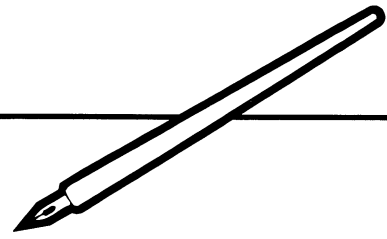




**Clarion**  
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## Praying in the U.S.A.

### A hunger for experience of god

Newsweek of January 6, 1992, presented an interesting article on praying in the U.S.A. under the title "Talking with God." Based on "recent studies at NORC, a research center, by Andrew M. Greeley, the sociologist-novelist-priest," the article makes a Christian who lives by God's Word sad, and it is frightening. No distinction is made between the praying of a Christian (those mentioned are mostly Roman Catholic) and that of a Jew or a Muslim. First I shall give a number of quotations, so that the reader can get an idea about today's "praying in the U.S.A."

*More than three quarters (78 per cent) of all Americans pray at least once a week; more than half (57 per cent) report praying at least once a day.*

*In allegedly rootless, materialistic, self-centered America, there is also a hunger for a personal experience of God that prayer seeks to satisfy.*

Remark: The contrast is a false one. Prayer can be made simply for materialistic good and for self-centered self-realization. Besides, this satisfaction of a hunger for spiritual experience is man-centered.

*For book publishers, the intense interest in prayer has been a godsend. Astonishingly, the current edition of Books in Print lists nearly 2,000 titles on prayer, meditation and techniques for spiritual growth – more than three times the number devoted to sexual intimacy. One publisher said that "books on prayer are our biggest sellers."*

*At a hospital, the cardiologist "prescribes the healing 'relaxation effects' that come from regular prayer and meditation. Other doctors have tried to show that prayer works even if the patient isn't the one doing the praying." "In an experiment [at another hospital] a researcher asked outsiders to pray for a group of cardiac patients. Even though the patients weren't told that prayers were being said for them, the study found that they recovered faster than those in an otherwise identical control group."*

Remark: This sounds like the praying Baal worshipers at Mount Carmel (1 Kings 18) and the way in which Christ characterizes the pagan praying in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 6), rather than the biblical picture of praying and prayer.

*One of those involved in the research said that "the most important thing in prayer "is to shut up and listen." [He], a Roman Catholic, usually spends 15 minutes a day doing yoga and stretching exercises plus an additional quarter hour on spiritual reading before sitting "in a quasi-lotus position for silent prayer." One teacher of prayer and*

*meditation said that the proper way is "gathering people in small groups for silent contemplation." Another teacher claims that his prayer center "helps people be directly, immediately in touch with our own reality in God."*

Remark: So, we should not go to church together, as a congregation of Christ, as people of God, to hear God's Word, but we should gather, as individuals, in small prayer groups for contemplation in order to get our individual feeling of a spiritual experience of god. This is the language of mysticism: immediate experience of oneness with God in one's inner self. Throughout the ages mysticism has made use of the language of (erotic) love to express the emotional intimate experience of oneness with god. This mysticism is also evident in the following paragraph. It presents the story of a woman who is "director of Christian education" in a church. She "has been developing her prayer life for 15 years." Her experience was the following:

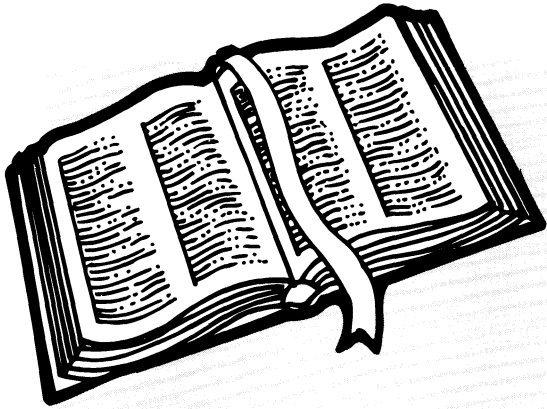
*Recently as she drove to a retreat center she found herself thinking of some of her old boyfriends. "I thought that's a funny way to prepare for a spiritual retreat," she says. "But that got me in touch with the best part of romantic love – being sought and desired by the other." "Then, during the retreat," [she] recalls, "I had this experience of feeling that God really desired my company. It was a powerful sense of union.... The feeling was so intimate."*

Remark: This is not how God, in His Word, speaks normatively about fellowship with Him in prayer. Rather, it fits within pagan religious experience. Since such neospiritual feelings are not in accordance with the Scriptures, they cannot come from the Holy Spirit.

*Of course, there are techniques to be followed, such as "silence, appropriate body posture and, above all, emptying the mind through repetition of prayer" which "have been the practices of mystics in all the great world religions." And so "the first big step...is to cease talking to God and start listening for God. And that requires silence.... 'Silence is the language God speaks,'" according to a Trappist Father (Roman Catholic) "who taught 'centering prayer.'" This "centering prayer presupposes that God makes his presence known from within and thus requires an interior quieting of the mind as well as outward silence." To do that this Trappist monk suggests "that those who pray repeat some 'sacred word,' like God or Jesus, to center the mind. All other thoughts, even the most religious, are to be pushed aside until eventually – with practice – nothing remains but the presence of God."*

Remark: A Buddhist uses a *mantra*, a sacred word, and repeats it constantly, in order to empty his mind and center

it on his god, in the hope that he will feel an experience of union with his god. Here a Roman monk teaches the same method for Christians. They are to use the holy names of God or of our Lord Jesus Christ as a *mantra* to empty the mind for an experience of union with the divine presence within. Did not God forbid His people to worship Him in the manner in which the pagan nations worshiped their idols?



***“If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you.”***

### Evaluation

It is clear that there is “a hunger for spiritual experience of the Master of the Universe” or “god.” I write this word here with a lowercase “g” for it is evident that we do not have here a speaking about the God who has revealed Himself in the Scriptures and who is the Father of Christ Jesus.

Christ did not teach us to pray to “our god who is within us,” but to “our Father who art in heaven.” In this modern neospirituality we are told to address the god within us and to get “directly, immediately in touch with our own reality in God” [god].

God teaches us in His Word that prayer is speaking to Him. Here we are told to shut up and to cease talking to god. When Christ teaches us to pray, He teaches us to speak to God words, sentences, in understandable language. Here we are taught to learn certain techniques in order to feel an experience of union with god.

God teaches us to fill our mind with His Word – promises and obligations – and so, having been spoken to by Him and taught what pleases Him, to speak to Him. Here we are told, in order to feel god in us, to empty our mind, in the manner of Eastern pagan spirituality.

God does not speak to us in our inner self. God speaks to us in His Word. Therefore, true religion is not: to follow certain steps to experience and feel god in silent contemplation. True religion is: to listen to what He says in the Scriptures with humble obedience. Open your Bible! There you read what the Holy Spirit says to you (Heb. 3:7).

Our conclusion must be that this again is an element of what is called the New Age Movement. It is a neospirituality, which is pagan in its roots and in its whole being. It is false religion over against the true.

It is sad that specifically so many people who call themselves Christians follow this new mystical paganism. It is also frightening that so many who consider themselves to be God-seeking Christians do not understand God’s Word and are blinded. This neospirituality provides a feeling, a spiritual experience which is either just a psychological phenomenon or, worse, some emotional feeling that is inspired by evil spirits, demons. Again: that which is in conflict with the Scriptures cannot come from God. If it does not come from God, it comes from the adversary, the deceiver and murderer from the beginning.

### Conclusion

How rich God has made us with the simple, biblical instruction about prayer as we have that in our Heidelberg Catechism. It is true instruction, for it is taken from God’s Word. We can give this instruction about prayer to our children and to everyone else. We have it in Lord’s Days 45-52. I quote Question and Answer 117.

Question: What belongs to a prayer which pleases God and is heard by Him?

Answer: First,

we must from the heart call upon the one true God only, [a matter of the First Commandment; let us take note of “from the heart”] who has revealed Himself in His Word, for all that He has commanded us to pray. [A matter of the Second Commandment.]

Second,

we must thoroughly know our need and misery, so that we may humble ourselves before God. [A matter of the knowledge of sin and sinfulness.]

Third,

we must rest on this foundation that, although we do not deserve it, God will certainly hear our prayer for the sake of Christ our Lord, as He has promised us in His Word. [A matter of praying in faith, in the name of Christ.]

How rich we are to know that our Saviour saved us from the power of the devil, which includes from unbelief, from paganism, from sin, from blindness. And how blessed we are that this Saviour taught us to pray what we call the Lord’s Prayer or the covenant prayer. Here He has pointed out to us what our needs are. And He teaches us that we may bring these needs to our covenant God, our Father in heaven. In Christ’s Name we may come to Him in prayer and speak with Him. We may be assured that our Father hears us, when we pray in faith, in Christ’s name, for what He taught us to pray.

Thank God that prayer is not a matter of feeling, that is, of experiencing something vague or fake, but that it is a matter of faith that lives by what God says.

He who prays to the living true God in true faith is not deceived. Christ said, “If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you will, and it shall be done for you” (John 15:7).



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# Once Again

## – A Conversation Continued

*Introductory Note: What follows here is the continuation of our conversation. The first appeared in Volume 40, No. 9; the second in Vol. 40, Nos. 19 and 20. First the reader finds again a response from Rev. Jelle Tuininga of the now independent Christian Reformed Church at Lethbridge, AB. Then my reply follows. I assume that the readers do not mind that we continue the conversations with others in our magazine. The purpose is that we may understand each other's position better and that it may bring us together. JG*

### A Response – J. Tuininga

I hope you will not take it ill of me or be offended at me if I express my disappointment with your latest response. Though your reply was lengthy, and you go into a great deal of detail, at the end of it all I still feel dissatisfied. It seems to me that you have not really answered my questions or addressed my concerns. In Dutch I would say, *Ik kwam bedrogen uit*. In fact, in some ways I believe your response does more to confirm my concerns than to alleviate them. I feel that in some ways you have corroborated the very thing I was concerned about in the first place. I find your response to be very defensive in nature; there is little or no admission of any fault or mistakes on the part of the Canadian Reformed Churches or people. I would have been so pleased if you had honestly and openly admitted that you have made many mistakes in the past; that (to put it in the words of a colleague of yours) you have not been attractive to members of other Reformed churches who might be looking for a new church home. Is it so difficult to confess wrongs? Are you not aware of a certain “kerkisme” and self-righteousness among the Canadian Reformed people of the past and the pre-

sent? Brother, I don't write these things with pleasure, but they are there and they have to be addressed. Ignoring them or “beating around the bush” isn't going to help us in getting closer together. We must be frank and honest with each other. Your response is very theoretical and very “rule-oriented,” but it doesn't address my concerns concretely. I just find a wall of defense in your response. I was hoping for something different.

Before mentioning a few specifics, one more general comment: You are afraid that “reality” becomes the norm for us, instead of the truth. That can be a danger, to be sure. But you are in grave danger of ignoring reality and making sure that all reality and all circumstances are squeezed into rigid rules, that everything is laid on the procrustean bed of air-tight rules, and they are made to fit whether or not they really do. But let me say it again, reality is always more complex than any rules we can make, and many things in the church too aren't quite as simplistic, black and white, as we would like to make them. That is just a plain fact. And your desperate attempt to fit everything into neat categories simply doesn't work. It doesn't fit, no matter how hard we may try.

Let me give a couple of examples: Two true churches in the same locality. Now to me “dat is een waarheid als een koe,” and though from a biblical point of view it is not ideal (we live in a sinful world and church), it is a fact and we're just going to have to recognize it. It happened and happens over and over again, and will happen until the Lord returns. But you seem to have great difficulty admitting that. To be sure, “cannot” does not mean it is impossible, but rather “it is not allowable.” And I agree, from a biblical point of view, it should not happen. But there are so many things in life that

are not allowable, but they take place anyway. Sin cleaves to us all the time, also in our church relations. We are sorry for them, but we're going to have to live with them till the end of history. And it won't do to say that only one is really a legitimate church, while the other is not. Both can have full legitimacy, even though there appears to be no possibility of uniting them. We can still recognize each other as brothers in the Lord. We live in a less than ideal situation this side of heaven. No doubt the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk should have gone along with the union of 1892, but it didn't. But that gives me no right to say they are an illegitimate church. Let's be careful with our judgments. B. Holwerda in one of his sermons had every other Reformed church categorized into a neat little scheme in which only the Vrijgemaakte Kerk came out smelling like a rose. Brother, we don't need that kind of thing. I fear too many Canadian Reformed people have learned some wrong things from their masters, and then have gone even beyond their masters.

One more example: The true and false church: When does a church once true become false? Where is the exact dividing line between the two? Does this happen overnight, or gradually? I believe James Wilson said it very well: “to prepare a minute statement of the marks of a true church, which will render easy the task of deciding in every case, absolutely and at once, whether a society can be reckoned a true church or not” is virtually impossible. No, it is impossible. Not one of us has that right or capacity. And yet you believe that this is a “weakening of our confessional language.” You want clear waterproof definitions: a church is either true or false, and there is no middle ground. A thief is a thief, and that's that. Brother, if this is not “kerkism”

and unwarranted rigidity, then I don't know what is. The texts you mentioned don't prove your point, and you yourself say that "we do not find a direct linking of the terms "true" and "false" with the word "church" in Scripture." Indeed, the Belgic Confession gives principles, guidelines, but they cannot be rigidly applied as you attempt to do. Just where a once-faithful church crosses the line from being a true church to being a false one is not always (ever?) easy to say. You may not like the Westminster definition of "more or less," but you must recognize that *no church* has the marks of the true church in perfection. Even the best churches fall short in many respects. Our preaching is imperfect, and our discipline leaves things to be desired. So we can say that no church manifests the marks of the true church in perfection; there are gradations that we must recognize. And a once true church can become false. But the Westminster divines recognized a reality that none of us can escape. It's not a matter of "eenie-mieny-meinie-moe" – and we've got you all pegged and categorized. See once again those excellent books by Veenhof. They can give us a lot of needed wisdom in this respect. A church can be unfaithful without immediately becoming a false church.

You say that you do not see the need for any statement of clarification about being "the only true church," because you have never declared the latter. Officially, no, but one hears it time and again from members of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and these members learned it from the pulpit. I do not believe, brother Geertsema, that you are sufficiently aware of how widespread this view was (and to a certain extent still is) among Canadian Reformed people, and to what extent this has hindered true ecumenicity. Why the great reluctance to clear this matter up once for all? And why make statements that can easily be misunderstood, e.g., that "we are that one catholic or universal church." Why not say, we are part of that one holy catholic church, or we are a holy catholic church? I honestly cannot understand the great hesitation on the part of many Canadian Reformed ministers and people to openly admit that their communion is *not* identical to the one holy catholic church, especially when there seems to be so much misunderstanding about this in your communion. And why the great reluctance about calling other

Christians "brothers"? Of course, that term can be misused. But we're not talking about that now. We're talking about the fact that all those who have had their sins washed away in Christ's blood and who have been sanctified and sealed by the Holy Spirit are members of that one holy congregation of true Christian believers, and that means they are all my brothers and sisters. They are part of the family of God, wherever they may be found. Why the great fear in admitting this? I don't understand it.

You do not like what I say about "options" in the matter of church unity. And you castigate the Free Reformed for wanting to maintain "our own special character." Once again, I must demur. Is there really only one choice (obedient choice) for ex-CRC members? I hear overtones of ecclesiastical pride here again, sorry to say. And when I read "News Medley" in *Clarion*, then I get the very strong impression that brother VanOene wants to maintain at all costs the special character of the Canadian Reformed Churches. What is so different about that and what you say about the Free Reformed? Why do we have to make those kinds of comparisons?

I must stop. Please do not construe my forthright language as lack of kindness. I simply want the issues clearly

before us. You end by expressing the wish that we may be brought together. That is the purpose of my writing too. But I must frankly say that I see rough waters ahead in reaching that goal unless and until we see much more flexibility and much less rigidity on the part of many Canadian Reformed leaders and members. Your response has not increased my optimism about that.

## A Reply – J. Geertsema

Let me begin with my colleague's disappointment about my defending attitude, instead of the acknowledgment of wrong doing or wrong thinking on our side. Brother Tuininga, are you not doing the very same thing: do you in your response not defend and maintain what you have said before? Let me assure you, I am willing to admit wrong, if there is wrong according to God's Word and the confession. So I admit that on our side things have been said that confirmed the image that others have of us and what you call self-righteousness and "kerkisme." I shall say it again: our confession does not say that the Canadian Reformed Churches are the only true church, but it gives the marks of the true church. Therefore, it is not our doctrine that we are



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the only true church. I would like to add a question. Now that you have seceded, did you not hear the same objections from the side of the CRC? Now you can feel what we felt all these years being pigeon-holed.

We were not attractive to many. We were to some. However, being attractive or not is not the point. Holding on to Scripture and confession is. That is what we recognize also in you. Has there been any voice from our side that said that you, the independent CRC in Lethbridge, and other independent CR churches, are false or illegitimate, because the Canadian Reformed Churches are the only true church? If you have, then I disagree with such a statement and find this wrong. Again, our confession states the norm but does not point to a specific "denomination."

As for the matter of my ignoring reality, I do not deny reality. I only want to maintain what we confess to be the norm of God's Word. You object to Dr. K. Schilder's use of the term "illegitimate." Imagine that the Canadian Reformed Churches would refuse to seek ecclesiastical unity with you, or with the Free Reformed Churches, or with others who have and maintain the same basis. And assume that they would refuse this on illegitimate grounds, that is, on grounds not based on Scripture and confession, for instance because we want to have quietness and peace for ourselves. In such a case our churches would become illegitimate churches, because we would be accepting a sinful situation. By the way, illegitimate is for me not identical with false. But it does mean: disobedient. You seem to stress the need to acquiesce in and to accept a sinful reality. If this is true, I cannot agree. This, for me, would mean: quit the call for obedience to the Word of the Lord. And once again, don't you see that when I maintain that it is disobedience when two true churches in the same place continue their separate ways this implies the recognition of each others being true? I am simply not allowed to merge with a false church. If I cannot call myself and others to obedience, also here, I would become disobedient myself.

Do you allow me to express disappointment? I find it disappointing that you stress again that my maintaining the confessional language of Article 29 of the Belgic Confession shows "kerkisme." You point to the Westminster Confession as it speaks of "more or less pure." I do not think that the Westminster

Confession means to deny the validity of the distinction between true and false. As far as I can see, the Westminster Confession still sees both, the less and the more pure, within the category of the true and not in that of the false church. It speaks in this context of churches that have "so degenerated as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan" (Ch. 25.5).

Further, imagine that a church is deviating from God's Word, and on this way it is confronted by some of its members with that Word of God. Imagine further that this church refuses to submit to God's Word, giving to its own pronouncements and decisions more authority than what God has revealed and what it has adopted as its confession. Imagine also that this church, in maintaining itself, oppresses and persecutes (disciplines) its members who abide by God's Word and this church's confession, is that church than still a true church? Do you not want to call such a church false? Do you not want to apply your confession? Is such a church only a somewhat less pure church? Do you agree with others that in the present situation we cannot work with Art. 29 of the Belgic Confession? Did Professor B. Holwerda have the confessional right to call the synodical churches false, when they did the things I asked you to imagine, and which are not far from your own experience either? By the way, you state that Professor Holwerda, in a sermon, "had every other Reformed church cat-

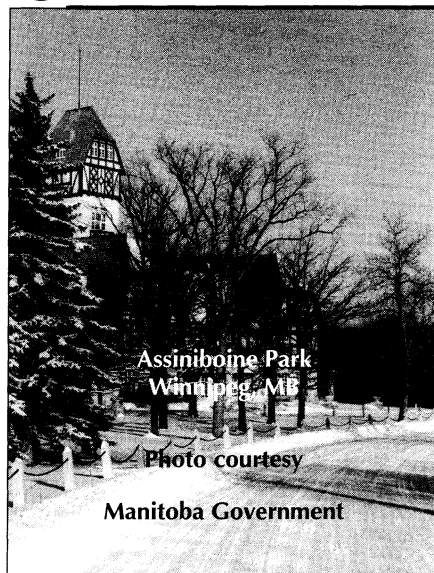
egorized into a neat little scheme in which only the [Liberated Church] came out smelling like a rose." I cannot do anything with this accusation because you do not provide any reference. I would like to know very much where Holwerda has written such a scheme in which the Liberated Churches "came out smelling like a rose." I do not believe that Holwerda wrote in this way, since he was always quite balanced in his writings.

You react to my remark regarding the matter of the "options." Again, I must say, I have the idea that you do not understand me, but read me through the glasses that have been painted with the image that you have of us. You said that we should not think that we are for you the only option. I reacted with saying that for me it is not a matter of having options, but of being obedient. I did not say that your joining us is the only option you have because only that way would be obedience. Let me turn it around. We do not have the option of joining you, or the Free Reformed Church, or the Orthodox Christian Reformed Church. I do not speak here about having such options. For it is not a matter of options. There is only one proper way, if you want: only one option. This is, to obey our Saviour and seek unity with all those with whom we share in the same basis, the same faith. Therefore, it is our calling to seek unity with you and with the Free Reformed, and with the Orthodox Christian Reformed, and so on.

You cannot understand our (my) hesitation to admit that we are not "the catholic or universal church." Let me try again with a different formulation. As Canadian Reformed Churches we identify ourselves with what our confession calls (Belgic Confession, Art. 27) "one catholic or universal Church, which is a holy congregation and assembly of the true Christian believers." I do not believe that this one catholic church is restricted to the Canadian Reformed Churches. But the Canadian Reformed Churches can be characterized or identified as such.

I am willing to admit that I might have been too hesitant on the point of calling believers outside our own churches "brother." You want me to say that everyone who has his sins washed away and is sanctified by the Spirit is my brother. In principle, yes. But in practice, who are they? Let me be concrete. I have not hesitated to call, for instance, Free Reformed people by that


## OUR COVER



name, when appealing to them to cooperate in working toward unity. I have no hesitation with respect to you. I would say that in the simple fact of the constant appeal for unity of our churches this brotherhood is recognized. On the other hand, the church can be characterized as communion of saints. Of the church we confess that we have to join the true church in order to maintain its unity. If this counts for the church it is the same for the communion of saints. This means that it is my calling to practice this communion there where I find the true church. For it is under the same preaching and at the same table

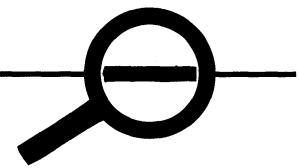
that we have fully the communion of saints. I have again a question. Can you imagine that there are situations that you do not call fellow Christians your brothers since they have refused to treat you as a brother, have disciplined you because of your obedience to the Word of God and your faithfulness to the confession? Again, I may refer you to Christ's word in Luke 8:21, where He says, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it." And if I know that there are Christians who live in disobedience and do not want to turn away from their disobedient ways, must I then, in spite

of it all, call them brothers? I can tell you, I have great difficulty with that, and you have not convinced me that I should apologize for this. If we have the same Father, should we not have the same mother? Or do you think that Christ thinks it alright that His people in a certain place have different mothers, some faithful, others unfaithful?

I hope that my reply serves a better understanding for our way of thinking. We went from A. Kuyper's teaching to that of K. Schilder who stressed in all things the norms of God's Word and the call of obedience to these norms. 

## PRESS REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



# Encouraging Ecclesiastical Developments in Great Britain

There has been some most heartening progress for the cause of the Reformed faith in the United Kingdom. The purpose of this *Press Review* is to provide an update on what is happening there.

### Presbyterian Association in England (PAE)

The PAE was established about four years ago in order to stimulate the growth of a federation of orthodox churches that maintain the Reformed faith as summarized in the Westminster Standards. Such a federation is to be similar to the Free Church of Scotland, sister churches of the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in the Netherlands. In the fall of last year an interim-presbytery was formed in which churches and elders of PAE churches would be members. These churches are at the moment found in Accrington, Cambridge, Hull, and the Island of Wight. A group that has not yet instituted (in Durham) is also represented. It is an interim-presbytery for one still needs to ponder and study the question how best to organize faithful Presbyterian churches given the present circumstances in England.

In order to get a feel of the situation, let us take a closer look at three congregations, two of which are associated with the PAE.

### Hull

The faithful Presbyterian church in this city on the north-eastern coast of England consists of a few families and totals about twenty. These people had seceded from the liberal United Reformed Church. Although their number is small, they have their own small church building and also a minister, the Rev. Nigel Westhead. It is of course quite something for such a small congregation to have their own shepherd, but this was considered extremely important under the circumstances. Because there is as yet no federation of churches, this congregation appealed to our sister churches in the Netherlands for assistance to support a minister. As a result Dutch deputies (Rev. A. de Jager and Rev. H. van Veen) were sent to investigate the situation (March 1991) and they were able to recommend helping this congregation which wants to be Reformed so that they could have

their own minister. (The amount of about f 35,000 per year will be sent.) When candidate Nigel Westhead was ordained on 7 September, the Rev. D. De Jong and the Rev. L. Moes were able to witness this event on behalf of the Reformed Churches (Liberated) and so strengthen the ties with the brotherhood there. Prior to this ordination, the deputies had asked the Dutch churches to remember this important event in prayer, a request which virtually all churches heeded.

### Accrington

Almost due west from Hull on the western shore of England is the city of Accrington. Here too a faithful congregation is found which appeared so to speak out of nothing. It started with some families who worked in the area and included members of the Reformed Churches (Liberated). They recognized each other as Christians but could not find a faithful church. This led to the establishing of a mission church which started to work towards planting a Presbyterian congregation. A call of help went to our Dutch sister churches, as well as to the Evangelical Presbyterian

Church of Ireland (EPCI), a sister church of the Reformed Churches (Liberated). The Dutch promised funding for a minister and the Irish were able to provide one in the Rev. Norman Green. As long as there is no organized faithful Presbyterian church in England, Rev. Green is a member of a presbytery of the EPCI which also exercises supervision and discipline.

The work in Accrington has been very difficult. Not only because of the nature of the city and the problems there, but also in view of the rupture that occurred in the congregation when a member of the church, a former Jehovah Witness, decided to start on his own because the drive to Accrington was considered too far. The congregation now only numbers about twenty.

As a mission post of the EPCI, regular visits are brought by ministers of the EPCI to encourage and help the congregation. It is also interesting to note that the Accrington congregation and our Dutch sister church in Alphen aan den Rijn have twinned (much as cities in Canada twin with cities elsewhere in the world). It is hoped that eventually the PAE will develop into a federation of churches. In that case, Accrington will no longer be under the direct supervision of the EPCI.

## Cardiff

The Ely Presbyterian Church in Cardiff broke with the Presbyterian Church of Wales in 1968 due to deepening differences respecting unbiblical doctrine and liberalism, as well as growing concern for biblical discipline and hierarchial trends in church government. The other churches in the Presbyterian Church of Wales were notified of the reasons for the Ely Presbyterian Church's leaving, but without any good effect. Concerned elsewhere left and joined independent evangelical or charismatic congregations. The Ely Church has a clear doctrinal basis by maintaining the confession which the Presbyterian Church of Wales (earlier called the Calvinist-Methodist Church) had adopted in 1823. This confession has many similarities with the Westminster Confession. (Historically, these churches originated by means of the preaching of George Whitefield in the eighteenth century.)

The Ely congregation numbers about 200 and they have their own church building and school. It is a church school, rather than a parental school. The elders form the school board and two of their four ministers spend most of their time as headmasters in the school. To keep costs down, about thirty people give of their talents

without pay to teach certain courses. The school has such a good reputation that there is also interest in it outside the church. Under certain conditions, "outsiders" can send their children to this school.


The Ely church is a growing church and the beginnings of a second congregation in the vicinity are being made. At the moment there are eighteen elders and much time is spent equipping them for their office by the studying of Scripture. Because the concept of the covenant did not come sufficiently to the foreground in their confession, new "Articles of Biblical and Reformed Faith" have been adopted. This congregation also has their own church order and their own "church book" including four part singing.

Although this congregation desired contact and unity with other faithful Presbyterians, it is only relatively recently that their isolation has ended. There is now contact with our Dutch sister churches (which will be intensified) and also with the above-mentioned congregations in Hull and Accrington, as well as with the EPCI.

## History and the future

It is most gratifying to read about these developments in the United Kingdom. It is instructive to realize that the relationships and contacts that our sister churches have with Presbyterians in Great Britain are not the first such ties. The churches of the Doleantie (1886) and the (then conservative) Presbyterian Church of England were already represented at each other's major assemblies in 1889 and 1990 respectively and they maintained regular correspondence. In the early twentieth century, the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands and the conservative Presbyterian Church of Wales also maintained a close relationship.

It is a wonderful development that after a century or more, contacts and growing relationships with faithful Reformed believers can be reestablished. Undoubtedly these matters will be on the agenda of the next general synod of our Dutch sister churches. May the Lord cause these relationships to be for mutual blessing.

Based on reports in *Nederlands Dagblad, Gereformeerd Kerkblad voor Overijssel, Gelderland, Utrecht, Noord-Holland en Flevoland*, as well as related documents provided by the Rev. L. Moes. 

## CHURCH NEWS



**CALLLED to Chatham, ON**  
**Rev. D.G.J. Agema**  
of Attercliffe, ON

\*\*\*

**ACCEPTED to Port Kells, BC**  
**Rev. E. Kampen**  
of Edmonton (Immanuel), AB

\*\*\*

**CALLLED to Burlington South**  
**Rev. J. Koelewijn**  
of the Netherlands

\*\*\*

**CALLLED and DECLINED to**  
**Abbotsford**

**Rev. P.G. Feenstra**  
of Guelph, ON

**CALLLED to Surrey, BC**  
**Rev. J.D. Wielenga**  
of Coaldale, AB

\*\*\*

**CHANGES OF ADDRESS:**

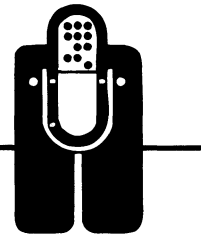
**Rev. P. Kingma**  
7625 Parmalee Road  
Middleville, MI 49333  
New phone (616) 795-8760

**"Bethel" Canadian**  
**Reformed Church**  
PO Box 635  
Thornhill, ON L3T 4A5



# NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene



Since this is the first newsmedley written in the year of our Lord 1992, I want to start with thanking all who so faithfully sent the various bulletins all through the past year. Even though the medleys did not appear all that frequently, they all should know that none of the bulletins is neglected, but that whatever newsworthy item was contained in them was noted, saved, and utilized when the moment for it was there.

What is also greatly appreciated are the personal notes that are included from time to time. It makes everything so much more pleasant and less business-like. Especially the wishes for the new year were greatly valued, and I hereby send our wishes to all who remembered us. In fact: I send them to all our readers.

Let me begin the medley proper with honouring a consistory, namely the consistory of Lincoln. Our readers know that I had some critical remarks about the manner in which the consistory of the church at Lincoln dealt with an Abbotsford letter sent for the forthcoming general synod. It gives me great pleasure that I can pass on the following item from a report on an Abbotsford consistory meeting: "Letter from the church at Lincoln, sending us their apology for misunderstanding our letter to synod. Apology graciously accepted." Thank you, brothers.

Various consistory reports mention receipt of a letter from the church at Grand Rapids dealing with the Ministry-at-Large. In general, there appear to be quite a few questions, but very few reports give any particulars. The Houston consistory "has certain reservations about the financial dealings of this committee." In Lincoln it likewise "was felt that several questions needed answering before a decision could be made."

The consistory of Carman was a little more specific: "Because the majority of the money requested has been designated for the support of the Christ American Reformed Church at Boulder, Colorado, it is decided to discuss the matter again after Classis has dealt with their request to be received into the federation of the Canadian Reformed Churches." Here, at least as I understand it, no money from the Fund has been passed on as yet.

A different impression is received from the information in the Cloverdale consistory report: "Letter informing of some of the activities of Rev. Kingma in Grand Rapids, especially in connection with Christ American Reformed Church in Boulder, Colorado, which is applying for admission to the federation, and which is receiving assistance from the fund for the Ministry-at-Large. Letter will be sent questioning whether support for a church is included in the mandate of the Ministry-at-Large and whether it is wise to give considerable support to a group such as at Boulder at this time yet."

If the information contained in the last-quoted report is correct, I do not hesitate to state that the committee that administers the fund has gone far beyond its mandate and, in fact, has violated the trust the churches placed in it. From all the information I could gather about this project during the past years I have always understood that contributions

from the churches were requested to defray the costs of especially the Rev. Kingma's travels and expenses involved in contact with others, of providing literature and any other assistance of that nature. But to take from the moneys contributed for that purpose and to provide financial support to a group with which the churches do not even have any official ties as yet, I cannot call this anything else than failing to honour the trust given by the churches.

In connection with this "Boulder-case" I pass on what the Rev. J.D.Wielenga wrote in the Coaldale/Taber bulletin.

"A more important matter was the request from Classis Ontario South to our Classis to give our opinion on the question of which Classis should proceed with the request of a small group of christians who had left the P.C.A. with a minister, and who had instituted itself on advice of the Ministry at Large (Rev. Kingma, Grand Rapids) as a Reformed Church at Denver, Colorado, to be affiliated with the Canadian Reformed Churches. Classis decided that Art. 44 C.O. defines classis as consisting of neighbouring churches which live in one another's vicinity. As Denver is considerably closer to our classical resort than Ont. South, Classis was of the opinion that the proper address for a request for affiliation in this case would be Classis Alberta/Manitoba. The delegates of Taber and Coaldale would have liked Classis to go beyond the actual request of Classis Ontario South and serve the brethren with the advice that according to the Reformed Confession (Art. 28, 29) and according to the Reformed Church Order Art.31 (the Canadian Reformed Churches have since 1977 recognized the O.P.C. as a true church) the group at Denver should have been advised by the Ministry at Large to join and not separate from the O.P.C. at Denver with whom they were already worshipping for five months and who had decided to receive them on their request. Classis decided to limit itself to the formal request."

The above quotation raises an interesting point. For the time being I want to make only one observation. It is a question. Does the fact that we recognize a certain foreign federation as a true church of the Lord, but with which we do not (yet) have a sister-church relation, *preclude* our accepting a group that *could* have affiliated with that federation, but prefers to be affiliated with "our" federation, and does it obligate us to deny any request to that effect? Something to be pondered.

We are jumping back and forth a little, although we have dwelt on one topic. Let's continue with Coaldale.

"On more than one family visit the dissatisfaction of the present church worship times has been brought to the attention of the elders." At the moment these times are: 9:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. but the consistory decided to "review the church schedule before we move into the new church facilities."

As for these new church facilities, "A letter from the Town of Coaldale regarding our request for water and sewer services for the new church building informs us that the original price given for the services of \$90,000 cannot be reduced. It has been decided not to obtain these services at

this cost." Who would have expected a different decision? There was some cheerier news as well: "TransAlta Utilities will install a 3-phase power supply without extra cost to the church."

As tentative shipping date for the organ April or May 1992 has been mentioned. In this connection "A question was raised as to whether other musical instruments such as piano and wind instruments should be used during the worship services." It was "decided that the organ is our instrument of choice to lead congregational singing and, therefore Council will not propose the inclusion of other musical instruments." You notice how carefully it is worded: The organ "is our instrument of choice."

Let us stay in Alberta for a little while longer. Some years ago I tried to introduce a column about "Personalialia." This is a plural and means: "Things pertaining to persons." It was my purpose in this column to mention special honours bestowed upon one or more of our members, special positions acquired by one or more of our members, and so on. Briefly: I wanted to bring specific personal facts to the attention of all our readers. I got quite some flak for this, for we should not glorify members, I was told. The column was not introduced and no names were ever proposed for inclusion in such a feature.

It is, therefore with gratitude that I pass on a little item from Rev. R.Aasman's review of congregational events in the Providence Church in Edmonton. "Brother Martin Hooimeyer was chosen as businessman of the year for St Albert. I mention this, because as the Scripture makes clear, Christians should be well thought of by outsiders. The way in which we as Christians carry out our daily lives and our business ought to be exemplary and it ought to be appreciated by the world." The world may notice and include a write-up in the newspapers, but in a Canadian Reformed periodical such a feature ought not to be found? I can hardly believe it. Heartfelt congratulations, brother!

Although at this time of the year the prairie provinces are not all that inviting for one used to milder climes, we do visit Carman for a little while. Agreement has been reached with Winnipeg to have a combined bulletin, scheduled to appear at three weeks intervals. The name "Manitoba Church News" has been proposed, but I have not read any decision on that point.

For the benefit of those who have difficulties with the English language a course in "English Church Language" will be given. This is one of the results of the discussions resulting from the request to have services in Dutch for the benefit of those members. Rather than take a step back, it will be tried to have them catch up with the other members.

Because we have only a few items from the West, we mention them first before turning our attention to Ontario.

In Langley "the consistory also brought forward for discussion the feasibility of calling a second minister." The four services per Sunday, alternating between two wards, will not satisfy in the long run, although there are many members who enjoy having the first service at 9:00 a.m.

No overcrowding is yet to be feared in Vernon, especially not because on December 22nd they met for the first time in their new premises, a church building of their own! As this time of year is not very fit to have people from the other B.C. churches travel to Vernon, it was decided to have an official opening around Easter. I am certain that they will not be lacking of visitors from the sister churches.



For years I have been trying to get some recognition from the members, as everyone knows. For this reason I mention with great thankfulness and appreciation that Rev. Moesker finally saw the light and was so courageous as to admit to this, too. Drawing the attention to my being scheduled to conduct an afternoon service in Cloverdale, he wrote: "This afternoon we welcome a patriarch of the churches here to the pulpit." Finally!

Beating a hasty retreat to Ontario (a safe distance from here), before I am robbed of this crown, we congratulate the church at Elora with the acquisition of their own church building. A Dedication Meeting and Open House was planned for January 17th. We trust that a report on this will be forthcoming.

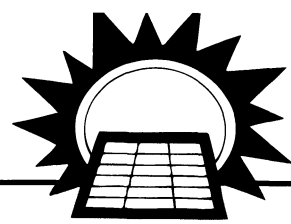
Ottawa reported that "we will look into broadcasting 'The Voice of the Church' in the Ottawa area." Would be nice if this could be achieved.

Orangeville's attention is directed almost all the time to Chatsworth. An elder has been appointed in the midst of the brotherhood there, but other ways and means to take care of this part of the congregation are being considered. "In the context of that serious attention a proposal was made...to approach those retired (or about to retire) ministers to see whether they would be willing to settle down in the Chatsworth area for a longer or shorter period of time." Sounds like an excellent idea, although I would advise the brothers to approach these ministers as soon as possible, for I am afraid that, once they have enjoyed the freedom from the burden of responsibility for a congregation for a longer time, they will be most hesitant again to take such a burden upon themselves.

— To be continued

VO





By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

## Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Sometimes we question God why some of us have such a difficult road to travel due to illnesses, handicaps, deaths of loved ones, or other trials in our lives. Nobody can give us an answer to those questions, unless that person bases his answers on the Bible.

In the Bible God speaks to us. Although, in the Bible there are no straight answers to all the questions, yet God reveals Himself to us. In Bible stories, prophecies and letters we can read that He is a faithful God and Father, and that He takes care of all His children. Since we may know that we belong to Him, we will find comfort in His Word. When we listen to what the Lord has to say to us, we will find peace with our circumstances, and so also receive answers to our questions.

One particular Bible book deals with a person who had to face many trials in his life. It is the book of Job.

Job loved God with all his heart. He lived closely to the Lord in everything he did. The Lord gave Job everything in abundance: a wife, many sons and daughters, cattle, and many servants. The Lord made Job very rich, and Job became an important person in his town.

We know that the Lord was pleased with Job. How do we know that? Satan came to a meeting in heaven, a meeting with God and the angels. Satan had been going "to and fro on the earth, and walking up and down on it." Then the Lord asked Satan whether he had seen His servant Job, and the Lord added that Job was the finest man in all the earth, pious and honest, fearing God and turning away from all evil. This shows how well Job pleased the Lord.

Job was not perfect, for nobody but God Himself is perfect. But Job had faith, and Job's life of faith was God's own doing. God spoke highly of His servant Job, for God had made him that way. God's Holy Spirit worked in Job's heart.

Satan thought that Job's obedience was only the result of all the riches he had. Satan said that when his wealth would be gone Job's belief would be gone as well. So Satan asked if he could destroy Job's riches. The Lord trusted so much in Job that He knew Satan was wrong. God knew that Job's belief was His own work. Job would be able to fight Satan's attacks for God would not let Satan destroy what was His.

Suddenly everything was taken away from Job. He lost his children, his cattle, his servants. In one day he became a poor man. And what did Job do? Job saw God's hand in it and his faith gave him the strength to accept it. He could even say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the Name of the Lord."

This story is full of encouragement and comfort.

We are no Jobs. We may not be as patient, we may feel that we are not able to live like he did, and that our faith is not as strong, we may think that we will never be able to endure what Job did. Yet this is what we have in common

with Job: his God is our God. From this story we do not learn what Job could do, but it is the comforting message of God in which He promises to everybody who expects everything from Him: I will help you through.

*O my soul, why are you grieving,  
Why disquieted in me?  
Hope in God, your faith retrieving:  
He will still your refuge be.  
I again shall laud His grace  
For the comfort of His face:  
He will show His help and favour,  
For He is my God and Saviour.*

Psalm 42:3

(Source: *As Rich as Job*, by Rev. C. Bijl)

## From the Mailbox:

The mother of Marinus Foekens informed me that Marinus has moved into a small group home in Chatham. He also works in a workshop in Chatham. He comes home every Sunday, and Marinus is quite happy in this new setting. Next month, when his birthday comes up, I will give you his new address.

Trevor Hofsink moved from Smithers to Beamsville. He attends the John Calvin School in Smithville, and Trevor is enjoying that very much. We wish Marinus and Trevor the best in their new environments.

## Birthdays in March:

### Ruth VanderPol

19471 - 72 Avenue, Surrey, BC V3S 4P1

On March 3rd, Ruth hopes to be 10 on this day.

### Trevor Hofsink

c/o A. VandenHaak

4290 Sann Road Beamsville, ON L0R 1B1

On March 3rd, it will be Trevor's 14th birthday.

### Gerry Eelhart

14511 - 62 Street, Edmonton, AB T5A 2A9

On March 12th, Gerry will be 30 years old.

### Jim VanderHeiden

PO St. Anns, ON L0R 1Y0

On March 15th, Jim hopes to celebrate his 33rd birthday.

### Roselyn Kuik

Box 93, Carman, MB R0G 0J0

On March 18th, this is going to be Roselyn's 18th birthday.

I wish you all a very happy birthday.

Until next month,

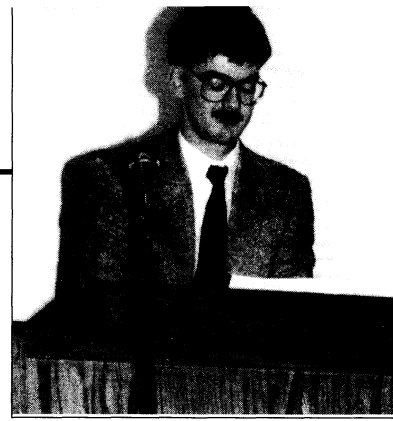
*Mrs. R. Ravensbergen*  
7462 Highway 20, RR 1  
Smithville, ON L0R 2A0

# American Reformed Church

LYNDEN

## Ordination of Rev. W.M. Wielenga

By W.D. Meester



On Sunday, November 17, 1991, the congregation of the American Reformed Church at Lynden joyfully witnessed the ordination of Candidate W.M. Wielenga as their new Minister of the Word.

Rev. J.D. Wielenga, father of Candidate Wielenga, and minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Coal-dale, led the morning worship service and preached on John 10:7-11, under the theme:

Jesus Christ, the good Shepherd, who determines the service of His servants in God's flock.

1. Christ's position determines the servant's access to God's flock
2. Christ's mission determines the servant's work in God's flock
3. Christ's love determines the servant's attitude in God's flock

Rev. Wielenga pointed out that Jesus, the chief Shepherd, is the door by whom His servants, the under-shepherds, are called to enter to tend the flock. Thus legally called and authorized by Christ, His servants must serve and please Him. The congregation receiving their new minister from the Lord must see Jesus Christ behind him and thus respect him and esteem him highly because of his work, namely the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus is also the door by which the sheep enter the safety of the sheepfold. Christ Himself laid down His life for the sheep and the voice of the Shepherd must be brought to the flock by His servants; they must preach nothing but Jesus Christ, crucified, knowing His love for them. The love of Christ, like in Paul, controls the servant to joyfully discharge his duties.

After the proclamation of God's Word, the Form for the Ordination of Ministers of the Word was read, to which Candidate Wielenga wholeheartedly responded in the affirmative.

Rev. M. VanderWel, counsellor, participated in the laying on of hands with Rev. J.D. Wielenga and the elders of the Church at Lynden.

After the completion of the service the chairman of the consistory, Br. R. Faber, congratulated the new minister, following which Rev. M. VanderWel spoke a few words on behalf of Classis Pacific.

In the afternoon service Rev. W.M. Wielenga held his inaugural sermon on Mark 9:38-41, under the theme:



Rev. and Mrs. W.M. Wielenga with their son Dustin flanked by their parents

Christ teaches that all disciples are called to serve in His name.

1. The character of this service to promote the gospel which proclaims the kingdom.
2. The reward for this service to inherit the kingdom which is proclaimed in the gospel.

He pointed out that what is required from each of us that we serve the Lord, promoting and furthering the cause of the gospel of Jesus Christ, serving the Lord and His people, each one in a different way and at a different place. Christ will keep for us an inheritance which is imperishable, undefiled and unfading, a gracious reward for humble service for all alike, serving in the name of Christ for the furthering of the glorious gospel of salvation. We all have a task to serve God with diligence in true thankfulness to the One who has redeemed us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the King-


dom of His beloved Son. A glorious gospel indeed!

On Monday evening, November 18, 1991, the congregation got together for a welcome evening for the Rev. W.M. Wielenga family.

Br. W.D. Meester, MC, opened the evening with the reading of Isaiah 40:1-5 and 27-31 and prayer. He welcomed all in attendance, but especially Rev. and Mrs. Wielenga and both their parents. Following this, Br. R. Faber, chairman of the council, briefly spoke and also read a letter of congratulations from the church at Vernon, BC.

Then Br. H. De Raad, on behalf of the Church at Abbotsford congratulated Lynden with their new shepherd. He briefly alluded to the privilege he had of teaching Lynden's catechism students during the vacancy. Dr. J. Visscher extended heartfelt congratulations on behalf of the Churches at Chilliwack, Cloverdale, Langley and Surrey. Br. P. Jansen added his congratulations on behalf of the Church at Port Kells.

Following this Rev. J.D. Wielenga briefly spoke in his threefold capacity as father, ordainer and colleague of our new minister. He encouraged him to seek all his strength for his new task from the Lord in fervent prayer, and referred to the Apostle Paul's words in 2 Cor. 3:5, "not that we are competent of ourselves, ...but our competence is from God, who has made us competent to be ministers of a new covenant."

A program followed in which the children of the congregation, the Young People Society as well as several other members of the congregation participated in songs, poems, skits and games. After this enjoyable entertainment Rev. W.M. Wielenga responded with some well chosen words of appreciation, after which we sang Hymn 65:1 and 3 and Br. R. Faber closed the evening with prayer of thanksgiving to the Lord. Refreshments were served in the basement of the church after the program. 

# BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam

## More on Groen van Prinsterer

J.L. Van Essen and H.D. Morton, *Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer. Selected Studies*. Wedge Publishing Foundation: Jordan Station, 1990. Paperback, 109 pages, plus index. Price: \$12.95 Cdn.

Wedge Publishing has done the Reformed cause a favour by publishing this collection of popular essays. This book makes available to the English speaking world some key ideas of Groen van Prinsterer as Christian historian and as champion for freedom of education in the struggle for Christian education in the Netherlands, a struggle which was only finally resolved in a good way in the twentieth century, long after Groen's death in 1876. This work forms an excellent supplement to H. Van Dyke's *Groen van Prinsterer's Lectures on Unbelief and Revolution* (Wedge: Jordan Station 1989).


Four of the five studies in the volume presently being discussed are authored by Jantje Lubbegiena van Essen, an expert on Groen van Prinsterer, now retired, who has spent most of her professional lifetime publishing Groen's correspondence. H.D. Morton translated the essays by Van Essen and contributed one himself dealing with the style of Groen van Prinsterer.

I especially enjoyed reading "Guillaume Groen van Prinsterer and His Conception of History" and "God's Hand in History." Living in the secular age that we do, it is most refreshing to read how as a Christian, Groen consciously let himself be guided by biblical concepts in his historical work. Let me list some. "The centre of world history is the reconciliation through Christ." "The core of general history must be the history of the Christian church" and "the purpose of all events is the triumph of Christ's church." "The meaning and purpose of history is the

restoration of the creation, the new heaven and the new earth, of which Christ is the centre." These were not just theoretical ideas for Groen, but he incorporated them in his history writing.

For Groen, history is to a large measure determined by ideas, ideas based on God's Word or in conflict with it. Belief in God and obedience to Him leads to blessing (which is not the same as prosperity) and disobedience leads to cursing (which is not to be identified with adversity). Groen illustrates this, for example, from the French Revolution. A present day reader can think of many examples from contemporary history as he reads through these chapters.

An idea of Groen's that has been much discussed lately is that God's hand can be seen in history. Critics have said we can say this of the Bible history for the Scripture tells us so. But can we speak with certainty of God's hand with respect to secular history? Groen van Prinsterer did not hesitate. Although we must be cautious (many wrong interpretations have been given), yet in faith this manner of speaking is possible. While we cannot fathom God's ways, yet by the light of God's Word and by the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can "discern in the course of events God's acts as they relate to people and nations."

This book was a pleasure to read. It is most edifying and whets the appetite for more. It is lucidly written, well organized, has an excellent introduction, and is supplied with full documentation, making it a good resource for the professional historian as well. It is to be hoped this book will be widely read. We need Groen's ideas in our day and age because he points us back to the Word. If a reprint is needed (which I hope), the missing part of a line in the middle of page 97 should be supplied. 



## PRESS RELEASE

### General Board meeting of CRAFTH held November 22, 1991

The chairman read James 5 and opened with us in prayer. He welcomed all those present. The agenda was established and the minutes of the general board meeting of September 20, 1991 were adopted. Discussion ensued. All local representatives (and also members of all congregations) are encouraged to visit the Anchor Home.

Mr. Vis is no longer a counselor for Fred Ludwig, due to poor health. Fred Ludwig will be needing a new workplace and boarding home.

There will be an application to the Town of Lincoln to change the zoning from 6 to 8 residents.

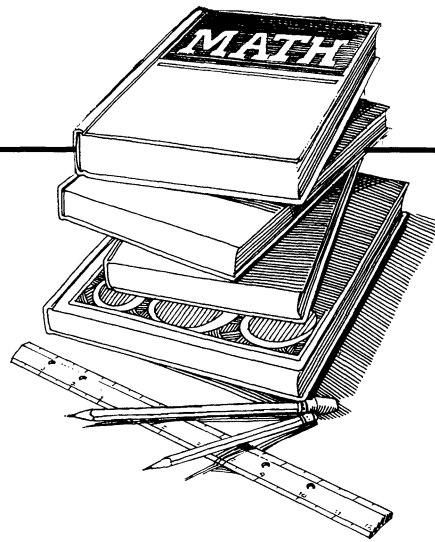
The PR Committee is working on a new logo. The Treasurer reminds us that all dues and donations must go to your *local* treasurers. K. Jager is appointed the new liaison to the Advisory Committee. The liaison to the Property Committee will be appointed when a suitable person is found. K. Jager closed with us and the meeting was adjourned.

J. VanAmerongen, Secretary

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# News from the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies

By M. Spithoff



On November 29, the league held its second meeting for the 1991-92 school year. Besides other items on the agenda, the following topics were tabled and discussed in detail at this meeting.

## Salary Committee Report

Every year this committee prepares an extensive report which it presents to the league and subsequently to the school boards for their approval. Much time, thought, discussions with CRTA members and feed-back from boards all contribute to the establishing of the report.

The main body of the report deals with the "salary and benefits recommendations." Although all eleven items under this section were discussed, this year the committee concentrated specifically on a) the differentiation between the occasional relief teacher and the part-time teacher, b) the pension component in the benefit area, c) leave for jury duty and d) salary grid adjustments.

## Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Education (CARE)

The CARE has had an interspective year and has emerged with specific goals and a clear focus on how it plans to implement these system-wide. Although impossible to outline all in this report, here are a few highlights.

The ministry of Education is continually establishing documents or guidelines which are regularly followed by lists of textbooks and learning material commonly called "Circular 14." One of the first things CARE plans to do is establish a list of criteria by which to judge a book or a series of books. This would facilitate a school in deciding

what would be the best book(s) to use for a specific subject.

Another goal of CARE would be to facilitate the sharing of curriculum work among our schools. If necessary and appropriate, it would take responsibility in publishing curriculum material from one school to be used in another. CARE also proposes to organize a workshop in July 1992 with emphasis on the teacher getting the "hands-on-experience" on a particular unit of a curriculum.

In order for CARE to successfully implement these proposals and act as liaison among the schools, there is a need for increased local school involvement. CARE proposes each school appoint a liaison so that its needs and what it has available, can be addressed to CARE. To be effective, it needs this system-wide contact and support from the league, school boards, principals and teachers.

## Government Contact Committee Report

As league of Canadian Reformed Schools, we are a member of the Forum of Independent School Associations (FISA). FISA meets regularly to keep up to date in developments between government and private education and to plan strategy in dealing with the ministry on several issues. FISA met with the coordinator of Liaison Services, their link with the new Minister of Education, Mr. Tom Silips. They hope to meet with him by January 1992.


In this GCC report we read: "FISA continues to push for government action in giving more freedom to independent schools in the area of annual Notices of Intent; school inspection, entry into ministry courses, teacher certifi- cates, criteria for hiring and firing of

teachers on moral grounds and recognition of independent schools as a viable education alternative."

The Government Contact Committee has proposed to the league to discuss and make decisions on where it stands on several important issues. These are funding, Bible credits at the high school level, teacher training and certification and school inspection. Especially this last issue, "school inspection," should have the league's attention due to the changes in the legislation of this summer. This has to do with the changes in section 50 and 8 of the Education Act in Bill 125. While section 50, which earlier already was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, is not going to affect independent schools one way or the other, section 8 is of more concern to our schools. This section wants to authorize the Minister to conduct reviews of classroom practices and effectiveness of educational programs and require inspected private high schools to participate in reviews and provide this information to the Minister of Education. Our GCC and FISA considers this an unnecessary intrusion into independent schools.

Our GCC continues to monitor the two court cases against the government. These are in the initial stages and concern funding for independent schools.

## League Activities

The Lord willing, the league plans to have its annual league day on February 15, 1992 at Guido de Brès High School. One workshop will be on "guidance and specific guidelines in carrying out the duties of the classroom visit." All board and committee members and interested persons are welcome to attend. 



# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Dear Editor

In the Sept. 13/91 and Sept. 27/91 issues of "Clarion" the readers were confronted with a conversation between Rev. Tuininga and Prof. Geertsema. This conversation is not just an exchange of personal opinions. Prof. Geertsema writes therefore: "With him (Rev. T.) I hope and pray that our exchange will serve the purpose of unity!" This puts the conversation in the right perspective. Hence, Prof. Geertsema responds as a spokesman for the Canadian Reformed Church and consequently, we as members are involved and must follow this conversation closely.

Prof. Geertsema, I have difficulty with your response to Rev. Tuininga! And many more in our Church. Although I have my objection to several points which, according to me, are in-

correct, I will confine myself here with my objection to the way you deal with Rev. Tuininga, since such a dealing might cause a detriment to the cause of seeking true unity. For with being frank and honest, we also might expect here to find a will of understanding. The questions, asked by Rev. Tuininga, are very understandable, simple and practical. Why then, Prof. Geertsema, are you not answering these questions??? Not even with *one* word! And then using instead, the space for these answers to correct Rev. Tuininga on the word "option," is nothing else than "unfair." For here you give the impression, that for Rev. Tuininga "belonging" or "joining" the Church is just an "option," which he never intended to say. Looking over your "response" as a whole Prof. Geertsema, out of concern, allow me to

say: When you are going into the history with all kinds of examples in such a detail as you have done here, you easily fall into the trap of elaborating on things, which are not at stake at all, thereby forgetting or ignoring the real purpose of the conversation, namely, to clear up the number of difficulties, your opponent has and to allay his fears!

We hope and pray that this conversation may continue, but then in a more honest and practical way.

Bart Bikker  
Surrey, BC

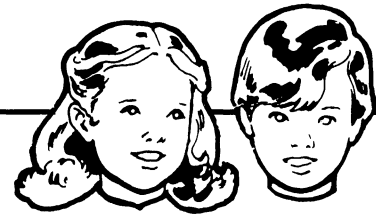
## Response:

Different people can have a different evaluation of what is at stake. There is no need to repeat this. Further, the main issues are the important points.

JG 

# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



## Dear Busy Beavers,

Do you have a "best friend"?  
You're lucky, if you do!  
Do you see each other at school? Or after school?  
Do you talk a lot to your best friend?  
What do you like doing together?  
How did you become friends?  
Friends are a blessing!  
We should be good to them!

Will you share your ideas about "being friends" with the other Busy Beavers?

Please send them to the Busy Beaver Club

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



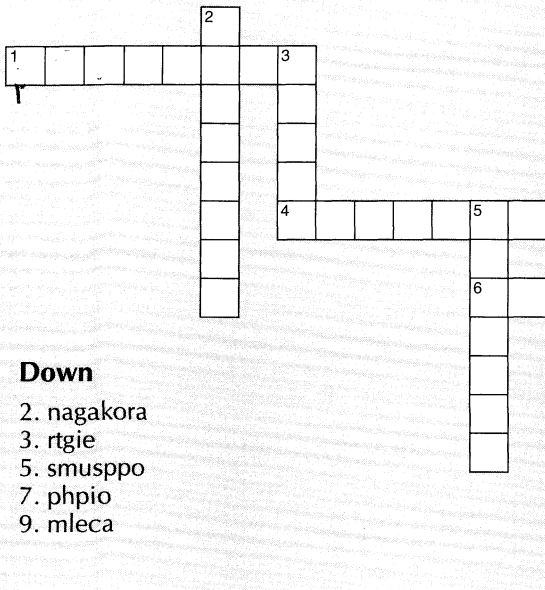
# Quiz Time!

## USES OF OIL

There were many uses for oil in the Bible. Can you match the use and the user?

- |                  |                         |                    |
|------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Wise virgins  | a. anointing a king     | 1 Sam. 16:1        |
| 2. Jacob         | b. bathing              | 2 Chron. 2:10-11   |
| 3. Solomon       | c. celebrating joy      | 1 Chron. 12:39, 40 |
| 4. Elijah        | d. consecrating a place | Gen. 35:14         |
| 5. Samaritan man | e. cooking              | 1 Kings 17:12-16   |
| 6. Samuel        | f. doctoring            | Luke 10:34         |
| 7. Hiram         | g. blessing a tribe     | Deut. 33:24        |
| 8. A widow       | h. exchanging for cedar | 1 Kings 5:10, 11   |
| 9. Moses         | i. lighting lamps       | Matt. 25:7, 8      |
| 10. Israelites   | j. paying debts         | 2 Kings 4:2-7      |
| 11. Issachar     | k. offering             | Num. 15:10         |

(See answers)



### SCRAMBLED CROSSWORD

by Busy Beaver *Rachel Wierenga*

Unscramble the animal names.  
Then write them in the blanks.

#### Across

- 1. pelehtan
- 4. cocanor
- 6. hcirtso
- 8. ppcuronie

#### Down

- 2. nagakora
- 3. rtgie
- 5. smusppo
- 7. phpio
- 9. mleca

### WINTER CODE

Done by Busy Beaver  
*Florence Nijenhuis*

20 22 26 21 24 23

24 25 28

21 27 26 30 29 31 27

- 20 = F
- 21 = S
- 22 = R
- 23 = Y
- 24 = T
- 25 = H
- 26 = O
- 27 = N
- 28 = E
- 29 = M
- 30 = W
- 31 = A

### VALENTINE SUGAR COOKIES

from Busy Beaver *Melanie DeBoer*

In the heart of winter, have a heart and make some pretty, melt-in-your-mouth Valentine cookies for your family and your friends!

- |                |                      |
|----------------|----------------------|
| 1 cup butter   | 1/2 tsp salt         |
| 1 cup sugar    | 3 cup flour          |
| 2 eggs         | 1 tsp. baking powder |
| 1 tsp. vanilla | 1/3 cup milk         |

Cream butter. Add sugar gradually. Mix in eggs and vanilla. Blend in dry ingredients and add milk. Chill. Roll out and cut with heart cookie cutter. Bake on greased cookie sheets in preheated 350° oven for 8-10 minutes.

May be decorated with pink icing, red or multi-coloured sprinkles, cinnamon hearts, etc. Makes about 5 dozen.



### FROM THE MAILBOX



Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Deanna Wierenga*. We are happy to have you join us. Thank you for a pretty letter, and the puzzle, too! I guess by now you are good at cross country skiing, right Deanna?

How is your music coming, *Rachel Wierenga*? What are you playing? How are your horses doing? Do you help exercise them? Bye for now, Rachel, Thank you for the puzzles.

What happend to your little goat, *Francine VanWoudenberg*? I'm glad you had such a nice trip to your relatives and your Oma. Did your Mom have a nice birthday? Thank you for the picture and the puzzles, Francine! Keep up the good work.

Thank you for the puzzles, *Laura Breukelman*. The Busy Beavers will enjoy them, I know. Did you have a good holiday, Laura? Bye for now.

Sounds to me as if you had a very enjoyable holiday, *Melanie Peters*. And you really did keep busy, didn't you? I see you are a good puzzler, too. Keep up the good work!

I'm glad you enjoyed your prize, *David Aikema*. I think we should have a contest again some time, right? Sounds to me as if you had a good holiday, David. Thank you for the puzzle.

### PEN PALS WANTED!



Who would like to be a pen pal? You may start by writing one (or both!) of these Busy Beavers.

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Michael Breukelman<br>Box 129<br>Neerlandia, AB T0G 1R0 | Crystal Dekker (age 7)<br>103 Wade Road<br>Smithville, ON L0R 2A0 |
|---|---|

#### Answers

Uses of Oil: 1. i, 2. d, 3. h, 4. l, 5. f, 6. a, 7. b, 8. j, 9. g, 10. k, 11. c.

I'm really looking forward to your letters, Busy Beavers!  
And your ideas about *friends!*

Bye for now.  
Keep busy!

Love to you all,  
Aunt Betty

