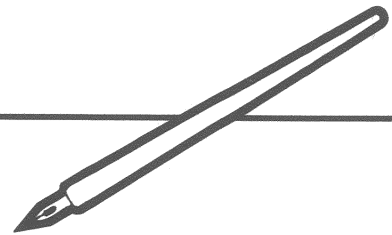


A black and white photograph of a snowy forest. In the foreground, there are snow-laden evergreen trees and branches. In the background, a stone wall or structure is visible, partially obscured by the trees. The overall scene is a winter landscape.

Clarion

THE CLARION UNIVERSITY REVIEW
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Psycho-Analysis and Prayer

A psycho-analytical study of prayer

In the editorial, "Praying in the U.S.A.," in the previous issue, I quoted extensively from an article in *Newsweek* of January 6, 1992. After some consideration, I omitted one specific paragraph dealing with a psycho-analytical study about praying. It deserves separate attention for two reasons, of which one is positive and the other negative. The positive reason is that we can learn from such an analysis things that go on in the mind of people, in particular of children. We shall see that this is important with respect to situations of abuse. The negative reason is that the analysis falls short in the fact that it does not reckon with the living God and His Word. Here follows first the part that was left out:

Unlike Buddhist and other meditative practices, prayer presupposes a God who can be addressed. Since no one has seen God, people who pray inevitably draw on their own imagination and experience. Thus, Sigmund Freud [called the founder of psycho-analysis, J.G.] dismissed the idea of God as a figment of the unconscious mind conformed out of a child's early relations with powerful parents. Today, however, some psychoanalysts believe the issue is much more subtle than Freud imagined.

According to Dr. Ana-Maria Rizzuto, a training and supervisory analyst at the Psychoanalytic Institute of New England East, Freud was only partly right. "Like everything else in life," says Rizzuto, "our internal representation of God is unconsciously organized by the mind" based on personal relations with other people. For example, a child who feels neglected by one or both parents may pray to God to prove she has a powerful ally and to numb the pain of not being understood. In some cases, people never get beyond the image of God they developed in the infantile state. Hence Freud's dismissal of God.

I insert here the remark that Freud's dismissal of God cannot just have been caused by this psycho-analysis of prayer. His entire approach was that of a non-believer with his presuppositions of unbelief. The article continues:

But from her own ongoing study of 120 cases, Rizzuto has found that in psychologically healthy people, this internal representation of God changes throughout the life cycle in response to other significant people and events. At the onset of puberty, Rizzuto reports, many children experience terrible doubts about God's existence as they try to reconcile inconsistencies between a benign childhood deity and human suffering. Again, at the close of adolescence, which she notes may extend well past 30, internal images of God change. Finding a loving spouse or holding a newborn child, Rizzuto

says, "may alter an earlier, more negative representation of God." (In other words, there is reason to be grateful.) In short, says Rizzuto, "the God we pray to is the complex outcome of our personal relations with other people." But this does not mean that there is no God outside of this unconscious internal process. Rather, says Rizzuto, it means that this mental process is the psychological medium everyone uses "for searching out that mysterious being we call God."

Some comments

One could ask, should we not just dismiss such a psychological analysis of praying, because it is a purely humanistic approach? Although in the end the existence of God is not denied, He is not acknowledged as the true God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who revealed Himself in His Word, but He is presented only as "that mysterious being that we call God." Further, no place is given to the Holy Spirit and His regenerating work. Nor is there any place given to God's Word. There is only a human "mental process" functioning as a "psychological medium" through which not just some but "everyone [emphasis added, J.G.] search[es] that mysterious being that we call God."

I would like to suggest that we do not just dismiss this psychological analysis. Aspects of what is said in the paragraphs which I quoted here are important and instructive. It makes us think about what is going on in our human mind when we pray. We are all human beings who can think and who go through a development, both physically and mentally. We form images and ideas about things and people in our lives, and also about God. With "image" I do not mean an idol, but one's perception of God. According to the Scriptures, such images or perceptions of God can be true or false.

Further, it cannot be denied that these images and ideas about God differ in accordance with what we are taught. A Christian, who lives by the Word of God, will not have the same image of God as those who are taught in the ways of Buddha or as those brought up with the teaching of Mohammed. According to the Scriptures, the one will have the true knowledge of God, the others will not. However, the point is that we all do form images and ideas about God, who He is and what He does.

Moreover, this forming of images and ideas about God happens in a growing and changing process. The apostle Paul writes in 1 Cor. 13:11, "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became a man, I gave up the things that pertain to a child."

Children learn about many things, also about God, from their parents (although not from them only). In their young minds, children form images about things in their life

through what their parents say (teach) and do. If the parents live by and speak according to God's Word, the child's image of God will be in accordance with the picture which God gives of Himself in Scripture. Of course, a child's picture of God remains in accordance with his ability to understand things. The knowledge of who God is, what He does, and what He means for His people grows with the age and knowledge of the child. However, if parents have ideas and act contrary to God's Word, the ideas about God, formed in the mind of the child will be different.

Therefore, it is not strange that Dr. Rizzuto observes that a child's image of God is formed under the influence of people and events that play an important role in that child's life. The awareness of these things should make parents very careful in what they teach and how they act with regard to their children.

Talking with an adult who, as a child, has been mentally, physically or, in particular, sexually abused by a parent, reveals that it can be very difficult, if not almost impossible, for such a person to pray with love and trusting confidence to "our Father who art in heaven." The Father image has become an image of horror. Even the word *Father* brings to mind the frightening experiences of youth. In all abuse, in particular in sexual abuse, the spirit or mind (which means the entire person or the whole personality of a child, is broken into pieces and crushed by the abusing parent. Self-worth is shattered; the child feels totally worthless. The child has great difficulties functioning in a normal way in his relationships with other people. This feeling remains when a child grows and becomes an adult. Even though each victim reacts differently, this is common among the abused.

Psychoanalysis, when analyzing what happens in and with the disturbed mind of a child, searches for and discovers these problems. It also teaches us that we have to be very careful in counselling victims of abuse. Let me mention one point. As Christians, we speak of our Christian calling to forgive each other, and that, therefore also a victim of abuse has to forgive the perpetrator. That is true. It is the calling of the gospel of Christ. However, it is not sufficient simply to tell a victim of abuse to forgive. A comparison with a broken leg can make this clear. Nobody tells a person with a badly broken, almost crushed leg to stand up and walk. The leg has to heal first, and then, slowly, a person can learn to walk again. The victim of (sexual) abuse has a badly broken mind and a crushed spirit. One cannot tell such a person just to act as a healthy person and to forgive. Like a leg has to heal, so a mind has to heal. This can take a long time. It is much easier to heal a broken leg than to restore a crushed mind. When healing takes place, the scars remain for ever.

At the same time, there remains the calling of the Lord that we, as Christian believers, forgive one another. On this point I would like to stress the antithesis between the message of the gospel of Christ Jesus as the great healing Physician and modern humanistic psychoanalysis, which brings across to us the great need for biblically based Reformed, Christian, psychoanalysts. Modern humanistic psychoanalysis places the human person in the center and works basically with the ideas of human self-fulfillment and human self-realization. It will not give specific directives, but rather build up in the mind of the abused victim a new and restored feeling of self-worth. The victim has to learn to feel good about her/himself. I can acknowledge the psychological need of a victim of abuse to build up such a feeling positive about her/himself. But the question is, on what basis and in what manner? Here our Lord gives us His healing directives in His Word.



The healing Gospel of Christ

God's Word tells us that God so loved the world, which was lost in sin and its consequences, that He gave His Son as Saviour. Therefore, the message of the gospel is that we, lost sinners, are of such great value to God that He gave His only Son for us, to place our sins and guilt and His wrath against it upon Christ, and so to reconcile us to Himself and restore to us the position of being God's beloved children. The gospel says that we, in our misery, are of such great value to God's Son that He became a human being for us to take upon Himself our guilt, our sins, our condemnation, our illnesses and diseases, our miseries, in order to purchase us through atoning death that we might become His own precious possession, leading us out of darkness into His light. We are of such great value to God, the Holy Spirit that He will dwell in us and make us holy temples for God to dwell in. Here we may find the basis and source of our self-worth. It rests in our triune God.

Further, it says in Proverbs 3:1-8 that listening to the teaching of the Lord and acknowledging Him "will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones." For "psychologically healthy" Christians, Christ said in the Sermon on the Mount that they have to forgive and even love their enemies. Hating people and keeping a grudge against them because they have caused harm is a normal human reaction. However, hatred does not only harm its objects: the person hated, it also harms the subject: the one who hates and keeps a grudge. Love and forgiveness are beneficial not only for the one who receives them, but primarily brings joy and healing to the one who gives them. Living with hatred in the heart is living in darkness, but he who loves through Christ lives in God's light (cf. 1 John 2:9ff).

Keeping in mind what is said above about the need of a slow and long healing process, we maintain that the directive of love also is there as a healing commandment for the abused. It can help an abused person when the perpetrator is punished, and when so justice is done. The victim then sees that (s)he is not worthless, and that others cannot just do with her/him as they please. However, for the sake of both, there should be a place for love and forgiveness, too. Christian love, rooted in the love of God in Christ, means light and healing for both the one who receives and for the one who gives. Also here there is forgiveness with God for a contrite heart that comes to Him. Then the consequences of sin can remain, but the guilt of sin is covered by the blood of Christ. It gives gratitude, light, joy to receive this forgiving love from the Father through Christ Jesus. It gives gratitude, light, and joy also when God, through His Spirit and Word, brings us to the point that we, for Christ's sake, can give this forgiving love to those who have hurt us so much. This means healing.

Dr. Rizzuto found through her psychoanalytical study that the image of God in the mind of a child is influenced greatly by important persons in the child's life. We have found that it is very hard for an abused child, even as an adult, to have a positive image of "our Father in heaven," as hearing the word "father" brings back memories of horror. Can this awful result ever be taken away? Can a wrong image be corrected, even when the impression is so awfully strong and deep?

We may say that it can.

God is not "a figment of the unconscious mind confected out of a child's early relations with powerful parents," as Freud asserted. God is really there as a good, helping Fa-

ther, saving us through His Son, Jesus Christ. He is especially the Helper of those who feel lost, and robbed of their dignity. How do we know Him? God gives us a true picture of Himself in His Word. This Word is His Self-revelation. Therefore, this Word of God, this gospel of Christ, can replace the wrong ideas about God in the minds of those who were never taught the truth of the Bible. It can also correct the thwarted images which we received in our youth through the sins of others. God Himself can correct the dark images and turn them into light. Blessed are all those who receive the true picture of God from His Word, and so pray to the true God of the Scriptures. They will not be ashamed.



REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Bones

Which bone are you?

In several places, the Bible describes the congregation as a body. In Eph. 2:22, 23 the apostle Paul wrote that God has made the Lord Jesus Christ head over all things for the church, which is His body. This body is knit together through its joints and ligaments (Col. 2:19).

The most extensive passage in the Bible which speaks of the church as a body is 1 Cor. 12. The apostle made the point that the body has many different members. Each member of the human body has its function which contributes to the shape and well-being of the body. In a similar way, God has given each member of every congregation a unique function which enhances the beauty and the welfare of the congregation.

A very important aspect of the human body is the skeleton. The 206 distinct bones in your body make up your skeleton. The various bones have different functions. There are four things which bones do.

Some bones protect delicate internal organs. For example, the 28 bones of the skull enclose and protect the brain, the back of the eyeball, the inner ear and the nasal passages.

Other bones, such as the pelvis, support your body.

Yet other bones allow you to move around. Bound together by ligaments at the joints, bones are set in motion by muscles attached to them by tendons.

Finally, bones help preserve your health. They store the calcium your blood needs for your body to function normally. As well, the marrow in your bones manufactures blood cells.

Your bones, together with ligaments, muscles and tendons, are what support your body, protect it, help keep it healthy, and allow it to move. Without bones, you would be a quivering heap of jelly lying on the floor.

Which bone are you? In your congregation, among your fellow believers, in your Young People Society, which bone are you?

It seems that members of any organization fall into several categories.

First, there are the Wish Bones. They are always wishing that someone would do something. You hear them saying things like: "I wish someone around here would take some initiative. Why doesn't somebody do something about this or that. I wish things were better." The Wish Bones spend all their time wishing and none of it doing. Just wishing gets us nowhere.

Second, there are the Jaw Bones. Jaw Bones are always talking. Talk, talk, talk. The skull structure contains

28 bones. Only one moves – the jaw bone. Jaw Bones have got that one flapping a mile a minute. Usually it is criticizing others. It never stands still. Jaw Bones are so busy talking they've got no time to listen to others. Their opinions are the only ones that matter. They don't even realize that the people at whom they talk might have opinions.

Third are the Bones of Contention. They seem to love arguments. Bones of Contention will disagree with anyone about anything. They are not happy unless they are in a heated dispute or controversy with someone else. They thrive only when they are quarreling with someone, opposing and contradicting a fellow member of the body.

Then there are the Knuckle Bones. Knuckle Bones are forever knocking the efforts of others. They are the down putters of this world. If someone airs an idea, the Knuckle Bones stand up and say with one accord: "No, that's a bad idea," and then sit down. Knuckle Bones seem incapable of appreciating someone else's initiative. They get nervous when someone says: "Let's do this or that. It might be good for the congregation." Knuckle Bones want everyone to knuckle under, forget about trying anything new, and maintain the status quo.

Fifth, there are the Back Bones. Back Bones are the faithful members of the congregation or society. They are never too busy to take on another responsibility. They complete the tasks given to them. They serve faithfully with resolve and enthusiasm. Because they

are Back Bones, they are almost always in the background, quietly working away. They are not immediately noticeable, like Jaw Bones or Knuckle Bones, and yet they support the body. They don't just wish. They do. They bear the brunt of the work. Without a

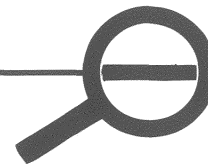
back bone, the human body would collapse to the ground. Without Back Bones, the work in congregations and societies would grind to a halt.

Which bone are you?



PRESS REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



The Orthodox Presbyterian Church: Struggle and Challenge

Statistics

According to a published report in *New Horizons* (November 1991), by the Orthodox Presbyterian Church's (OPC) statistician, ruling elder L.E. Brown, the OPC is declining in total membership. He characterized 1990 (the last year full statistics are available), as a year in which there were both significant gains and significant losses.

On the positive side, 915 adults and young people became communicant members by profession or reaffirmation of faith. Also, 380 covenant children were baptized. Two mission works were organized as new and separate churches, and two congregations were received into the OPC.

It was also a year for setbacks, however, as three congregations withdrew, taking away nearly 800 members. As a result, the OPC experienced net losses in membership, attendance, and giving.

At the end of 1990 there were 170 local churches and 25 unorganized mission works in the OPC as compared with 171 and 20, respectively, in 1989. OPC membership as of December 31, 1990 totaled 18,164 persons (325 ministers, 12,177 communicant members, and 5,662 non-communicants) a reduction of 546 persons (2.9 per cent) from 1989's adjusted total of 18,710 members.


A similar drop in membership also occurred in the preceding year. Not surprisingly total giving dropped as well,

but the per capita giving remained quite constant at \$1,098 per communicant member.

Why the decline?

In the same issue of *New Horizons*, Mr. George E. Haney, a former general secretary for the Committee on Home Missions, writes:

In many conservative presbyterian bodies today there is more than a hint of congregationalism and in-dependency. The OPC is not exempt from this trend. The enthusiasm for denominational allegiance that characterized the early years of our church is diminishing.



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Mr. Haney continues with reminding his readers of the need to be loyal to the OPC and then comments

To be sure, there is a sense in which denominationalism is to be decried. The organizational unity of the people of God is indeed mandated in Scripture, and the OPC is working at this through our general assembly's Committee on Ecumenicity as well as on the presbyterial and local level....There is a need to strengthen and support our church and her ministries in her present state.

These words of Haney seem to allude to the fact that many of those who have left the OPC have left for the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) which has a broader and more evangelical character. Many have left the OPC because they have become impatient with the ecumenical discussions and efforts that have been on and off over the last number of years between the OPC and the PCA.

Within the OPC there appear to be tensions between those who want to retain a strong Reformed identity and those who want to become more evangelical. Unfortunately, Westminster Theological Seminary is also developing into a more evangelical direction

and it is from this school that historically many of the OPC ministers have come. (The OPC has no official training for ministers.) If the OPC continue to receive a large number of ministers from Westminster, developments at this seminary do not bode well for a strong Reformed character of the OPC.

The ongoing challenge

The OPC has a strong record of being true to her founding principles. Haney points to the fact that the OPC has been basically faithful to the Word of God since 1936, despite the sins that beset us. Thank the Lord that we can still support missionaries who unabashedly proclaim the gospel in all its glorious fullness. Thank the Lord for Sunday school materials, catechetical aids, and study courses that are true to the Bible and our Reformed confessional statements. Thank the Lord for a ministry of mercy in which we minister to one another.

The OPC have a very large number of missionaries, both at home and abroad. One can only admire the OPC zeal, drive, and ability, under God's blessing, to establish new congregations in many parts of the United States and

throughout the world. Readers of *Clarion* will be interested to know that the Rev. K. Hubenthal of the OPC now takes care of the house congregation in Surinam's leper community which was formerly under the jurisdiction of our sister church at 's Hertogenbosch.

The OPC also continues to be interested in true ecumenicity. This interest is clear, for example, from their application to join the International Conference of Reformed Churches. At the same time, there are internal difficulties as is clear from the beginning of this article. We do well to remember in this context what was written in the Report of the Committee for Contact with the OPC submitted to General Synod 1989:

In this time of trial for the OPC the Canadian Reformed Churches should use the opportunities given to support and assist the OPC in their search for ecclesiastical union in the unity of the faith, wherever and whenever possible (III.7).

May the Lord bless the OPC in their desire to be faithful and may we also benefit from the many good things that they by God's grace have received. **C**

NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene

continued from last issue

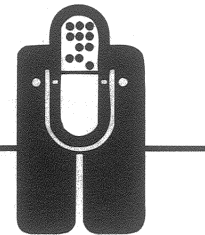
Chatham is vacant, as we know, as a result of the retirement of the Rev. VanRietschoten. Thus efforts are being undertaken to come to the calling of another minister. While the Abbotsford consistory received thirty-four nominations (it does not say how many different names were suggested), in Chatham "the congregation submitted 35 letters (26 ministers). The consistory has chosen, for further consideration, the three ministers who had the most nominations." Wow! Where do they find twenty-six ministers?

I was disturbed by a classical decision mentioned in Chatham's bulletin. "Our request to Classis to appoint Rev. Moes as counselor was denied, because he is also counselor for London. Our pastor was temporarily appointed until their March meeting."

There are a few things here that are so hierarchical that I fail to see how people that want to be truly Reformed can decide or state them.

It is a classis that appoints a counsellor, but when it says in Art. 45 of our Church Order that "Each vacant Church shall request classis to appoint as counsellor the minister it desires as such," is it then not implied that classis shall appoint that specific minister? Is it not contrary to what we have accepted here in Art. 45, when a classis says: "You request this specific minister, but we do not have to comply with that, we can take someone else."? What gives a classis the right to ignore and bypass the request of that vacant church? Nothing.

Besides, what business is that of a classis whether the requested minister is already counsellor of another church?



It is none of their business. If the vacant church does not object and if, upon consultation with that minister by the vacant church, he does not object, there is nothing a classis can do but comply with the request. After all, a counsellor is only someone to whom you can and do go for advice. He does not *have* to become involved in teaching catechism classes, in visiting the sick, in attending consistory meetings. The only thing he *has* to be involved in is the calling of another minister.

At one time, while being minister of the church at Fergus, I was counsellor of three other churches. At the classis at which the third counsellorship was added, I thanked the brothers for clothing me with such a position of power (!), but they wisely laughed it off, for it meant no power at all, nor did it constitute a very heavy extra burden. Even if one or two more counsellorships had been added, all classis would have had to consider was the request by the vacant church.

Another point is that "Our pastor was temporarily appointed until their March meeting." The "pastor" meant here is Rev. VanRietschoten who ... was honourably released from his active duties but who, nevertheless, contrary to the request of the consistory, is charged with a task that apparently was too heavy for the Rev. Moes to carry in addition to his load of counsellorship of London. Strange.

I am not certain whether the formulation in the last-quoted sentence is the classical formulation or comes from the writer of the brief report on the consistory meeting. In any way: it is as hierarchical as can be. "Temporarily appointed until their March meeting." Classis Ontario South does *NOT* have a "March meeting." There may be a Classis Ontario South in March, but this is a completely new and different classis, even though the same churches are represented there. It is totally wrong and un-Reformed to say: "We appoint you temporarily, and at our March meeting we shall review the situation." Basically, of course, all appointments by a classis stand only till the next classis, unless it is stipulated that the appointment shall be for a year, e.g. in the case of church visitors. But in the case of counsellors it is logical and most beneficial that the appointment stands till the vacant church receives another minister of the Word.

From the Chatham bulletin we glean something else, which is not restricted or confined to Ontario South. It is the condition under which an appeal will be accepted to be dealt with at a classis. Let me first quote the relevant passage.

"Watford Church presented a proposal to set a two-week deadline on appeals for Classis. Our consistory decided to request classis to enforce the present rule instead (That appeals must be sent early enough to mail the documents to all churches.)"

It is mandatory that all the churches receive all the documents dealing with proposals etc. at such a moment that they can take note of the contents and, if necessary, discuss them so that the brothers who are delegated to the broader assembly know what the feelings are within their own consistory. Even so, they are free to vote at a classis as they consider proper, having heard the discussions and the opinions of the other brothers. This, however, applies only to proposals and the matters belonging to these churches in common.

It definitely does *not* apply to appeals. These are not directed, *nor should they be sent to the churches*. One appeals to the broader assembly, and this broader assembly is not there until it has been constituted. No classis has the right

CHURCH NEWS



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

DECLINED to Burlington South
Rev. J. Koelewijn
of the Netherlands

CALLED to Taber, AB
Rev. G.Ph. van Popta
of Ottawa, ON

to decide that an appeal must be in even one day before a classis is to be convened. It may be included in classical regulations that an appeal will not be dealt with unless there are copies for all the members and some for the archives. I might even be in favour of making the provision that, if an appeal is denied, the appellant shall be billed for a proportionate part of the cost of classis (!), and this might make some appellants more careful and make them think twice before they put such a burden on the churches, but there is no justification for demanding that appeals shall be sent before the convening of classis. And it is definitely wrong to send them to the churches. Appeals are sent to the broader assembly and not to the churches, not even to the brothers who have been delegated to the broader assemblies. Why should the consistories receive copies of appeals to a classis and not of those to regional or general synod respectively?

It will be understood that I am not advocating that appeals to regional or general synods shall also be sent to the churches. My point here is: as little as the churches should receive copies of appeals to regional or general synods, so little should they receive copies of such documents to a classis. It is therefore wrong to decide that appeals shall be in two weeks before classis is held.

For a while there was some concern in Ontario that a proposed change in the Education Act would adversely affect our schools. Apparently a circular letter was received from the Coalition for Religious Freedom giving rise to those fears. Various bulletins contained a sample letter to be sent to the Minister of Education, expressing this concern. Again we were taught to investigate before taking any action, for it became apparent that these proposed changes affected only religious instruction in *public schools*. And even though it is a sign of continuing efforts to eliminate the Word of God from public life and public instruction, and as such is disturbing indeed, we learned anew not to jump up right away upon receiving just any letter sounding alarm or warning about an insufficiently examined proposed measure by the civil authorities.

Let us go and visit Australia.

The Armadale consistory received an invitation from the church at West Tamar (Tasmania), "invitation to opening of new church building, the Lord willing, 14th December. The name of the church is to be changed to FRC Legana." The FRC stands for Free Reformed Church. I think

that in due time we shall become familiar with the name Legana instead of West Tamar. Congratulations.

As in Canada, so in Australia the churches know the institute of church visitors. The Armadale consistory received "From Church Visitors: copy of Church Visit report. The Church Visitors will be asked for permission to publish an extract of the report." About the same report we read: "The report is to be tabled, in accordance with the rules at the next Synod." And a final piece of information: Church visitors gave their permission, and an extract was published.

This is a wrong thing. Unless a synod has decided that copies of a certain report to the next synod shall be sent to the churches, reports by synodically appointed deputies belong not even to those deputies, who can do with them whatever they want to, but to the forthcoming synod. No

the consistory of Byford gave us permission as before on a three-weekly basis."

At the other side of Armadale we find Kelmscott. Its consistory received "two letters from the School Board ... regarding two members who are experiencing difficulties with their financial support for the school." Is that the proper procedure, that the school board notifies a consistory when members have these difficulties? They are at the wrong address. The families should be pointed to the office-bearers of Christ's church who have been appointed to help in case of need and difficulty: namely the deacons. At the consistory level such letters are totally out of order and inadmissible.

Our international contacts are expanding. For some time now someone (in Smithers?) has been sending me also the



deputy has the right to give a copy of his report to others than to the assembly to which he is to report, and no deputy has the right to give permission to others to publish an extract from his report to synod.

Besides, church visitation reports are usually read in closed session, for there may be points in them that are less favourable or make mention of specific difficulties which are none of the business of others who may be listening to the procedures.

It is customary to send a copy of the relevant church visitation report to the church that was visited, and I cannot call this wrong, because it concerns that particular church specifically, but that is all that is allowed. It is only a courtesy gesture. The report itself, as we heard above from the rules of synod, is to be tabled at synod. If *synod* decides to publish something from it, this is up to that assembly. No one else has this right.

Nearby Byford sees the regions around Rockingham and Bunbury developing into the right direction. As for Rockingham, "In discussion on institution, consistory is of the opinion that the second half of 1992 would be a feasible goal. Rockingham ward elders and deacons will meet separately to discuss their offices. However, consistory as a whole remains responsible." Stands to reason.

Regarding Bunbury News Update, it is now more than seven months ago that they started there. "It is with the Lord's blessing and guidance that we may say that everything is proceeding better than expected ... In the last weeks,

bulletin of the Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk in Pretoria, South Africa. Until now we have learned little about the churches in that country. This is mainly caused by their closer ties with the churches in the Netherlands and their use of the Afrikaans language. You will not find much if any English in their bulletin. The Afrikaners, as may be known, are very keen on keeping their language free from anglicisms and elements from any other language. Although originating from and very similar to the Dutch, yet it is a language in its own right, although one who knows Dutch will have little trouble understanding Afrikaans, at least when reading it.

If anyone should think that, because of this similarity, there are no difficulties, one discovers soon enough that he is mistaken. At the Christian Censure, "Rev. F.J. Byzet points out that elders and deacons can create a gap (or distance) in some families by offering their prayers in Dutch. When Afrikaans is the language of the home, an office-bearer must do his best to use that language."

The apartheid question affects also the relation with the Mission Church, which is black. At one time there was a combined service with the Mission Church. As a result of this some members broke with the church, but their motives, we read, were basically political. We "should not let ourselves be led by either politics of segregation or politics of integration. The Church of the Lord ought just to follow its Lord in this world, and also in this country. And when, without respect of persons, He brings lost sinners together into His church as each other's brothers and sisters, then

we must also look for ways of fellowship and helping each other, even though today there are differences of language and culture which render complete unity in one congregation as yet undesirable."

It is good when we are aware of the difficulties the churches of the Lord are facing in other countries as well. It will make our prayers more concrete and may also help us in matters we are facing.

In the meantime, it is being considered to split the church at Pretoria, and starting in 1992, catechism classes will be divided into the two (possible) future wards.

There is one more difficulty the brothers and sisters there have to struggle with which we, too, know: they have a car-park patrol during the services. In some of our congregations this is necessary as well. What's new?

Herewith we have come to the end of this medley.

Greetings from
Your patriarch
VO
C

Mailbag

By G.Ph. van Popta

In the September 13, 1991 *Clarion*, I published an article on the subject of pornography. In response I received the following painful letter from a sister. She requested that it be published as an addendum to the article with the hope that what she writes may help encourage a person to choose rightly. The letter speaks for itself:

I want to tell you first-hand what looking at soft porn will do to a person's marriage someday – for I am a wife who has suffered.

If you look at pornography before you are married:

a) It will make you want your wife to do intimate things that she does not desire to do. Then it will make her feel guilty that she cannot/will not do them to please you. She will feel inadequate, and at the same time will despise you for putting her in that position. She will feel angry that she is, in a sense, being punished for keeping herself pure – for what you desire springs not from your mutual love, but from wanting to try what *looked* so mutually enjoyable in print or film. It will take you a while to realize that those people's enthusiasm was paid for, and not genuine.

b) The images you place within your mind will not die. They will be there for comparison – even after you are married. They are not pure thoughts.

c) After a few years of marriage, when your wife is exhausted and her shape has altered by bearing your chil-

dren, it will be so easy to slip into a bookstore or movie and renew the taste for such stuff. No one will know, right? If you think marriage will absolutely kill a developed taste for this stuff, you are wrong. Sin goes on.

d) When/if she finds out, she will begin to feel inadequate. She will feel she is not beautiful to you because, after all, you are staring at women whose outward beauty she cannot possibly equal, though she does her best.

e) No matter when you do it, you are contributing to a degrading view of women, not the view endorsed by God.

What "soft" pornography will lead you to is deep marital problems. Is it worth it?

A Sincere Sister

Let us listen to Proverbs 5:15-23

*Drink water from your own cistern,
flowing water from your own well.*

*Should your springs be scattered abroad,
streams of water in the streets?*

*Let them be for yourself alone, and not
for strangers with you.*

*Let your fountain be blessed, and re-
joice in the wife of your youth, a
lovely hind, a graceful doe.*

*Let her affection fill you at all times with
delight, be infatuated always with
her love.*

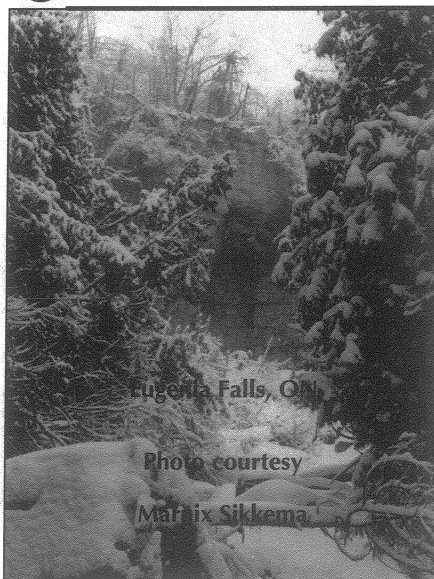
*Why should you be infatuated, my son,
with a loose woman and embrace
the bosom of an adventuress?*

*For a man's ways are before the eyes of
the LORD, and he watches all his
paths.*

*The iniquities of the wicked ensnare
him, and he is caught in the toils of
his sin.*

*He dies for lack of discipline, and be-
cause of his great folly he is lost.*

OUR COVER



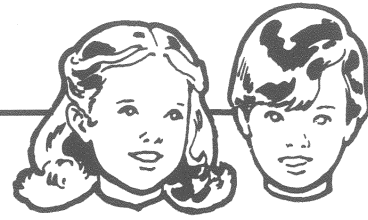
Eugenia Falls, ON

Photo courtesy

Marrix Sikkema

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

The *big* envelope said "Aunt Betty." *SURPRISE!*
Inside was a 3D kind of picture of a colourful skier in a swirl of "real" snow.

It was gorgeous!

I was very happy to get such an interesting picture, you can be sure!

It even smelled pretty!

Many of you Busy Beavers are good at making pictures, I know.

So let's have another *picture contest!*

Send in your pictures of pets, cars, horses, Spring.

Send in *more* than one, if you like!

You may use markers, pencils, paints – whatever.

Who knows how fancy you can get!?

Send to

Picture Content

c/o Aunt Betty

Premier Printing Ltd.

One Beghin Avenue

Winnipeg, MB R2J 3X5

**NEW
CONTEST**

Quiz Time!

BOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT WORD SEARCH


By Busy Beaver Alex Sikkema

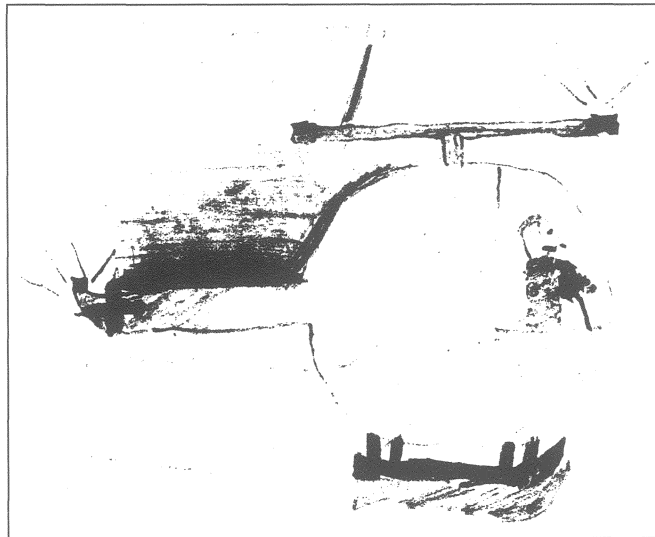
M	A	R	K	P	E	T	E	R	P	F	Can you find:
T	A	J	O	H	N	A	B	C	H	U	Matthew
H	C	T	J	U	D	E	D	T	I	T	Mark
E	T	F	T	L	U	K	E	R	L	H	Luke
S	S	G	I	H	H	I	T	E	I	E	John
S	C	R	T	E	E	A	I	V	P	S	Acts
I	A	E	U	B	A	W	M	E	P	S	Romans
A	D	J	S	R	J	R	O	L	I	A	Corinthians
N	G	Y	R	E	A	O	T	A	A	L	Galatians
S	G	J	Y	W	M	M	H	T	N	O	Ephesians
J	O	H	N	S	E	M	Y	I	S	N	Philippians
A	B	H	I	C	S	A	D	O	H	I	Thessalonians
I	O	M	N	Q	R	N	S	N	P	A	Titus
R	S	U	V	W	X	S	Y	Z	A	N	Philemon
C	O	R	I	N	T	H	I	A	N	S	Hebrews
E	P	H	E	S	I	A	N	S	B	Q	James
G	A	L	A	T	I	A	N	S	C	J	Peter
P	H	I	L	E	M	O	N	D	E	R	Jude
											Revelation

PICTURE PUZZLES

By Busy Beaver Alison Veenendaal

Can you think of the sayings/words meant by these?
The first one is done as an example.

- | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. E Z
iiii | 2. T
O
U
C
H | 3. Moth
cry
cry
cry | 4. Hurry → |
| 5. ME QUIT | 6. <u>KNEE</u>
LIGHTS | 7.  | |
| 8. He's /
Himself | 9. <u>Wear</u>
Long | 10. T
O
W
N | 11. iii iii
O O |
| 12. <u>Stand</u>
I | | | (See answers) |



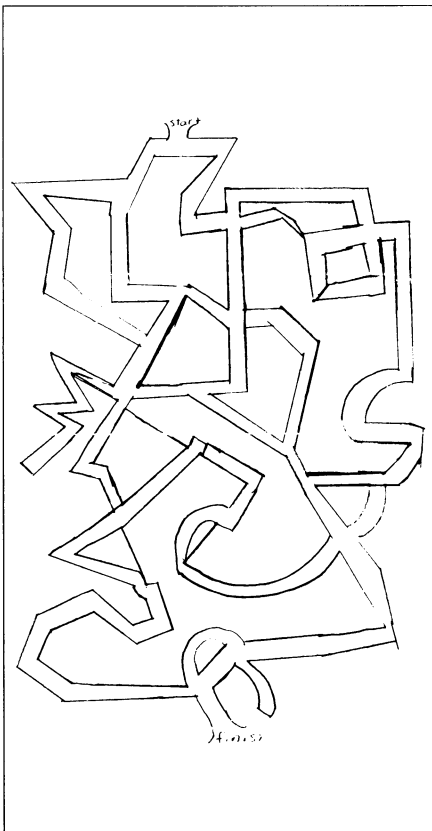
How do you like Busy Beaver David Aikema's Helicopter?

Do you make pictures of flying machines too?
How about sharing them 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

MAZE

By Busy Beaver
John Verhoeff



REWARDS FOR WATCHERS

Spring is on its way!
Watch carefully for signs of it coming.

Be alert!

Keep your eyes and ears open.

When you see a sure sign of Spring, notice carefully *what* you see, *where* you see it, and *when* you see it.

When you have written about *three signs* of Spring, you will get a reward for sending it to:



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

BIRTHDAY WISHES

Have a super day on your birthday all you Busy Beavers on this list! May our heavenly Father guide and keep you in the year ahead. We wish you all a very good time celebrating with your family and friends.



MARCH

Brian Dykstra	2
Rosaleen Jager	6
Earl Van Assen	8
Julie Bratcher	11
Sherri Malda	12
Monica Dalhuisen	14
Linda Schouten	20
Rebecca Stel	21
Jeffrey Vandergaag	22
Amanda Bartels	23
Helena Beijes	24
Suzanne Schouten	26
Elisa Vandergaag	27
Erika Hopman	30



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Terry VanAndel*. We are happy to have you join us. Have you had lots of snow for recess for snow fights, Terry? Thank you for the picture and letter. Be sure to join in our *picture contest*, Terry!

Welcome to the Club, *Miranda Barendregt*. Thank you for a pretty letter. I see you are going to be a very good writer. Keep up the good work, Miranda!

Welcome to the Club, *Felicia Oosterhoff*. Who plays with you in the hay loft? Do your kittens have names? Will you please write and tell me your birthday, Felicia? Then I can put your name on the birthday list.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Richard Oosterhoff*. Thank you for the pictures and the letter. What are you reading right now, Richard? Be sure to join in our contest!

Welcome to the Club, *Eric Vandergriendt*. Will you write and tell us about yourself and your school? Do you have pets? Bye for now, Eric. Write again soon.

Welcome to the Club, *John Verhoeff*. We are happy to have you join us. Sounds to one as if you had very good holidays, John. Have you been skiing since?

Thank you for your pretty letter and story, *Alyssa Lodder*. Also for the puzzle! I know the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it! Keep up the good work!

Hello, *Trisha Van Woudenberg*. Looks to me as if you've been enjoying the snow! Thank you for your letter and picture. Write again soon.

I'm glad you had such a good holiday, *Margaret Nijenhuis*. I'm sure your first service in your new church was special for you. Be sure to join in our Contest, Margaret! Bye for now.

Thank you for the card and good wishes *Florence Nijenhuis*. I see you are a good puzzler, too! Write again soon.

Hello, *Lydia Penninga*. It was good to hear from you again. Thank you for a very pretty "text." Be sure you join in our Contest, Lydia. Bye for now.

Sounds like you had a great holiday, *Alison Veenendaal*. And you've been keeping very busy! Thank you for the interesting puzzle I know the Busy Beavers will enjoy!! Keep up the good work, Alison!

Thank you for the special picture, *Nelena Bergsma*. How is your skiing coming? Yes, I love the snow in your picture. Be sure to join in our picture contest, Nelena, Bye for now!

Answers to Picture Puzzles

1. Easy on the eyes 2. Touch down 3. Moth balls 4. Hurry up 5. Quit following me 6. Neon lights 7. High chair 8. He's beside himself 9. Long underwear 10. Downtown 11. Circles under the eyes 12. I understand

Bye for now, Busy Beavers!

Enjoy making those pictures!

And keep your eyes and ears open as you look for Spring!

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty 