not failed (v. 6). This Word of God is the covenant promise to father Abraham, to establish His covenant with Abraham and his children so as to be a God to Abraham and his children. This covenant Word might be thought to have failed because so many natural sons and daughters of Abraham reject Christ and perish – the thing that causes Paul "great heaviness and continual sorrow" (v. 2).

But the Word has not failed. The explanation is that God never made the covenant promise to every physical descendant of Abraham. The promise, "I will be the God of your children," did not refer to all physical Jews.

There is a distinction between two kinds of children of believing Abraham. There are those children who are merely physical offspring. The apostle calls them "children of the flesh" (v. 8). There are also the children whom the apostle refers to as "the children of the promise" (v. 8). These are the children who are born again by the power of the promise, so that they are living children of God.

The Word of God's covenant promise did not refer to the "children of the flesh." They were not in view when



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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial – The Year of our Lord 1992: "All or Nothing."
– J. Geertsema2

Remember Your Creator – The marriage and the antithesis
– G.Ph. van Popta3

An "Election Theology" of Covenants – D. Engelsma4

The Covenant and the Children of Believers – A Reply – J. DeJong ...6

Church News8

Ray of Sunshine
– Mrs. R. Ravensbergen9

College Corner – Donations Gratefully Received
– C. Van Dam.....10

Book Review – Divorce and Remarriage – G. Nederveen11

School Crossing – About Students
– A. Witten12

Press Releases13

Our Little Magazine – Aunt Betty ...15

God said to Abraham, "I will be the God of your seed." Only the "children of the promise" are counted for the seed (v. 8). Since the seed of Abraham are exclusively the children of promise, the Word of God has not failed. God has kept and fulfilled His covenant promise with every one of the seed of Abraham.

Paul illustrates, and proves, the truth of this distinction from Old Testament history. Abraham had two sons, but God Himself said, "In Isaac (only) shall thy seed be called" (Gen. 21:12; Rom. 9:7). Also the Word of Jehovah to Rebecca concerning her unborn twins, grandsons of Abraham, "The elder shall serve the younger," was a Word that made radical distinction between two physical children of Abraham (Gen. 25:23; Rom. 9:12, 13). The promise of the covenant was only for Jacob. Esau was excluded.

This distinction between two kinds of children of Abraham is fundamental for the concern of the passage that the

Word of God did not fail. If all the children of Abraham are the same and if the Word of promise came to them all alike, the Word *did* fail in numberless instances. It failed in the case of Esau.

The question then is, "What accounts for the distinction between the two kinds of children?" Specifically, "What accounts for the fact that some of Abraham's physical children are children of the promise?" The answer of the apostle is: "The purpose of God according to election" (v. 11). Eternal election determines the true, spiritual seed of Abraham. Eternal election determines that the covenant promise is for them only. Inasmuch as the covenant promise is the promise that the covenant is established with someone personally – the promise of one's own inclusion in the covenant of grace – eternal election determines membership in the covenant of grace.

Romans 9:11ff. is not simply the classic passage in the Bible on the eter-

nal decree of election and reprobation. But the passage sets forth God's predestination as the source and standard of all of God's covenantal dealings in history. The subject of the passage, it must be remembered, is the saving and the hardening of the children of believing Abraham. By implication, the subject of the passage is the saving and the hardening of the children of godly parents in every age.

Romans 9 is the Holy Spirit's "election theology" of covenant.

Thus, and only thus, is defended and proclaimed the sovereignty, the grace, and the faithfulness of the covenant God of Israel and the church. Thus, and only thus, is maintained the reliability of the Word of promise for believers and their children today. The Word of promise by which we are saved and upon which we depend does not fail.⁴

(to be concluded)



The Covenant and the Children of Believers – A Reply⁵

By J. DeJong

In his fifth response to my earlier rebuttal of his charges against us, Prof. Engelsma proceeds to point out how he reads the confession, and to highlight those areas where he feels we read it incorrectly. I will answer him at the numbered points in his article.

1. Election and Scripture

In the first part of his response, Prof. Engelsma again makes clear his view that the covenant of God is only made with those who are elect according to God's eternal counsel. While we confess the doctrine of election as much as he does, and also uphold the scriptural doctrine as confessed in the Canons of Dort, it is *this* assertion of Engelsma that we dispute. Engelsma says: "Election is decisive for inclusion in the covenant." To this we respond: This is only one side of the matter. For although God chose a *people* to Himself, election is, at bottom, *particular*. The Scriptures also make clear that not all who are *chosen* in the covenant are ultimately *elect* in Christ. In

1 Cor. 10 Paul says that the people of Israel were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, and they drank from the supernatural rock which fol-

"...all the children of godly parents belong to the covenant of grace...."

lowed them, and the rock was Christ. Yet he adds: "Nevertheless with most of them God was not pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness," v. 5. Many who were included in the covenant were later rejected. Why? They were cut off because of unbelief, cf. Heb.

3:19. That is the "clear, pervasive, and massive testimony" of Scripture reflected in the creeds!

2. Election and confession

When Engelsma then begins to read his specific view that the covenant is made only with the elect *into* the confessions, one sees a remarkable thing. The confession is no longer read accurately, or at face value. For example, Engelsma says that the Canons of Dort Chapter 11 Art. 8 "sets forth Christ's death as a covenant death: He died as Head and Mediator of the new covenant in order to redeem to Himself a covenant people out of all nations." If one carefully reads Ch. 11, Art. 8 of the Canons, then one notices that it does not say what Engelsma purports it to say. For nowhere does the Article teach that Christ is the *Head* of the new covenant, and that therefore only the *elect* are included in this covenant. In fact, the Rejection of Errors II/4 clearly imply that Dort sees the covenant of God

made with *man* and not with *Christ*. Christ is the Mediator of the covenant, and so becomes the *Head* of the new humanity, the church of God.

Engelsma then continues to read the Rejection of Errors with a biased and pre-conceived perspective. He says: "Specifically, our Reformed confession condemns the notion that anyone has been accepted 'unto the state of reconciliation' except the elect." But when one reads what the Rejection of Errors II/5 says, once again one finds that the article does not say what Engelsma purports it to say. Rather, this article condemns the view that "all men have been accepted into the state of reconciliation and into the grace of the covenant." This article is directed against the Arminian teaching that all men have been included into the grace of the covenant in Adam when the gospel was offered to him after the fall. But there is absolutely no ground for asserting as Engelsma does that here the fathers of Dort wanted to say: only the elect are accepted into the state of reconciliation and the grace of the covenant." The fathers of Dort were much more careful in their assertions! At this point we must already conclude: here the Canons of Dort are incorrectly *read*. It is no wonder that they are also incorrectly *interpreted*.

3. Election and the children

Engelsma proceeds with his coloured way of reading the Canons when he suggests that I have given a misrepresentation of the real meaning of the Canons of Dort, I/17. According to Engelsma the real point of this article is that the children who die in infancy and have believing parents are *elect* and *saved*. He insists that not all the children of godly parents are included in this article "without exception." He stresses that the article only deals with children dying in infancy. Essentially he implies that the fathers of Dort wanted to say that these children are *elect* and therefore they are to be considered as saved.

This represents another fine example of an incorrect interpretation of the article in question. At the same time, this reading thoroughly undercuts the pastoral intent of the article. The obvious inference of the article is that there is no distinction with respect to the group of children in question. For Dort, all the children of godly parents belong to the covenant of grace, and it is by virtue of their share in the covenant of grace that the parents may be comfort-

ed concerning their salvation, should they die in infancy.

Here, too, Engelsma's view is: the real ground of these children's salvation is God's election. Hence, *election* takes priority over fellowship in the covenant of grace. However, such a reading effectually turns the whole argument of the article upside down. For Dort, the ground for the assurance with respect to election is: fellowship in the covenant of grace. For Engelsma, election is the ground for their fellowship in the covenant of grace, and their salvation.

Here one may ask: how is any parent to know whether his child was elect or not? As Scripture repeatedly shows, election is essentially individual and particular, not communal and national. There is therefore no essential certainty for any parent if one follows Engelsma's approach to the Canons on this article. Indeed, one can ask Engelsma where he gets his certainty from on this point. How can godly parents know that their children are *elect*? What pastoral certainty can be imparted here? Where does Engelsma give tangible proof to parents that their child, having died in infancy, is *de facto* an elected child? A child dying in infancy is also a child of wrath, a child conceived and born in sin. And the fathers of Dort did not want to assert that a child conceived and born in sin, but dying in infancy, is therefore an *elect* child.

In this regard, the Canons of Dort follow the line of Calvin. It is true that later Reformed theologians began to

distinguish between those children dying in infancy who were elected and those who were not elected. Calvin, however, limited himself to asserting that baptism confirms God's covenant with the children. He says, "Accordingly, in infant baptism nothing more of present effectiveness must be required than to confirm and ratify the covenant made with them by the Lord." (*Institutes*, IV, xvi, 21). Calvin also did not assert that all children of godly parents dying in infancy are saved because they are elect. He employed a more cautious circumscription, and this is even reflected in the wording of Canons I/17, when it states that parents of children dying in infancy are *not to doubt* the election and salvation of their children by virtue of their birth into the covenant. Calvin did not overlook that which Dort also confessed, *viz.* that our children are by nature children of wrath, conceived and born in sin (Form of Baptism, cf. Eph. 2:3).

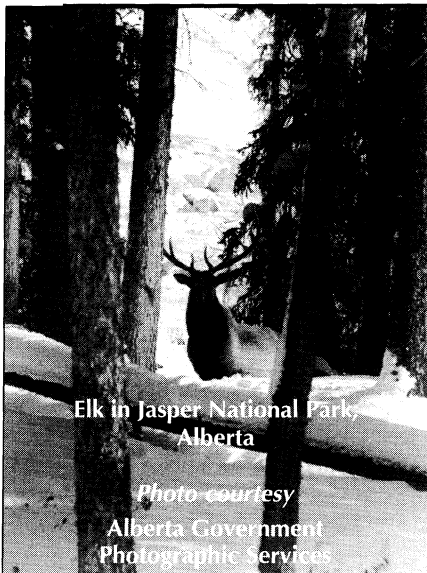
Implicit in Engelsma's critique of our position is his assertion that our reading of Canons I/17 ends up pitting "membership in the covenant against election." But this is entirely foreign to our position, and also entirely foreign to Calvin. The best proof of this can be found in Calvin's commentary on Rom. 9:7 where he says that the hidden election of God overrules the outward calling, and yet "it is by no means inconsistent with it, but on the contrary, it...tends to its confirmation and completion." God realizes his election through the channels of his covenant and its promises!

4. Romans 9

Engelsma then proceeds to justify his erroneous reading of the Canons on the basis of his interpretation of Romans 9. But, as was the case with Rev. H. Hoeksema, so Engelsma carries on an erroneous reading of this passage. Indeed, one of the reasons that Protestant Reformed writers keep returning to Romans 9 is because of the apparent credence it lends to their view of the covenant. But this is only an apparent credence, for any closer examination of this passage will make clear that Engelsma's interpretation is seriously flawed.

We can concur with Engelsma when he states that the great concern of the apostle in Rom. 9 is to demonstrate that the Word of God has not failed. But our objections arise as soon as he begins to work this out. For he says: "The explanation is that God nev-

OUR COVER



Elk in Jasper National Park,
Alberta

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Photographic Services

er made the covenant promise to every physical descendant of Abraham." But I ask: where does Paul say this? Where does Scripture say this? To be sure, Paul says that "not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel," v. 6. But his concern here is not with the receipt of the covenant promises with their conditions, but with the fulfillment of those covenant promises. The entire chapter is written from the perspective of the fulfillment of God's promises.


When Paul says that not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel, it is clear that he uses the term "Israel" in two different senses. The first refers to the nation Israel, the second refers to the church, that is the real Israel, or the "Israel of God," cf. Gal. 6:16. His point is that the participation in the fulfillment of the blessings of the covenant come only to those who are called according to God's election. For he states that it is not the natural or physical descendants of Abraham who are counted as descendants, but only those born out of God's sovereign power. Only those are participants in the fulfillment of the promise who are born through the power of God's Word. Hence Isaac is chosen over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau.

However, no one should conclude from this that the promise did not count for Ishmael or Esau, or that the promise did not really come to them. For the electing work of God incorporates human responsibility within it! Therefore we must maintain the full participation of all the children in the reception of God's promises. A proper reading of Romans 9 itself requires this, for it says in Rom. 9:4: "They are Israelites, and to them belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises." Who does Paul speak of here? He refers to "his brethren," and "kinsmen by race" for whom he in the Spirit has great sorrow and anguish in his heart. For their sake he could wish himself to be "accursed and cut off from Christ," vv. 2, 3. His attention turns here to those of his countrymen who have rejected the promises of the gospel, and have turned their backs on the proclamation of the good news. Thus, Paul's entire argument in Romans 9 must be seen in the light of his concern for the effect of the gospel proclamation. In all that follows he has the fruit or fulfillment of the gospel message in mind.

The apostle first makes clear that the Word of God did not fail the people of

Israel. They were included in all the covenant promises. They were adopted sons, partakers of the glory to be revealed. Who failed? The unbelieving Israelites, for they profaned the promises of God, and trampled His holy covenant under foot. Hence Engelsma erroneously reads his view into Romans 9 when he asserts: "Eternal election determines the true, spiritual seed of Abraham. Eternal election determines that the covenant promise is for them only." We must be open for the scriptural teaching that even when men reject God's promises, His Word does not return empty, and His Word does not fail. To assert, as Engelsma does, that human unbelief implies the failure of God's Word is to make God's Word dependent on man's actions. Contrary to all his assertions, this is neither our position nor the position of the Reformed Creeds. Rather we teach that in spite of Esau's unbelief, God's Word of promise does not fail. Esau was a covenant breaker! Hence, he must undergo the sanction and the punishment of the covenant.

Who then are the "children of promise" mentioned in Rom. 9:8? They are those who by the grace of God's electing work share not only the receipt but also the fulfillment of the gospel promises. They are those reborn by the Spirit from above. Both for them, and for those rejecting the promises, the Word of God has not failed. Indeed, this Word is magnified and glorified in the salvation of the just, and in the just condemnation of the wicked and unbelieving.

Engelsma and others with him ought to be persuaded that this view accords with the reasoning of Rom. 9! For the apostle does not exclude any Israelite from the covenant, nor does he put him in the special (fictitious!) category of the "sphere of the covenant." In Rom. 9:4, all descendants are included in the receipt of the covenant promises. However, only the elect share the fulfillment of these promises. It is precisely this reading of Rom. 9 which not only provides comfort for parents who lose children in infancy, but also forms an incentive for them to expend their energy and talents and all the effort they can muster to teach their children concerning the riches of God's promises for them! For God uses the means, and will most certainly work out His promises there where godly parents willingly work with those promises for themselves and their children, through the generations. 

CHURCH NEWS



CALLED AND DECLINED
to Brampton, ON

Rev. P.K.A. de Boer

of Carman, MB

CALLED to Grand Rapids, U.S.A.

Rev. D.G.J. Agema

of Attercliffe, ON

CALLED to Port Kells, BC

Rev. E. Kampen

of Immanuel Church, Edmonton, AB

DECLINED to Ancaster, ON

Rev. R.A. Schouten

of Calgary, AB

CALLED to London, ON

Rev. R. van Wijnen

of Zuidwolde (Dr.), the Netherlands

DECLINED for Mission work in
Brazil

Candidate L.E. Leefink

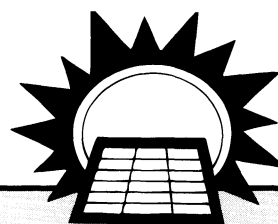
of Ureterp, the Netherlands

CHANGE OF ADDRESS FOR COR-
RESPONDENCE:

Canadian Reformed Church
of Attercliffe

RR 1

Dunville, ON N1A 2W1



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

Guide us by Thy Holy Spirit, that we may use this new day as well as all the days of our life in holiness and righteousness...and may we always work in such a manner that we expect all results and fruits of our work from Thy generous hand alone.

(from: a Morning Prayer-Book of Praise)

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

It is the New Year: 1992. Most of us started off the new year with good wishes, and great, big plans. Or maybe some of us are not that happy. We are grieving, or ill; things are not going all that well in the world, there are concerns about the future – what is going to happen?

We have come to the year 1992. It is a long, long time ago that it all started. This was on the first day of creation. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." God is almighty, for He created heaven and earth out of nothing.

We cannot imagine what it was like before God's creation. There was no heaven, no earth, nothing. Only God was there, because He has always been. Then, at first, after God had created heaven and earth, there was, regarding the earth, only pitch darkness and some kind of substance without shape or texture. God did not need an earth or a heaven, or light. "Even the darkness is not dark to Thee, the night is bright as the day; for darkness is as light with thee" (Ps. 139:12).

Then God said, "Let there be light." And there was light. The original darkness was gone forever. God made light, because He was preparing a place for us to live. God knew that for us life would be impossible without light.

When God created the light, He did not completely destroy the darkness. God made a separation between light and darkness. He gave each of them their own place and meaning. Light was followed by darkness, and darkness by light. A continuous flow, like a rhythm of light and darkness. God gave both of them a name as well: the light He called Day, and the darkness Night. Every morning when the darkness of the night makes place for the light of the new day we are reminded that God takes care of us, for He made that light for us. In the light we can see where we are going, so we can do our work. In the light of the day God's children can also see their Father in all the beautiful things He created.

When the very first day of creation was over, it became night. When that night was over it became light again, and it was the second day. The first day, in which God created light and darkness, was the first day in a row of seven. God took six days to create the heaven, the earth, the sea, the firmament, and everything that is in and on it. On the seventh day He rested. God did not only create heaven and earth, but also the order of six days of work, and one day of rest. It showed again that our Father took care of us; He knew our needs.

God's week of creating was followed by hundreds and thousands of weeks in the history – and many weeks in our lives. By living from week to week, we are following God's example. Even when we think that our weeks just drag along because we feel we don't accomplish much, the truth is, that not one of our days escapes God's attention. If we live guided by the Holy Spirit, expecting all results and fruits of our work from His generous hand alone, we may rest assured on the seventh day. We may rest in Him, our Father.

The abiding by God's order of work and rest pointed forward in the Old Testament times to the promised Saviour. And it still has a special meaning, even though after Christ's resurrection the first day of the week became the Day of the Lord. Our whole life is concentrated on that new Sabbath day of the New Testament. Every first day of the week we may take a break; we may rest in the fulfilled work of Jesus Christ, who conquered death in His resurrection. Refreshed with His Word, and strengthened by His Holy Spirit, we receive all we need to enter another week of work again. This will go on, until one day we will celebrate the eternal Sabbath day. That day will not be followed by darkness. "And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never be shut by day – and there shall be no night there; they shall bring into it the glory and honour of the nations. But nothing unclean shall enter it, nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:22-27).

Since the first day of creation, the sun has risen in the morning, millions of times. In 1992 the sun has risen quite a few times already. We do not know how many more times the sun is going to rise. But we can go on from day to day, from Sunday to Sunday until we may celebrate that eternal Sabbath day with all "those who are written in the Lamb's book of life."

*My unformed substance Thou didst see,
And all the days allotted me –
When of them there as yet was none –
Thou hast recorded every one.
Their number, LORD, Thou hast decided
And in Thy book for me provided.*
(Psalm 139:9)

Birthdays in February:

Albert Dorgeloos

199 Westwood Road

Unit 101, Guelph, ON, N1H 7S1

Albert will celebrate his 33rd birthday on the 12th.

Conny Van Amerongen

Russ Road, RR 1

Grimsby, ON, L3M 4E7

For Connie it will be her 27th birthday on the 12th.

Cora Schoonhoven

24 James Speight

Markham, ON, L3P 3G4

Cora is going to be 41 on the 18th.

May you all have a very Happy Birthday!

Until next month,

*Mrs. R. Ravensbergen
7462 Highway 20, RR1
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0*



Donations Gratefully Received

Saying thank you for gifts has become a regular feature of College Corner and a continuing privilege. Special donations have again come to the College and we would herewith like to recognize them.

The first gift that arrived since our last public acknowledgment was all the way from Australia! The Women's Societies "Sola Gratia" and "Sola Scriptura" of Armadale sent us \$230.39 (Australian) for the purchase of books. Many thanks ladies! The money will be put to good use! Since we are busy with Australia, let me now also mention that Dr. J. Faber donated a copy of his lectures on the church which he delivered in West Australia and which were published in that country. Also, the Rev. G. Van Rongen, emeritus minister residing in Kelmscott, sent us a bound copy of an unpublished manuscript entitled *Our Reformed Church Service Book* (1991). This volume deals with major parts of our *Book of Praise*, with special emphasis on the liturgical forms. All these gifts are greatly appreciated.

We are also thankful for other donations received. The Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene who gave lectures in Church Polity at our College for six years sent us a copy of his explanation of the Church Order entitled *With Common Consent*. Br. and sr. A. Zuidhof of Hamilton donated a number of books on Judaism, including the original text and translation of *Pirke Aboth* ("Sayings of the Fathers"), a collection of ethical words of wisdom of post-biblical Judaism. From London, Ontario we received from the Interleague Publication Board the newly published outlines on Romans by the late Rev. J. Franke with the title *Justified by Faith*. From Prof. A.H. Oosterhoff in that same city we received three volumes from the series *Monumenta Christiana* including works by Tertullian and Athanasius. It is interesting to note that



these volumes were originally part of the library of Dr. K. Schilder, subsequently belonged to his son-in-law the Rev. W.G. de Vries and eventually came here! Books do have a history! Also from Prof. Oosterhoff, we received a copy of his translation of J. Van Bruggen, *Annotations to the Heidelberg Catechism* (1991). Br. and sr. H. Jelsma of Burlington donated five volumes of exegetical work on Exodus to Deuteronomy by the well-known C. H. Mackintosh of Plymouth Brethren fame. It was hard to believe that these volumes were published in 1879-1880. All these gifts are gratefully acknowledged!

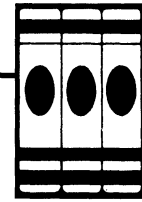
Finally, two gifts of a different nature need to be acknowledged. On November 7 we received an anonymous gift of a thousand dollars from a member of one of the Canadian Reformed Churches to be used for reducing the

debt of the Theological College. These wishes have been honoured and we also express our gratitude for this donation. The second gift of a rather different kind are the many hours that Mrs. Marsha Oostermeier gave to the library by volunteering to come down a morning a week for about two and a half years. She has retired from that function now and we thankfully acknowledge her valuable contribution.

By mentioning all these special gifts, we do not of course want to disparage or minimize in any way the crucial support we receive from the churches via their regular contributions and from the sisters in our midst via the Ladies' Savings Action. We know ourselves carried on the prayerful and financial support of the churches and their members. This support enables us to do our work and daily encourages us greatly

BOOK REVIEW

By G.Nederveen



Divorce and Remarriage: Four Christian Views; H. Wayne House, Editor, InterVarsity Press, Downers Grove, 1990, 267 pages.

"He who states his case first seems right, until the other comes and examines him" (Proverbs 18:17).

These words came to mind as I read the book in which four authors state their position on divorce and remarriage.

Let me introduce these four men to you. Carl Laney holds the view "No Divorce & No Remarriage." William Heth argues for the possibility of "Divorce, but No Remarriage." Thomas Edgar defends the view "Divorce & Remarriage for Adultery and Desertion." The last contributor, Larry Richards promotes the view "Divorce and Remarriage under a Variety of Circumstances."

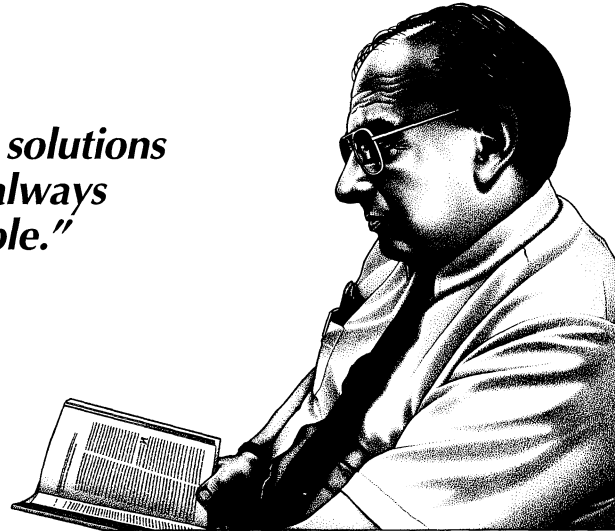
One thing becomes right away clear in each account and that is the desire of all four writers to do justice to the Bible as the divinely inspired Word of God. All four agree that divorce involves sin. How, then, is it possible to have these contradicting views on divorce and remarriage? The reason lies in the starting point each author takes and the interpretation each gives to certain Greek and Hebrew words, and of course, the conclusions they draw from them.

Each author argues and defends a certain viewpoint to which the others react. In general the rebuttals are done with appreciation for the points in common and at times with quite forceful criticism for the divergencies.

It is obvious that Heth and Laney see eye to eye on most everything. Their reviews are very similar. It is striking that in their respective responses Laney's congratulatory comments on Heth closely parallel those of Heth on Laney. The basic difference between the two is the final conclusion. For Laney, divorce is out at all times. Heth regards divorce in some cases as scripturally possible.

An interesting fact is that at one time Laney held the view of Edgar while Richards once promoted the view defended by Laney. Which means that these writers are very familiar with each

"...the easy solutions are not always probable."



other's views. Through further study these men have come to change their minds. However, in Richards the pendulum has swung the other way and takes too many liberties so as to permit divorce for nearly any reason. Therefore Richards' view is in my opinion unacceptable.

We can agree with his position that with God there is forgiveness for all sins. But when you get the impression of an attitude of "go ahead, do as you like, God will forgive you," then this borders on tempting oneself to live an unholy lifestyle. It also borders on tempting God and grieving the Holy Spirit.

Each chapter closes with a Case Study which describes an imaginary family situation. Laney who defends the "No Divorce & No Remarriage" position concedes that divorce is inevitable at times. In his case study he is not consistent with his view. That is because he has taken the least likely position. William Heth is more consistent and I respect him for that fact.

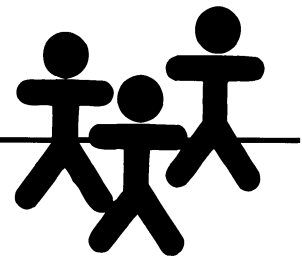
My personal understanding and position on this issue is more in line with Thomas Edgar. He gives a strong rebuttal and exposes the weakness in the arguments of the others. According to Edgar, both Heth and Laney view marriage as indissoluble and regard it as a sacrament. I believe Edgar is right when he states that these men treat the exception clause in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 "except for unchastity" as no exception

at all. The argument that the Greek is not at all clear whether unchastity means adultery is not very solid. Would the context of Matthew 5:27-32 not decide the matter? There Jesus speaks about the seventh commandment. Does this not point to the fact that unchastity is here synonymous with adultery? My main criticism of Edgar is that he uses and relies too much on logic.

I recommend this book. It makes for good and careful study as long as you keep in mind Proverbs 18:17. These four views make you keenly aware of the differences concerning the matters of divorce and remarriage. Some people have an easy solution for difficult problems. When you read this book you will find out that the easy solutions are not always probable.

Take, read, analyze the material and you will find a lot of stimulating reading. All four authors make good points that should not be ignored or discarded. In that regard I like to echo the words of Larry Richards who writes,

"The very fact that so many different understandings of divorce-and-remarriage passages have emerged – each buttressed by careful exegesis and argument – reminds us that we must each hold our view humbly and accept our personal responsibility to study even more diligently to discern as best we can the will of God" [p. 146].



About Students

Students is what schools are all about. If it wasn't for students there would be neither schools nor teachers. As we, parents and teachers but especially teachers, deal with our children as students we do well to further consider the characteristics of children/students.

One "principal's report" (*News and Views*, vol. 18, no. 2) used the telling metaphor of sheep in reflecting on her students.

"When we examine the character and behaviour of sheep, we learn that sheep are animals that seem to be bent on their own destruction. Sheep will stampede for the slightest reasons following blindly where others lead, trample each other, get themselves stranded in impossible places, or lie helplessly kicking the air when they fall onto their backs. They depend for their very survival on the shepherd. Only a shepherd who loves the sheep for what they are and feels a sense of duty towards them will have patience with their wayward and often foolish behaviour.

When the Bible calls us sheep, the Lord directs us to the realization that we are utterly and totally dependent upon the Good Shepherd who gave His life for the sheep entrusted to Him by the Father. As we go about our work during this new school year, we do so in the acknowledgement that we are all, teachers and students together, sheep who cannot do without the Shepherd. At the same time, we live and work in the comfort of knowing that our Good Shepherd is faithful and powerful. He does not permit one of His sheep to be snatched from His hand."

Another principal (*Ebenezer*, vol. 25, no. 2), in considering the students at his school, emphasized children's responsibility toward one another. He stressed that God "wants us at all times to be aware of the fact that each and every fellow student is a child of God for

whom Christ has spilled His precious blood." In particular the ruthless discrimination or "picking on" that some children (and adults) are susceptible to was addressed. Harmony among students, among the young brothers and sisters was prompted with the words;

"If Christ has spilled His blood for that person, we should certainly be able to do the little that is asked of us. You are not going to ignore someone because he/she is from an other town, or needs a shower, or is really good at something, or is the dummy in the class. Now we hold every single one of us, with all our sinfulness, as redeemed by Christ. And if redeemed by Christ, who are we, not to accept him or her? Who are we not to show love towards a fellow believer or to discriminate against him?"

One age group of students that I think needs to be considered in particular, if we want to understand our children/students well, are the adolescents. As adults we so quickly forget their sensitivities and needs. One way to characterize the needed awareness of adolescence is by personally "remembering when." The following characterizations (from an adult's perspective) are adapted from an article in *Middle School Journal* (Allen, 1990, pp. 5-7).

Let your imagination go for a moment and pretend, just pretend that you are 11 or 12 or even 13 again. Remember when?

You have feelings that are new to you and you're not sure of what they mean or if you like them at all.

You find that you feel clumsy and awkward and someone is always around to confirm the fact that you are.

You girls are a head taller than the boys that are starting to interest you.

You boys want to be macho but it's tough to do when you weigh 90 pounds and most of the girls are more mature and athletic than you are.

Your clothes are always too small because you are growing so fast and

sometimes you get the idea that your parents hold it against you. They buy your clothes.

You want to be your own person, but everyone seems to want a share of you and you don't have enough to go around. Your agenda is set by other people and you have no control over your life.

Sometimes you just want to relax but no one will let you.

Sometimes you can't sit still yet you are expected to do just that six hours a day five days a week.

You are terrified that you will fail in school, especially next year, and not meet the most minimal of standards. You don't want to disappoint your parents, your teachers, or yourself. You're afraid that you will get schoolwork that you don't understand or that will take too long to do or you might fail the test on Friday. It's hard to concentrate yet class work seems harder than ever. You must be stupid because you don't understand what the teacher is explaining and no one else has his hand up.

You have insomnia at night and fall asleep during the day. You are controlled by adults at home and at school who, you think, don't understand you and you're not sure that they want to. You can't quite figure them out, either. Everyone expects so much of you and you're plagued by the thought that you won't measure up, even a little bit.

Your friends tell you it's okay to do something and the adults in your life say that it's not.

You are scared and vulnerable and you are sure that everyone else is full of self-confidence. You are the only one who has few friends, who always says the wrong thing, dresses funny, who isn't one of the popular kids. You don't feel like answering your mom when she asks who sat with you on the bus today. Sometimes you don't feel like talking about stuff like that at all.

You have memorized Lord's Day 1 but wonder who is in control of this world. You wish you could see God or

know that He could be seen, that would help to believe. Why is there so much sorrow in this world. Right now, I'm happy, why can't everyone else be?

You must follow rules that you don't always understand. Why don't you get some of your own? The parents are forever making promises that they don't keep, yet you must always honour a promise that you might make. Life seems to be full of double standards.


Having a fight with your best friend could mean the end of the world as you know it.

Your parents are a constant source of embarrassment to you.

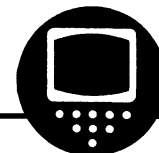
No one could possibly feel the way that you do. No one will ever understand you, and you spend a lot of time and energy wondering if you are normal. Frequently, you hide feelings because you think that they are strange or unusual, and you never break the code of silence that is unwritten among adolescents – don't take too many risks – you might embarrass yourself or be poorly thought of among your peers. So you stay on the edge, apart, and keep

your thoughts and feelings to yourself. You are vulnerable.

Our children as students are often vulnerable. Being knowledgeable about the vulnerability of our children/students reminds us that all need to be shepherded. This understanding assists us as parents and teachers in the tremendously rewarding task to show the Father's care.

References: Allen, L. & P. 1990, *Remember When. Middle School Journal*. March, pp. 5-7. 

PRESS RELEASES



Regional Synod East, November 13 and 14, 1991

Art. 1 - Opening

On behalf of the convening church of Smithville, Rev. D.G.J. Agema, as counselor, welcomes the delegates. He also welcomes some students and teachers from the John Calvin School who were present as observers. He opens the meeting in a Christian manner.

Art. 2 - Credentials

Examination of the credentials show that all delegates are lawfully present.

Art. 3 - Officers

The following officers are chosen: Chairman - Rev. D.G.J. Agema; Vice-chairman - Rev. B.R. Hafford; Clerk - Rev. P. Feenstra. Certain matters of memorabilia are mentioned: Rev. Cl. Stam's mother and Rev. G. Van Popta's father-in-law passed away. Br. J. Gelderman, who had been delegated to this Synod, was hospitalized.

Art. 4 - Agenda

After some alterations, the provisional agenda is adopted.

Art. 5 - Appeals

a. An appeal from the consistory of the church at Toronto is admitted. The appeal asks this Synod to reverse the decision of Classis Ontario North of December 14, 1990 in conformity with the practice of the Canadian Reformed Churches of not interfering with local church matters unless it is contrary to the Word of God. Classis Ontario North of December 14, 1990 had acceded to

the request of a sister at Toronto who asked this classis to judge to be wrong the decision made by the Toronto consistory to use a series of teaching tapes of someone outside the Canadian Reformed Churches in their catechism curriculum.

The Synod denies the appeal of the consistory at Toronto.

b. An appeal from a brother at Burlington East is admitted. His appeal responds to the same decision of Classis Ontario North of December 14, 1990 referred to above. He asks Synod to judge that Classis North exceeded its jurisdiction by denying the church at Toronto, and thereby denying all churches in the federation, the freedom to use material which the consistory has reviewed and approved. He also asks Synod to judge that the classis should have denied the appeal of the sister.

The Synod decides to deny the appeal of this brother.

c. An appeal from a brother at the church at Watford is admitted. This brother appeals a decision made by Classis Ontario South of March 13 and 14, 1991 regarding the use of tapes in catechism class. The appeal asks Synod to decide 1) "that it is not allowed to use tapes in catechism class to teach children of the catechism class by them because the minister, as shepherd of the flock, is called for the task to teach the children in catechism class from God's Word and confessions as adopted in our churches. To use a tape breaks into the task of the shepherd"; 2a) "that tapes from non-reformed sources cannot be used as a teaching aid in catechism classes because there is not a unity in

faith and this unity in faith has to be taught in the catechism classes"; 2b) "that a judgment be made about the specific tape mentioned by the appellant, that this tape is not allowed to be used to teach in the catechism classes."

On Thursday, November 14, 1991, the Regional Synod reconvened at 9:00 a.m. with singing, Scripture, and prayer. All delegates were present with one alternate.

The Synod did not accede to the first two requests of the appeal from the brother at Watford. Synod acceded to his third request.

d. Two appeals are dealt with in closed session.

Art. 6 - Reports

a. The Treasurer's Report is received and an assessment is set. Br. D. Van Amerongen is reappointed as Treasurer.

b. The favourable report of the church responsible for auditing the Treasurer's books is received.

c. The favourable report of the church responsible for checking the archives is received.

d. The reports of the deputies ad Art. 48, C.O. are received.

Art. 7 - Appointments

a. The following are appointed as deputies of Regional Synod East:

For North: Rev. D.G.J. Agema and Rev. Cl. Stam with Rev. G. Snip as alternate.

For South: Rev. P. Feenstra and Rev. G. Nederveen with Rev. W. den Hollander as alternate.

b. The church at Lincoln is appointed to audit the Treasurer's books.

c. The church at Toronto is appointed to maintain the archives.

d. The church at Brampton is appointed to check the archives.

e. Next Regional Synod East: Convening church - Ottawa; Suggested Date - December 2, 1992.

f. The following are nominated to the Board of Governors of the Theological College: Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. W. den Hollander, Rev. P. Feenstra, with Rev. G. Nederveen, Rev. G. van Popta, and Rev. P. Aasman as alternates, in that order.

g. The following are delegated to General Synod Lincoln, 1992: Ministers: Rev. D.G.J. Agema, Rev. W. den Hollander, Rev. P. Feenstra, Rev. Cl. Stam with Rev. G. van Popta, Rev. B.R. Hofford, Rev. G. Nederveen, and Rev. K. Kok as alternates, in that order.

Elders: H. Faber, J. Schouten, W. Smouter, A. Witten, with L. Jagt, K. Linde, J. Medemblik, and H. Buist as alternates, in that order.

Art. 8 - Question period/censure

Personal question period is made use of. There is no need for censure.

Art. 9 - Acts and Press Release

The acts are adopted and the press release is approved.

Art. 10 - Closing

The meeting is closed in a Christian manner by Rev. Feenstra.

For Regional Synod East of November 13 and 14, 1991, B.R. Hofford, Vice-chairman

Classis Alberta/Manitoba December 10th/11th, 1991

1. *Opening*: On behalf of the convening church, Rev. E. Kampen calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Ps. 98:1, 2, reads Jer. 23:1-8, and leads in prayer. He notes that Rev. Jonker is present for the first time as a delegate from the church at Winnipeg, and also takes note of calls extended to Rev. de Boer and Rev. Schouten by the churches at Brampton and Ancaster. He then reports that the credentials have been found in good order. Several consistories have sent instructions. Rev. Kampen declares classis constituted and invites the proposed moderamen, Rev. J.D. Wielenga, chairman, Rev. R. Schouten, vice-chairman, Rev. R. Aasman, clerk, to take their places. The chairman thanks the convening church for its work in organizing this classis. After a short break, the provisional

agenda sent to the churches, with a few additions, is adopted.

2. *Reports*: Two reports from the *Committee for Needy Churches* are read and adopted. Also an additional letter from the church at Calgary is read and declared admissible. After discussion, Calgary's request for aid in the amount of \$15,292 is granted, while the church at Barrhead is granted \$10,485.

3. *Proposals/Instructions*:

a) The church at Calgary requests a letter from classis to the Dutch committee for relations with churches abroad regarding a proposed drive for funds for its Building Fund in the Netherlands. Classis decides to send such a letter.

b) Upon request of the church at Coaldale, classis decides to rescind Article 16 of the Acts of Classis June 1991. This Article concerns the need for written notices from officebearers not present at consistory meetings with church visitors. The ground for rescinding Article 16 is that this decision contravenes classical regulations, Article 9, which states that changes to the Classical Regulations must be placed before the churches six weeks before classis.

4. *Adjournment*: After the singing of Ps. 98:3, the chairman gives thanks to God. The meeting of classis is adjourned for the evening.

5. *Reopening*: The delegates gather again at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday morning. The chairman requests the singing of Ps. 139:1, 13, reads Phil. 1:1-11 and leads in prayer. Roll call is held. All delegates are present.

6. *Reports*:

a) In closed session, a report from the *Committee for Financial Aid to Students* is read. This report is received with gratitude. The Committee has approved a request for aid by a needy student. The assessment for this purpose is \$2.00 per communicant member. Classis decides to charge this Committee to investigate the mandate for their work especially as to how the Committee reports to classis and how it arrives at a recommendation for financial aid. For this purpose, one of the local ministers is to be added to the existing Committee. The Committee also presented a revised form of application. Classis decides to leave this matter until the revision is complete and until the expanded Committee has met.

b) In closed session, reports are read concerning visits made by the Church Visitors to the churches at Taber, Calgary, Edmonton Providence, Barrhead, Neerlandia, and Coaldale.

7. *Question Period, Art. 44, C.O.*: The church at Carman requests and receives advice concerning a matter of church discipline.

8. *Correspondence*:

a) A letter is received from Rev. B. Hofford on behalf of a committee appointed by Classis Ont. South Sept. 11/12, 1991, concerning a request from the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver, CO. This letter requests the opinion of Classis AB/MB as to which classical district should receive the application of the Christ American Ref. Church at Denver to join the federation of Can. Reformed Churches. This letter is declared admissible.

Classis decides to respond to this letter by stating that in its intention to pursue affiliation with the federation of Can. Reformed churches, the Denver church should be directed to Classis AB/MB, in accordance with the Reformed Church Order, Art. 44, which defines a classis as consisting of neighbouring churches which live in one another's vicinity.

b) A copy of the Minutes of a meeting of the Dakotas Presbytery of the OPC is received and accepted for information.

9. *Appointments*:

a) The church at Edmonton Providence is appointed as the convening church for the next classis. Date: Mar. 17, 1992, with June 9 as alternate date. Proposed officers: Rev. Jonker, chairman; Rev. Wielenga, vice-chairman; Rev. Schouten, clerk.

b) Church visitors as well as existing members of various Committees are reappointed. The changes are as follows: Rev. Jonker, appointed as examiner in Church Polity; Rev. Wieske appointed as examiner in Knowledge of Scripture; Rev. E. Kampen is added to the Committee for Financial Aid to Students. Rev. Schouten is appointed to produce an updated version of the classical regulations.

10. *Personal Question Period*: The delegates of the churches at Barrhead and Calgary express the gratitude of their churches for aid granted by the sister churches. Several other brothers make use of the question period.

11. *Brotherly Censure*: This is not necessary.

12. *Closing*: The *Acts* are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and adopted. After singing and thanksgiving, the meeting is closed.

For classis,
R. Schouten



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

A "Happy New Year" wish to you all!
 Are you looking forward to something special this year?
 Maybe you are *hoping* for something special?
 Busy Beavers, maybe some of you have a special *worry*
 already at the beginning of the new year.
 The year 1992 AD is another year of *our LORD*.
 Our heavenly Father is in control.
 He guides our life every day, every hour!
 We may trust Him to look after *all* our worries and
 cares.
 We may thank Him for His care, His blessings, the joy
 and fun we may have.
 "Trust and obey," Busy Beavers, in this *New Year*, too.



Dear Busy Beavers

Reading is Fun. People like Reading Book.
 Reading also tell you about are World
 So for now have fun Reading

From Bradley Bartels

Quiz Time!

YEARS

One way to measure time is in years. Answer the questions with the number of years.

- _____ 1. How many years did it take Solomon to build the Temple, 1 Kings 6:38?
- _____ 2. How many years old was Jesus when he attended the Passover feast, Luke 2:42?
- _____ 3. How many years did the Israelites wander in the wilderness, Numbers 14:33?
- _____ 4. How many years did Methuselah live, Genesis 5:27?
- _____ 5. How many years did Abraham live before Isaac was born, Genesis 21:5?
- _____ 6. How many years did the woman whom Jesus healed have a crooked back, Luke 13:11?
- _____ 7. How many years had Sarah lived when Isaac was born, Genesis 17:17?
- _____ 8. How many years had the woman with "an issue of blood" been sick, Matthew 9:20?
- _____ 9. How many years had Mahlon and Chilion lived in Moab, Ruth 1:1, 4-5?
- _____ 10. How many years did Eli judge Israel, 1 Samuel 4:16-18?
- _____ 11. How many years did it not rain on the Israelites when Elijah asked God to withhold the rain, Luke 4:25?
- _____ 12. How many years was Paul a house prisoner, Acts 28:30?
- _____ 13. How many years had Noah lived when Shem, Ham, and Japheth were born, Genesis 5:32?

See answers

CARTOON

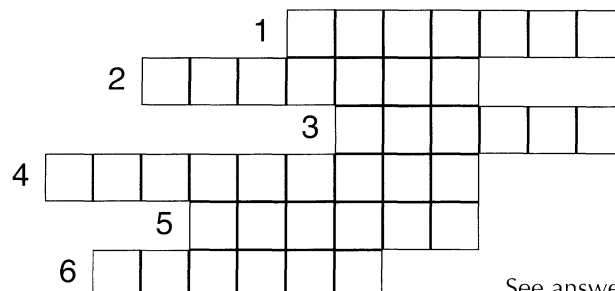
By Busy Beaver
 Karen DeBoer



COLD-WINTER COUNTRIES

Unscramble the six countries which are very cold in winter and you will then find another cold-winter country reading down.

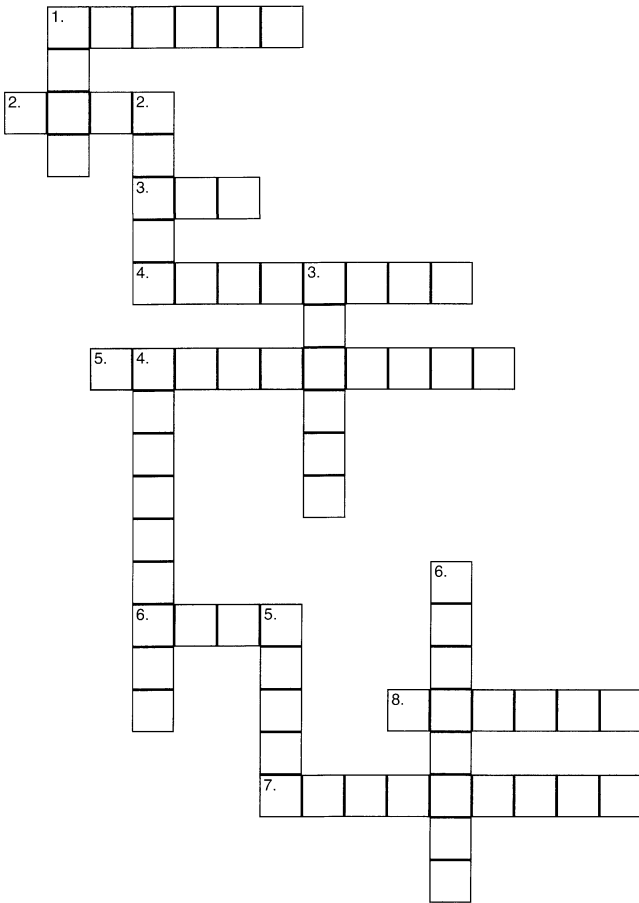
- | | |
|------------|--------------|
| 1. Icendai | 4. aednlgren |
| 2. nafildn | 5. enwsed |
| 3. rwyona | 6. ssiura |



See answers

CROSSWORD

By Busy Beaver *Alison Veenendaal*

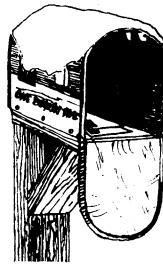


Across:

1. the same as snowmobile
2. opposite of hot
3. I like skating on _____
4. same as sled
5. some food at New Year
6. wear it on your head
7. keeps you warm
8. reindeer pull it

Down:

1. flakes from the sky
2. big snowbank
3. something like mittens
4. you wear them under your pants
5. put it around your neck
6. sometimes you eat it with ice-cream



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Cheryl VanAndel*. We are happy to have you join us! Did you like the puzzles we had today? And how did you enjoy your holidays, Cheryl?

Welcome to the Club, *Crystal Dekker*. And thank you for a pretty letter. I hope you will write again soon! What did you do during the holidays, Crystal?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Andrea Vanderhorst*. I see you are very good at writing! Did you get to bike lots during your holidays, Andrea? Bye for now.

Thank you for a very neat letter, *Trisha Vanwoudenberg*. Has your teacher planned anymore science field trips, Trisha? And how does your sister like Eastern Canada?

Hello, *Benjamin Bartels*. It was good to hear from you again. Thank you for an interesting picture! Bye for now. Write again soon, Benjamin.

You are a good puzzler, *Maria Stel!* Thank you for your letter. Yes, you are right. High school is much different from elementary school. How is it going now, Maria. Have you got really used to it already?

Answers:

Down: 1. snow, 2. drift, 3. gloves, 4. long johns, 5. scarf, 6. hats, 7. fireplace, 8. sleigh
 Across: 1. skidoo, 2. cold, 3. ice, 4. toboggan, 5. oilbollen,
 Cross Word
 Cold-winter Countries: The country is Canada
 9. 10, 10, 40, 11. 3 1/2, 12. 2, 13. 500.
 Years: 1. 7, 2. 12, 3. 40, 4. 969, 5. 100, 6. 18, 7. 90, 8. 12.

Thank you for your letters, pictures and puzzles, Busy Beavers!

I love to hear from you !

Bye for now.

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

I will sing for joy at the works of Thy hands. How great are Thy works O LORD. Psalm 92:4b, 5

The Lord has shown great wonders with the birth of our daughter

ROBIN PATRICIA

Born December 9, 1991

Cor and Janine Lodder
(nee Devries)

A sister for *Michelle, Jodie, Amy, Colin, and Cori-Lynn*

The Lord has richly blessed our family with the birth of another son

THOMAS JEFFREY

Born November 10, 1991

Fred and Joyce Bosscher
(nee De Boer)

A brother for *Darryl, Brian, Michael, Gregory*

916 Hazel Street
Burlington, ON L7R 3X2

With thankfulness to the Creator and Giver of life, we announce the birth of our son

IAN TREVOR

Born November 21, 1991

Adrian and Ellis Veenendaal

7455 A 256 Street
Aldergrove BC V0X 1A0