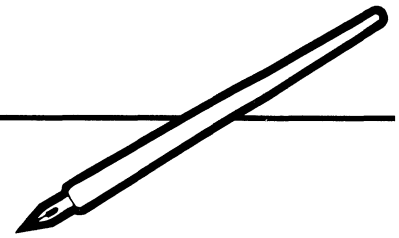




Clarion
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Remembering the Union of 1892

In this issue the reader will find the text of a speech with which Dr. J. De Jong addressed the ministers' workshop at the Theological College. This speech dealt with the merger of two Reformed church groups in The Netherlands. On June 17 it was one hundred years ago that the churches of the Secession of 1834 and the churches of the Doleantie of 1886 joined. In this "Editorial" I would like to ask your attention for two aspects in this union, the historical consciousness of the participants and their obedience to God's will which shows that God was at work.

Historical consciousness

In an article published thirty years ago in the weekly *De Reformatie* (16 June 1962),¹ Prof. J. Kamphuis paid attention to the Union of 1892. He started his article with pointing to the very beginning of the Acts of the first General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, that is, of the two groups of churches together, in Amsterdam this June 17, 1892. The Acts read in solemn language:

In the year after the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, one thousand eight hundred and ninety two, on the seventeenth day of June, there has been gathered together and began at one p.m., in the name and the fear of the Lord, a General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.²

Kamphuis writes that "the style of this beginning" shows clearly "that the brothers at that time knew how solemn the moment was that now had come about." The style and even the formulation "were taken over...after the pattern of another beginning, namely of the Acts of the Synod of Dort, 1618/19." This beginning reads:

In the year after the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, one thousand six hundred and eighteen, on the thirteenth day of November, there has been gathered together and began, in the name and the fear of the Lord, a National Synod of the Reformed Churches of the two tongues, the Dutch and the French.³

Kamphuis adds this comment:

It is obvious that this agreement in style of the beginning of the Acts of 1618/19 and of 1892 was not incidental. Consciously the example was chosen in 1892 in order to make clear where the Reformed Churches took their stand: in the historic continuity with the churches of the Reformation of the sixteenth century and their synods, of which the last one was that of 1618/19. And because of this continuity there was the radical break with the Dutch Reformed (Hervormd) Organization which had been introduced in 1816.

The synodical (previously) Reformed Churches have joined the World Council of Churches. They also work towards re-union with the Dutch Reformed (Hervormde)

Church. They call it: "Together on our way." Kamphuis comments:

But when presently in the "Reformed" world there is a drift toward union with the Dutch Reformed Church, "1892" cannot be used. In this aim of today [in 1962, J.G.] also the act of seventy years is denied; not only the Secession of 1834, not only the Doleantie of 1886, but also the Union of 1892 is being destroyed, because the *basis* of the union is no longer sought in the *confession* according to the Scriptures, as the churches in this country possess it in the Three Forms of Unity since 1618/19.

On our North-American continent the same broad ecumenical drift, not having the confession as basis, is being promoted. An example is the booklet of Dr. Henry Zwaanstra, professor in Church History at Calvin Theological Seminary in Grand Rapids.⁴ True ecumenicity is based on oneness in confession since it places itself on the foundation of the apostolic truth. In 1892 our Reformed fathers of both the Secession and the Doleantie were not only seeking each other on the basis of the same confession, but they also did this in evident awareness of their common historical Reformed root. Together they expressed their oneness with the Reformed fathers at the Synod of Dort. The confession of Dort, the Three Forms of Unity, and the Church Order of Dort, that was the bond that bound our fathers together in the union of 1892. Unity together in oneness with the past.

God's work

Dr. De Jong concludes his speech with the words "God works mightily there where men seek to act in true obedience to His will." The union is obviously the work of God. Humanly speaking, it seemed impossible, at first. The differences between the men of the Secession and of the Doleantie in thinking and approach were so profound that many, at first opposed a union. As Dr. De Jong points out, the people of the Secession were strongly confessional, holding on to what was said in the Act of Secession or Return. The Secession was for them a matter of obedience to the Word of God and of faithfulness to the Reformed Confession. In the Act they stated that the Dutch Reformed (Hervormde) church had become a false church, according to Art. 29 of the Belgic Confession. Therefore, the Secession churches, having seceded from this false church, were the true church in the Netherlands which every believer was called to join, according to Art. 28 of the same confession.

The simple conclusion was, for the men of the Secession, that the people of the Doleantie should have joined these true churches immediately, instead of forming an own (provisional, temporary) federation. This thinking was not a

matter of haughtiness and pride, or sectarianism. It was their Reformed confessional thinking in terms of obedience and faithfulness.

As shown by Dr. De Jong, Kuyper and those who followed him in the Doleantie approached the matter of the church from a different angle. Kuyper, at first, rejected the thinking in the Act of Secession and said that the Secession had been wrong. He did not think in terms of true and false church. In his view, he had not separated from the Dutch Reformed (Hervormde) church as a false church, but only from its false hierarchical governing system. Kuyper saw the true church everywhere where there were still true believers. And since there were still true believers in the Dutch Reformed churches, they were still true churches from which he did not separate.

It is clear that this difference in speaking about the church had great practical consequences. There were different views about the name for the united churches, about the manner in which to deal with the people in the Dutch Reformed Church, to mention only these points. Another difficult matter was that of the training for the ministry: should this be done at a church seminary or in the context of an university? Some also objected against Kuyper's ideas about the presumptive regeneration, although this was not a strong issue, at first. Thus, the differences were great, and it does not amaze us that, on both sides, many were opposed, again, at first. Some remained opposed to the union and continued as the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk (in North-America they are called the Free Reformed Church).


However, the willingness to unite grew so strong that the barriers were overcome. This willingness was the result of the deep awareness of the will of the Lord, the Head of the Church, that those who are one in confession also ought to be one in the same church (federation). It was on the basis of the common confession and the common Church Order (of Dort) that the two church groups united together and did not dare to remain separate. Obedience to the call for visible unity made the people on both sides give themselves to each other in a formulation in which both could find satisfaction. Obedience overcame differences. Obedience of faith is the work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of believers. Therefore, the union of 1892 was the work of the Lord. Him we praise also for this work in the history of His church. Soli Deo Gloria. At the same time, this history holds a lesson for today.

¹This article was reprinted in *Verkenningen II. Kerk en Kerkgeschiedenis*, Goes: Oosterbaan & Le Cointre (R.B. Serie), pp. 128-136.

²I give also the Dutch text which makes even more clear the connection between the two quotations. Here follows the Dutch text of 1892:

In het jaar na de geboorte onzes Heeren en Zaligmakers Jesu Christi, duizend achthonderd twee en negentig, op den zeventienden dag van Juni, is vergaderd geweest en te een ure aangevangen in de naam en de vrees des Heeren een Generale Synode der Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland.

³In het Jaar nae de gheboorte onses Heeren en Salighmaker Jesu Christi, duysent seshondert ende achttien, op den dertienden dag van November, is verghadert gheweest ende aengevangen inden namne ense vrees des Heeren, een Nationale Synode der Gereformeerde Kercken van beyde spraken, Neder-duytsche ende Fransche.

⁴Dr. Henry Zwaanstra, *Catholicity and Secession. A Study of Ecumenicity in the Christian Reformed Church*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991. 



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The Union of 1892 and its implications for today

By J. De Jong

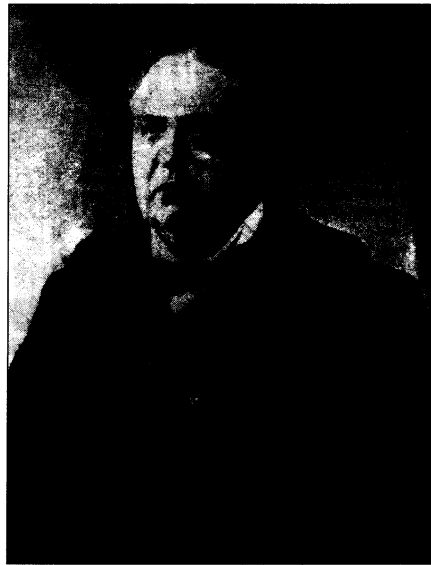
Text of an address given at the Ministers' Conference of June 1, 1982, slightly altered.

I would like to cover three areas with you in this speech: what I see as the heart of the matter in the Union; how this was resolved; and its implications for today. Time constraints necessarily require us to give only a cursory treatment of some issues. The discussion can perhaps bring out more points.

The central issue

Examination of the events leading up to the union and even the last minute negotiations make clear that the central issue of the union lies in the area of ecclesiology, that is the view of the church.¹ The Secession of 1834 took place on clear confessional principles. It was stated that the Netherlands Reformed Church was a false church according to Art. 29 B.C., and that it was the duty of all believers according to Art. 28 B.C. to separate from the false church in order to maintain the fellowship of the true church. As J. Kamphuis pointed out, the word "or" in the title "Act of Secession or Return" means: Secession and Return go hand in hand. They are not to be identified. Secession is the *means* and return is the *goal*. By seceding, the brothers of the secession were seceding from a wrong form of church life in order to return to the true worship of the Lord.²

The "Doleantie" of 1886 on the other hand, was marked by a more philosophical approach to the teaching about the church. The leading figure in this movement was A. Kuyper. Kuyper said that the true believers only need to break with the "genootschap," i.e. the organization of the church, not with the church itself. The church was to be found in particular in the local autonomous churches. The organization was like a shade or cover put on the



Dr. Abraham Kuyper

church. Kuyper, who was adept at finding all kinds of images to explain his point, compared the Netherlands Reformed Church to an old abandoned house that only had the walls intact. Empty and deserted due to decay and corruption, the essential form of the church was still there. The true local Netherlands Reformed Churches are those in the "Doleantie," said Kuyper.³

As the leading figure of the "Doleantie," Kuyper wanted direct union talks with the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk," the Seceded Church. He was critical of the Secession as an act. He said that in the days of the Secession the church was thought of as a fixed building, so that to continue it properly you had to separate from the old building. Kuyper said: we see the church more as a movable tent. You can change your external structure, but internally you are the same. Therefore he was also able to say with respect to the true believers in the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk": "With all that

confess the pure truth according to the Word of God both in or outside of the separated churches, we feel ourselves organically, in the body of Christ, one."⁴ F.L. Rutgers, the noted expert in church polity and law at the Free University and Kuyper's trusted colleague in the "Doleantie," was also instrumental in putting the matter of union on the first agenda of the provisional synod of the "dolerende" churches.

Now the negotiations with regard to the proposed Union took many forms up to 1889. Central in all these negotiations was the concept of the church held by A. Kuyper. It formed a continual stumbling block to the progress of the talks. Kuyper remained critical of the Secession. Lindeboom said that the "dolerende" (literally, the "grieving," i.e. those protesting hierarchical actions in 1886) should have immediately joined with the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk" according to Art. 28 of the B.C. Throughout this period the "Doleantie" churches maintained that although they had broken with the *organization* of the church, they still had a tie to the Netherlands Reformed Church. At the same time, they spoke of "Reunion," and not "Union." Kuyper's opinion was: we do not need to marry the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk." We were already one, but the sin of separation came between (i.e. the Secession). All we need to do is get over this sin of separation, and go on being what we always were, minus the organization ("het genootschap").

The position of the seceded brothers is clear from the decision of the Synod of Assen 1888 on the conditions for union. The synod stated that it was willing to allow for discussion on the regulation of 1869.⁵ It also stated that it was prepared to come to a union with the "Dolerende" churches, since they maintain the same Confession, Church Order and Liturgy as the Seceded

churches. However, it insisted on the following points:

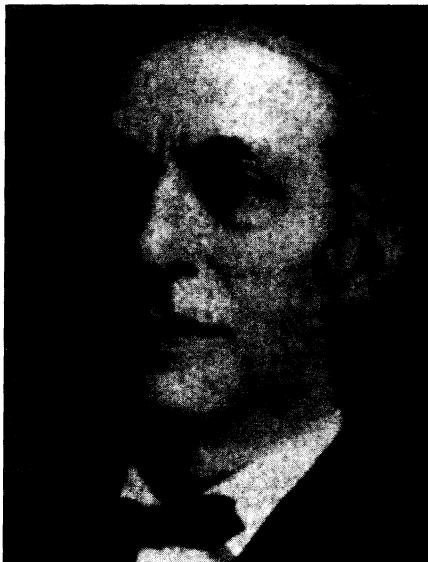
- that the “Dolerende” in obedience to Scripture and in accordance with Art. 27-29 B.C. have completely broken with the Netherlands Reformed Church as it has existed in its organization, boards, and regulations, since 1816.
- that they acknowledge the Secession from the Netherlands Reformed Church as mentioned above as it took place in 1834 as having occurred in obedience to and in agreement with the Word of God, and thus acknowledge the local churches of the “Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk” as true churches.
- that only those who express agreement with the Reformed doctrine and promise to be willing to submit to church discipline be admitted as members.
- that no attestations be given or received except from the churches that have broken with the synodical hierarchy (i.e. the State church).
- that no new congregations be instituted where a “Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk” exists, unless the local consistory and congregation move from the synodical terrain to the Reformed one.⁶

The point in all the conditions above is clearly that the seceded required a *full break* from the Netherlands Reformed Church.

The Draft Act (“Concepte-Acte”) introduced by Kuyper in the negotiations in 1888 only had the effect of slowing down the whole process of union. It was also permeated with the Kuyperian church concept. Kuyper insisted in the Act that the “Doleantie” churches broke only from the denomination or organization of the Netherlands Reformed Church. He said that the Netherlands Reformed Church was a degenerated church. As Prof. L. Lindeboom pointed out, however, he was reluctant to call it a false church according to Art. 29 B.C. He also insisted that “Doleantie” churches should be permitted to exist along side “Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken.” Although it was granted that this situation was not normal, it was to be tolerated “because of the need of the times.”

Clearly, Kuyper envisioned a Union as occurring from the top down. There would not be a good deal of fellowship and actual unification of churches on the *local* level. The churches would first meet as united churches in united class-

es, then united particular and general synods. On the local level, the Act promoted a loose and strictly organizational union, i.e. a union in name and not in deed. Although this document was extensively debated and often amended by the seceded brothers, it proved to be a fruitless document for a true confessional union. Unfortunately, it only served to aggravate differences in the seceded camp. Even the personal appearance of Dr. Kuyper and Rev. W. Van den Bergh, the leaders of the “Doleantie” churches, at the Synod of the “Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerk” held in Kampen failed to bring an end to the stalemate. By 1889 the talks had stranded without a resolution.



Dr. F.L. Rutgers

It was then decided to leave the initiative to the “Christelijke Gereformeerden.” The Synod of Leewarden 1891 established the conditions for union. In effect there were two motions, one from Prof. L. Lindeboom, seconded by J. Hessels, the other from Prof. H. Bavinck and J. Van Anandel. The Lindeboom-Hessels proposal was much more directly confessional.⁷ The Bavinck-VanAnandel proposal, while insisting that the Secession was a work of God and was both a duty and right according to Scripture and confession, allowed the different groups to have their own views on the method of reformation and on the church, but insisted that any attempt to come to union must include the following basic minimum requirements:

1. The united churches must up-
rightly and without reservation be re-

garded as the true churches according to the confession and C.O.

2. All must accept that the break with the Netherlands Reformed Church, not only with the boards of the church, but also with the members, was required by the Reformed confession, and thus necessary;

3. Only those may be regarded as members of the united church who declare their agreement with the Reformed confession, and agree to abide by the C.O.

This motion carried 32-8. The chairman, Rev. J. Van Anandel, prayed before the vote that also in this serious matter the Lord would be the leader of the church. It should also be noted that before the motion was adopted, the second point was amended to state that the union could proceed:

“2. If concerning the relationship with the Netherlands Reformed Church, it would be mutually stated that the breaking of the ecclesiastical fellowship, not only with the boards of the Netherlands Reformed Church but also with the members in a corporate and local sense, is demanded by the Word of God and the Reformed Confession, and is therefore necessary.”

The point concerning “corporate and local severance” with the Netherlands Reformed Church was thus a clause added to the Bavinck-Van Anandel motion, pushing it in the direction of the motion of Lindeboom-Hessels.

Here the conclusion is clear: a *confessional* unity was desired by all. The only point that was left open was whether the Netherlands Reformed Church should explicitly be called a false church according to Art. 29 B.C. While the “Dolerenden” never publicly applied this confessional term to the Netherlands Reformed Church, the acceptance of the condition adopted by Leewarden in effect asserts this point. The Seceded were thus satisfied with a tacit assent to the confession, an assent proven with the *deed*.

Resolution of the issues

Then came the time for the last minute negotiations which took place at the Provisional Synod of The Hague in the fall of 1891. In the first round, the deputies from the “Dolerende” churches wanted a more detailed explanation of what the Seceded brothers meant. Implicitly they tried to retain their view of the church in this round. They said: you allow us our view of reformation in the preamble, but in the conditions it appears that the principle of the

Doleantie must be sacrificed, that we must apply the concept of the false church to the synodical fellowship, and that we no longer have any responsibility to its members. The "Christelijke Gereformeerde" brothers insisted: how one sees the Netherlands Reformed Church and the members individually is an open matter but there can be no ecclesiastical responsibility for them, i.e. they cannot be objects of church discipline, and they have no right to the use of the sacraments unless they declare their allegiance to the Reformed Confession and agree to live by the Church Order. In effect, these members had to join the united churches before they could be a part of the official responsibility of the church.

The second round of negotiations brought some minor changes in the conditions for union which had been set by Synod Leewarden, including all the practical regulations. In these minor changes, the "Dolerenden" were permitted to keep their view respect the Netherlands Reformed Church. At one point Kuyper wanted to change the expression "go over" (from the Netherlands Reformed Church) to the United churches to "align oneself with." Kuyper had coined many phrases to squeeze his theory into the mould of what had actually happened, and the Seceded granted him his phrases.⁸ The essential reality, however, was that a complete break with the Netherlands Reformed Church formed the absolute bottom line for union. The union was a *confessional* union.

Finally, on Sept. 15, 1891, the deputies reached an agreement. Some of the "Dolerenden" felt: we have lost our principle of existence ("beginsel"). Indeed, although the "Dolerende" never came out and said that the Netherlands Reformed Church was a false church, in their acceptance of the conditions of Leewarden, it became clear that *de facto* this is what they were saying.

Implications for today

What then are the implications of the union for today? In the first place, we should stress that we cannot endorse any direct comparisons between the situation of 1892 and the situation today. Circumstances have changed so much and the issues are so different that this defies easy comparisons. Yet we can work comparatively if we pay attention to the norms. The foregoing makes clear that the union was a *confessional* union. A confessional union implies that the terms of Art. 27-29 B.C. are clearly applied to the existing

situation. In this connection we can review two groups, the OCRC and the Independents.

1. The OCRC

A group of thirteen churches forming a federation published an *Declaration of Separation and Return* in the *Christian Renewal* of Jan. 20, 1992. Clearly this document is modelled on the line of the Act of Secession and Return. Yet there are some striking differences. In the first place, a rather free use is made of the term "denomination." Noteworthy too is that in spite of all the criticisms directed against it, the Christian Reformed Church is not called a false church according to Art. 29 B.C. Rather this statement says:

"We will continue to recognize as per Article 27 of the Belgic Confession that the unity of the true faith transcends institutional (denominational) unity. Consequently we acknowledge with gratitude that we have many brothers and sisters in the Christian Reformed Church and in other churches. We pray that this confessional unity may never be broken, rather that under the blessings of our covenant God this confessed unity may (again) become a unity in practice."⁹

Here we must say that despite all appearances and good intentions, the spirit of 1834 is not present. This *Declaration* includes a leaven of denominationalism which can only hinder the true reformation and unity of the church. It is true that the unity of faith transcends institu-

tional lines. But this is not to be taken in such a sense that the distinction between the true and the false church is blurred. The declaration makes a false contrast between confessional unity and organizational unity. The point of the Secession was that these two necessarily incorporate each other and complement each other. Thus they are on equal footing and one cannot value the one above the other.

Must we insist that the Christian Reformed Church be called a false church according to Art. 29 B.C.? On the model of the Union of 1892, that cannot be required. However, the same model demands that the Canadian Reformed Churches insist in all negotiations that the Liberation and its continuation on this continent was both a right and duty according to God's Word and the Reformed confessions, and thus was necessary.

2. The Independent Churches

We can be very thankful that the new independent churches have expressed the desire to return to the confessional standards of the church, and to model church practice according to these standards and the Church Order of Dort. But there are also grave concerns on our part. For most of the initiatives which have come from the side of local Canadian Reformed Churches have met with cool responses. Here, too, the progress of unity appears to be hampered by the leaven of denominationalism.

The present situation of the Independent Churches highlights the same essential ingredient to true union: historical consciousness. No one would insist that all the errors of the past must be duly accounted for. But those seceding from the Christian Reformed Church must place themselves in their historical situation. They must examine past events to see where deviations originated, and where the gathering of the true church continued by God's grace. The Dolerende had to accept the integrity of the Secession as a prerequisite for Union. Similarly, I would think that a prerequisite for union today concerns the right and duty of Liberation in 1944, and thus the right and duty of the Canadian Reformed Churches to institute on this continent. One may not find agreement on all issues or doctrinal points. That is also not necessary as long as there is a willing allegiance to the Three Forms of Unity. But acknowledging the Church Order of Dort would require that we insist on the legitimacy of the Liberation in 1944 and

OUR COVER



its continuation on this continent, and that this not be relegated to the matters of indifference.

The lesson of 1892 is that if we want to pursue a true and lasting unity, it will need to be a confessional unity. We may also add the provision that it must be clear that the brothers concerned desire to *live* in accordance with the confession. Only when this became clear in 1891 was the Union effected.

The figure who perhaps best forms our teacher here is the Rev. S. Van Velzen. When he was forced to secede from the Reformed Church of Drogheda in 1835 he and the consistory maintained that they wished to uphold the unity of faith with all true Reformed believers. This was at the time when the Seceders were considered to be separatists with exaggerated sectarian gripes. But he received the reward for the stand he took at the end of his life. He was the only one of the fathers of the Secession still living at the day of the Union. He was brought in on a pallet. He could not speak. But through the voice of his son, he made known to the assembly how overjoyed he was to ex-

perience this day. Kuyper called him the Simeon in their midst.

His life shows that true faith unites, contrary to all appearances. If we let faithfulness to the confession be our standard, we may be sure that our attempts will be blessed, even if there are many disappointments in the short run. For God works mightily there where men seek to act in true obedience to His will.

¹Here I follow the assessment of J. Kamphuis. See his "De Vereniging van 1892," an article which first appeared in *De Reformatie* on June 16, 1962, and was later reprinted in *Verkenningen II Opstellen over de Kerk en haar geschiedenis*, (Goes: Oosterbaan en le Cointre, 1964) pp. 128-136.

²See J. Kamphuis, "De kerk in de Acte van Afscheiding" in D. Deddens and J. Kamphuis (eds.) *Afscheiding—Wederkeer: Opstellen over de Afscheiding van 1834*, (Haarlem: Vijlbrief, 1984), p. 100.

³See R.H. Bremmer, "Rondom 1892-2" *Gereformeerd Kerkblad voor Overijssel en Gelderland*, Vol. 1, #47, (May 28, 1949), p. 2.

⁴"Met allen, die in of buiten de gescheiden kerken de zuivere waarheid naar het Woord Gods belijden, voelen wij ons organisch, in

het lichaam van Christus, één." Quoted in E.D. Kraan "De Doleantie en de Afscheiding" in K. Dijk et al. *De Reformatie van '86* (Kampen: J.H. Kok, 1936), pp. 233-234.

⁵This regulation was adopted by the Seceded churches in 1869 in order to obtain recognition with the civil authorities. This regulation provided for a permanent Synodical Committee composed of three members who were to take care of the day to day affairs of the church, and deal with all matters pertaining to the church's relationship to the government. This formed a stumbling block to unity for the "dolerende," who stressed the autonomy of the local church.

⁶For the text of the decision see Rev. W.W.J. VanOene "Patrimony Profile - 49" *Clarion* Vol. 36, #22 (Nov. 6, 1987), p. 491.

⁷For the text of the Lindeboom motion, see R.H. Bremmer, *op. cit.*, (Dec. 3, 1949), p. 4. H. Beuker also submitted an important "mediating" motion, but it fell out of favour as the discussion focused around the two sides of the issue.

⁸On Kuyper's terminology, as well as that of others in the Doleantie, see M. te Velde, "Voortrekkers over nakomers" in D. Deddens and J. Kamphuis, *Doleantie-Wederkeer Opstellen over de Doleantie van 1886*, (Haarlem: Vijlbrief, 1986), p. 292.

⁹See *Christian Renewal*, Jan. 20, 1992, p. 18.

C

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G. Ph. van Popta

O Canada!

Ottawa is getting ready for the big birthday party. This July 1st, Canada turns 125. In preparation, artisans are sprucing up the Parliament buildings. In particular, masons are restoring the two passages of Scripture chiselled into the stone of the Peace Tower.

Engraved upon the Peace Tower are words of Psalm 72:8: "HE SHALL HAVE DOMINION FROM SEA TO SEA." Psalm 72 was meant as a prayer for the reigning king of Israel. This Psalm, however, speaks of the king in terms that no mere human could attain. It speaks of a king who reigns forever and who rules over all nations. He is a King of kings, Lord of lords. Both Jews and Christians have always understood that, ultimately, Psalm 72 is speaking about the Messiah.

The noble words written upon our Parliament buildings speak not about any founder of this nation nor about past or present prime ministers, governors general, or British monarchs. Rather, they speak about the King of kings and Lord of lords. The words inscribed upon the Peace Tower proclaim the Prince of Peace, the Lord Jesus Christ.

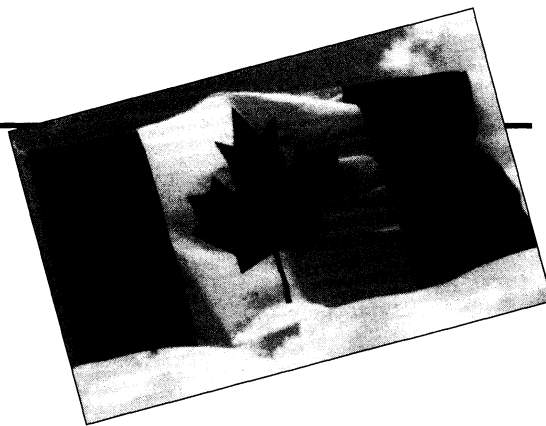
In our Canadian context, He is the one who has dominion from the Atlantic Ocean in the East to the Pacific Ocean in the West. Every Canadian owes allegiance to King Jesus.

Apparently these words spoke powerfully to our forefathers - to the founders of this nation. Of all the words available, they chose these words to

stand high above our nation. These words were also incorporated into Canada's Coat of Arms. Underneath the shield, the lion and the unicorn unfurl a banner with the words: *A mari usque ad mare* ("From sea to sea") written on them. This is Canada's motto.

Did the founders of our country understand the rich significance of engraving these words of Psalm 72 into the Peace Tower and adopting them as Canada's official motto? I would like to think they did.

This Psalm speaks of a king who rules in a righteous and merciful way. That's the way King Jesus governs. He is righteous and He is merciful. When He judges He is not partial. He does



not favour either the rich or the poor. He only does what is right.

He is compassionate. He delivers those who call to Him. He has pity on the weak and the needy. Many kings and governments put heavy burdens, heavy yokes on their citizens. King Jesus says: "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest....For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

By choosing these words of Psalm 72 as our motto and flying them as a beacon of truth above this country, our forefathers declared that they wanted righteousness and compassion to characterize life in this country.

Do they? Do the righteousness and mercy of King Jesus still rule supreme in Canada? Do the citizens of this country still bow to the dominion of King Jesus, the King who also claims every square inch of Canada?

A good question to ask on July 1st, Canada Day, "Dominion" Day. Does Jesus Christ still exercise dominion from sea to sea in Canada? Do we, as a country, recognize Him as Lord? Without Him as Lord, life degenerates into chaos, personally and nationally.


There is a second inscription on the Peace Tower in Ottawa. There is another quotation from the Bible which our forefathers deemed appropriate to fly above the heads of the citizens of Canada. They also chose Proverbs 29:18 which says: "WITHOUT A VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH."

The vision which Proverbs 29:18 is talking about is the revelation of the Word of God. Without the Word of God, the people perish. We could also translate the word "perish" from the original Hebrew as "run wild." Without the Word of God as a source of guidance the people run wild. They let loose. There is no discipline, no restraint. Everyone does what is right in his own eyes. Chaos! Anarchy!

Sadly, Canada has largely let go of these words. We have let go of the Bible which contains these words proclaimed from Parliament Hill. We have lost the vision. Canadians have forgotten that King Jesus is the One who rules from sea to sea. We have let go of Him as our divine King and have begun bowing down to other gods – King Selfishness and Queen Pleasure.

Because we have let go of the true King of Canada and of His Word, we are running wild. Because we have let go of the law of King Jesus, we have become lawless. We are perishing. We turn to drugs. We turn to deviant forms of sex. We abort our own babies. Pornography is socially acceptable. Child abuse. Wife abuse. Divorce. Drunk parents. Angry families. Broken families. That's what Canada is like. Righteousness and compassion? What a joke!

What's the answer? The answer is in Ottawa. No, not the House of Commons. Not the Senate Chamber. Not the Privy Council. The answer is written on the Peace Tower. The answer is found in those wonderful words etched into the tower on Parliament Hill which, in a sense, is the very centre, the very heart of Canada. We find the answer in those words which the founding fathers of this nation took from Psalm 72:8: "HE SHALL HAVE DOMINION FROM SEA TO SEA." We find the answer in Proverbs 29:18: "WITHOUT A VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH."

O Canada! Return to the Lord! Return to His Word! Why would you perish? 

Response to Reactions

By W.W.J. VanOene

Recently a few brothers reacted to what I had written about a few decisions or actions communicated to us via official publications. Their reactions touch upon the decisions regarding the use of tapes with catechetical instruction, the two examinations required by the churches in Ontario South of a minister who wished to be declared eligible for call, the information from the Grand Rapids bulletin that Rev. P. Kingma "preached" in Denver. That this information has been rectified in the meantime does not render it unnecessary to respond to remarks made in connection with what I wrote about it. Although I do not want to monopolize the available space in our magazine, yet it is good that these things are discussed openly among us. For good measure I'll also throw in a few remarks about Rev. J.D.Wielenga's submission re Denver.

Use of tapes

Let me start with the point of the use of tapes as an aid in catechetical instruction.

No one should receive the impression that by what I wrote about classical and regional-synodical decisions in this regard I defended the use of tapes as such. I did write that our readers know what I think about the use of tapes, both audio and video. For clarity's sake I shall elaborate a little on it.

I consider the use of tapes recorded by outsiders both unwise and dangerous, and a *testimonium paupertatis* (something that is proof of poverty) on the part of the instructor. A minister should be able himself to tell the students at catechism classes all they need to know to come to the public profession of their faith. It is up to him to

gather and "digest" all information available and needed, then to present the result to his students to instruct them in the faith and to bring them to maturity in it. *If* a minister needs the help of others with this, is there, I would almost ask, then no prophet in *Israel* whom he can consult? We do have trustworthy writings by fellow-ministers. There is absolutely no need to call in outsiders. What could they possibly contribute that cannot be found in writings by our own members or members of our sister churches? To give material by outsiders into the hands of not-yet-mature students is both unwise and dangerous. They lack the necessary knowledge to distinguish well and to discern error from Truth.

Our readers know now precisely where I stand in the matter of the use of tapes as such.

An incorrect scenario

Rev. VanPopta did me the honour of trying to prove that I was wrong in my evaluation of classical and regional-synodical decisions. In order to achieve this, he presented a scenario. Imagine, he wrote, "I decided to send my catechism students to take in the lectures (of non-Canadian Reformed teachers VO) as supplementary material." He also asked: "What is the difference between sending the catechism students to hear an outside instructor live, and bringing him in via electronic media? ... The medium is irrelevant."

It is here where my colleague goes wrong. The medium is *not* irrelevant. When I send my catechism students to take in a lecture, *I do not know what the instructor is going to say!* He does become the instructor indeed.

If I required of them that they listen to a cassette, I must have listened to it myself first and thus be able to point out what is wrong in the presentation, if anything. If a minister just trusts that a "lecture-on-tape" will rightly present the Word of Truth, and has not checked it beforehand, and then tells his catechism students to listen to it, he forsakes his duty and is to be "censured" for that according to Art. 73 C.O. When, however, he has listened to and judged the contents of the tape and has found the contents Scriptural, he uses it as a teaching aid and remains the instructor, bound by his signature affixed to the Subscription Form.

It is a fallacy indeed to state that in this case an outsider becomes the instructor. The minister, having listened to and having evaluated the tapes beforehand, remains fully responsible for what is being taught, in the same manner as when he would require his students to read a certain book written by an outsider. This is completely different from sending students to someone's lecture.

Continuity

When Rev. VanPopta writes that "there should be a line of continuity between the preaching done on the Lord's day before the whole congregation and the catechism instruction given to the youth of the church," I could not agree more. In my remarks, however, I did not defend the use of tapes; I only evaluated the classical and regional-synodical decisions and found them based on false inferences. *That* was my point, and it still is.

Lording it over?

At Classis Ontario North of Dec. 14, 1990, an appeal was received "against the decision of the consistory at A. to have catechism students listen to tapes by non-Canadian Reformed ministers as part of their homework assignment." Appellant requested "Classis to judge the decision made by the Consistory with regard to the tapes to be wrong." Classis acceded to the request.

The consistory involved listened to all the tapes and found them to be Scriptural. There was no effort even to prove that the consistory erred in its evaluation of the contents, nor was any concrete point brought to the fore in which an error could be pointed out. It was the mere use of the tapes that was condemned or declared wrong, if you wish.

If this is not interfering with the right of a consistory to decide about the use of aids in catechetical instruction, and if this is no "lording it over," then I would not know what is.

Certainly, Rev. VanPopta is right when posing that "a judgment was made in an appeal," but the very judgment does impinge upon the authority of the local church.

Catechetical instruction at broader assemblies?

In one of the considerations of Regional Synod East of Nov. 13-14, 1991, it is stated: "Because as churches we are part of this federation and the ministers that serve in our congregations have also in Classis signed the Form for Subscription, Classis has indeed the right to deal with the catechism teaching in a congregation when this is properly brought before Classis."

Would you please read this again and try to follow the reasoning?

It is this statement that I qualified as showing a complete lack of distinction. I repeat that no broader assembly has the right to deal with the catechism instruction in a congregation or, for that matter, with the preaching or with the diaconal labours or with family visiting. This regional synod made a sweeping statement which *in its generality* is totally incorrect and amounts to a lording it over a church indeed.

When something is brought before a broader assembly by way of an appeal, this may be only a concrete point, not "catechism instruction" in general. For instance, if a consistory allowed a minister to skip catechism classes every other week, this unfaithfulness on

the part of the consistory could be appealed, as the young members do not receive the care they have a right to and need so badly. Or if a member complains that the consistory backs the minister up whereas it can be proved that he teaches lies instead of the truth. Then the specific instances in which lies are being taught can be submitted to classis for its judgment. Then, however, it is *not* "the catechism teaching" that is brought properly before classis, but then classis is to judge whether the points submitted are errors indeed and whether the consistory is faithful in admonishing the minister who teaches *specified* errors.

In the same manner specific points from the minister's preaching can be submitted to classical judgment if the consistory permits him to teach those things, but this does not mean at all that now a classis has the right to deal with "the preaching" because we live in one federation and the ministers have signed the Form of Subscription also at classis. Here is a lack of distinction and an argument that paves the way for hierarchy: broader assemblies have the alleged right to deal with "the catechism instruction," "the preaching," "the diaconal work," etc.

Nowhere did I state or imply that a broader assembly should say: "Sorry, anything to do with catechism instruction is hands off for a classis." What I judged and rejected is the *argumentation* by both classis and regional synod.

Rev. VanPopta's response has not adduced any convincing proof that I was wrong in my evaluation. If either classis or regional synod meant something different, the formulation should have been different and more precise. As it reads now it is to be rejected.

Investigate?

Coming now to some of the remarks by the Rev. Cl. Stam, made in reaction to what I wrote about Rev. P. Kingma's alleged preaching in Denver, he wrote "The writer of News Medley would have done better to investigate properly what really had taken place than to come with such patriarchal pontifications." I shall overlook the personal sneer (it is not the only one in Rev. Stam's submission) and reply to this rebuke.

Can it be justly demanded that I shall investigate whether information in bulletins is correct? When I read in Taber's bulletin that they bought a parsonage for a certain amount, do I have to write them to verify this information

before I am allowed to mention it in the news medley? Or when I now read in Grand Rapids' bulletin that the Rev. Kingma only "gave an edifying word" in Denver, is it then my obligation to write either the editor or Rev. Kingma himself to find out whether this information is correct?

What Rev. Stam writes in this connection amounts to an unreasonable demand. If I cannot trust that the information I find in bulletins is correct, it is impossible to quote anything at all. And if any correction is made concerning any point I wrote about, I pass this correction on, but no one can justly say that it is my duty to verify information found in the various bulletins.

Contact beforehand?

Another colleague wrote me a personal letter from which I quote the following. "Did you contact Rev. Kingma before you wrote this? I talked to him and found out that you did not. Why not? Even if it was true that Rev. Kingma preached in Denver (which he didn't, it was a mistake in the bulletin) then still you have no right to publish this and condemn a minister of the Word rashly and unheard. Indeed I believe what you wrote goes against the ninth commandment. In this regard I also think of what we read in Psalm 52."

Wow! Do you really think that Paul went against the ninth commandment when he rebuked Peter openly, or do you think that he first approached Peter privately? I don't believe it for one moment. Note: I do not compare myself to Paul at all, nor, for clarity's sake, Rev. Kingma to Peter. The point is that what was done openly in one of the churches was openly declared to be wrong. That's what it was in Antioch; that's what I did. Besides, I did not speak of a *sin* although I declared to be wrong what Rev. Kingma was said to have done.

Did I judge "rashly and unheard"? Rashly, that is without good grounds? But it is not *my* fault that the information was incorrect, and I passed the correction on with joy. And "unheard"? But I quoted from Grand Rapids' own bulletin, and then still "unheard"?

Did I have no right to publish it?

When I started this news medley column some nineteen years ago, I wrote to all consistories requesting them to send me the bulletins so that I could write a news medley. They did realize that by complying with my request they at the same time gave me permis-

sion to quote from these bulletins. I have never tried to get any bulletin stealthily so as to be able to glean some juicy morsels. If a consistory does not want to send it, too bad, but I have to respect such a decision. And if a certain bulletin contains a marginal notation "do not publish," or "do not mention this," I honour such a request, as everyone can testify who did make such a notation. As for the rest: I have the full right to quote whatever I consider important enough to be passed on or to be evaluated.

"Why hurt our brother this way?" my colleague wrote. I have never been out to hurt a brother, nor have I ever cast doubt on someone's integrity or character. But when I see hurt for the *churches*, I point this out, and if anyone gets hurt in the process, this is an unintentional though perhaps unavoidable "by-product." I am happy, however, that a correction has been made possible.

My colleague also asked me to take back what I wrote in this connection. He has not proved in any way that I either misquoted or misinterpreted the information received, nor that my reaction to it did injustice to anyone. Now that Grand Rapids' bulletin published a correction, it is clear that what I wrote no longer applies, but that is all. Several years ago I wrote about an almost similar case in another congregation, and there it did not even get that far that the minister did "speak an edifying word," but then I did not hear any of the protests I receive now. Why now?

Two examinations?

From Rev. Stam's submission I glean that the decisions of previous broader assemblies were being remembered by the brothers and were also taken into account. I am happy with that and I am also glad that I was wrong when ascribing the course chosen to ignorance.

I was also happy to read Dr. DeJong's conclusions and to see that my conclusions regarding the *one* examination for ministers who want to be declared eligible for call were similar to his. This shows that I was not all that far out with my understanding of the relevant general synodical decisions. Unless, of course, both Dr. DeJong and I are mistaken, but this will have to be proved.

Dr. DeJong will perhaps reply for himself; I just want to make a few remarks in response.

Does a minister who, together with "his" congregation, applies for admission into the federation, not have to be

"declared eligible for call"? When a congregation and its minister are received into the federation, this means more than that they are just a member of the federation. It means that they share in all the privileges and responsibilities that being a member of the federation brings with it. One of these privileges is that the minister may be called by other congregations. A congregation is not examined for admission in the strict sense of the word, but a minister will have to be, *for he will become eligible for call* as well as receiving all the other privileges connected with the status of minister within the federation.

It does not make any difference indeed, whether a minister comes with or without a congregation. Thus the relevant decision of Edmonton 1965 was and is clear.

I have no desire, as Rev. Stam seems to suggest, to defend either the gist or the formulation of decisions by synods of which I was a member. If formulations or decisions have to be changed, let them be changed. But please, let us not have explanatory decision upon explanatory decision. Before we know it, we'll have a thick "law-book," a book filled with all sorts of specifications regarding this, regarding that. To everyone who is aware of what being received into the federation entails it will be clear that also when a minister comes with a congregation, he has to be declared eligible for call. There is no "unforeseen vacuum" in the 1965 decision.

For how long?

Rev. Stam states that "A point which also played a role was this: what if the minister declared eligible does *not* receive a call, will he then still have the status and rights of a minister in the churches, and if so, for how long?"

As I wrote before, I am convinced that the classis that declared the minister in question eligible for call did the correct thing by recognizing his status as a minister of the Word. It is a point to be considered indeed for how long such a position could be maintained. To my knowledge, there is no decision covering this point.

Realizing that it can be very dangerous to reason "on the analogy of," I would draw the attention to Art. 11 C.O. His status is basically that of a minister who has been released from his congregation. Thus I would suggest that also in this case a period of three years is to be observed.

Admittedly it is an inconsistency to recognize a ministerial status in the case of one who has been dismissed or released from the bond with a specific church, yet I would not advocate a change in this respect. When we follow this course, the churches would "be safeguarded ... and be not unduly burdened." Especially when one comes from without the federation, there are no financial consequences for the churches when they recognize his status.

Could or should?

Prof. Geertsema told me that he was going to reply to Rev. J.D. Wielenga's "Answer to a Good Question," and for this reason I shall refrain from going into it to a larger extent. Yet a few remarks have to be made.

Rev. Wielenga distills too much out of my question. For brevity's sake I

shall not repeat what I wrote. Our readers can consult this when they save their copies of *Clarion*.

My question was a general question, not one in which I "admitted" that "the Denver group *could* have affiliated with the OPC."

Besides, the big question is: "Who is the one to decide whether a certain group can affiliate with a foreign federation?" Is that not the group itself?

When we receive a request for affiliation from a group in a country where there is a federation which we have recognized as a true church of the Lord, is then not all we have to do examine the reasons why this group seeks affiliation with us? Is it then really in our province to say: "You *could* have joined that federation there and therefore you *should* have done it, and for this reason we must refuse you"?

If we are to disapprove of the reasons why a group seeks affiliation with our federation, then we have the right to refuse them. But it is my sentiment that they are the only ones that can judge whether they are able to affiliate with a federation with which we have no sister church relationship even though we have recognized them as a true church of the Lord. If they have come to the conclusion that they are not able to do so, we do not have the right to tell them that they nevertheless *should* have done so on the basis of a decision which our federation made in 1977.

Conclusion

Perhaps I have demanded too much room already, and the above lines can certainly not find room in one issue. It is important that we discuss these things openly, and for this reason I have written them. C

NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene



It gives me great pleasure that I can begin this medley with passing on a correction I found in the Grand Rapids bulletin. Here it comes.

"Correction: A previous bulletin mistakenly informed the congregation (and the sister churches by way of the 'News Medley' column in the *Clarion*) that Rev. P. Kingma had preached at the Denver American Reformed Church. This should have read, 'given an edifying word.' The editor regrets any misunderstanding that may have resulted from this error."

We pass this information on with joy, for it shows that Rev. Kingma did not do anything improper. In connection with what I wrote about the original information, I received two reactions, the one in a piece written by the Rev. Stam, the other in a personal letter from another colleague. I will respond to their concerns in a separate article. Our news medley is not the most suitable place for such response.

Coming to Ontario, we note that the consistory of London received "From the City of London a notice that our churchbuilding has been identified as a potential 'Historical Property' within the city. More information will be obtained." I do not think that this honour will result in funds being made available for the building's upkeep. It may rather be so that no changes will be allowed without the approval of all sorts of bodies and committees.

From London we reach Hamilton. Hamilton's consistory sent "A letter to Rev. J.M. Vigno of the Free Reformed Church of the Philippines, in which he was advised to contact the correspondence address for the Canadian Reformed Church-

es (the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington), if he wants to establish contact with our church federation for the purpose of obtaining financial assistance."

If this sentence conveys correctly what the request was, I am the more grateful for the reply that was sent. Perhaps it would even have been better to write bluntly: "If you want to establish contact with us for the purpose of obtaining financial assistance, forget about it!" I am very wary of communications in the line of: "We want to have closer contact with you, and this is how much money we'll need." I do realize that, compared to the situation in the Philippines, we have a very high standard of living and enjoy a luxury of which others can only dream. On the other hand, we, too, experience the effects of a recession and the contributions for the maintenance of the ministry, combined with what our families pay for Reformed education of their children amount to a considerable sum of money. Almost unnoticed cause upon cause is added to the worthwhile enterprises for which our donations are asked. We must be very careful that we do not add so much to all this that those causes to whose support we have committed ourselves suffer damage. Our resources are not unlimited.

Burlington West's consistory received a remarkable proposal. "A proposal to appoint for two years an elder to be the regular delegate at classis meetings (When will we have the proper wording: "classEs" or "classiCAL meetings"? VO) with the minister to provide continuity and allow this person to be more effective. The proposal does not carry."

Speaking of a classis, Grand Valley's bulletin drew the attention to the many vacancies in this manner: "With Ottawa becoming vacant, Classis was asked to arrange for pulpit supply for five churches (Brampton, Chatsworth, Elora, Ottawa, and Lower Sackville)." This means, Rev. P. Aasman wrote, that every minister in Ontario North will serve a vacant church once a month. As far as I know, the situation will not improve all that rapidly, seeing the number of brothers preparing themselves for the ministry at our Seminary.

Meanwhile, the consistory of Ottawa conducted its five hundredth consistory meeting!

One more item from Grand Valley. "The Organ Committee ... brings forward its concern that when the organist arrives at church on Sunday, that he or she should not have to re-establish a proper setting (arrange the stops)... The Committee does not want to discourage organ playing, but to prevent it from causing trouble on Sunday morning."

Frankly, I do not understand what the difficulty is. I don't know what sort of an instrument the Grand Valley church has, but I presume that it is not much different from what is found in almost every auditorium: an instrument with two or even three manuals, plus pedal board, and provided with various pushbuttons to "automatically" produce a certain combination of stops. How long does it take to pre-set the different combinations? Two or perhaps even five minutes? Most organists write on the pieces they are going to play which combination of stops should be used with this particular composition or song. It won't take them long to register this combination so that it can be engaged by pushing one button. And one cannot demand of someone who plays on Saturday evening that he first shall write down or remember which combinations have been put into the instrument's memory. Here I think a mountain has been made out of what is not even a molehill.

Herewith the memorable news from Ontario has been exhausted for this time, and we move on to Manitoba.

In Carman plans are being made to build a Seniors' Housing Complex. "Property is available at this time directly south of the church building in Carman." It would be nice if the plans could be realized. The location seems to be excellent as well, and the distance to the centre of town is not all that great. We'll keep you informed if we are being kept informed ourselves.

"There is a favourable response to the office-bearers' conference held in Winnipeg in April. It is decided in favour of making this an annual event." In connection with this we quote from Winnipeg: "It is decided to recommend to Carman that conferences should be held once a year from now on." It is too bad that these two churches are so far from sister churches but it is quite something already that the office-bearers of both churches can meet in conference.

Carman is the first, and until now the only church which seems to be in favour of an alternate melody for The Apostles' Creed." It is decided to recommend to the synodical deputies, the standing committee for the *Book of Praise*, that General Synod Lincoln 1992 adopt the new proposed melody for Hymn 1A as it is except for a request to make a revision to the ending."

There seems to be some confusion here and there as to what this alternate melody is to be used for. If I understand the various synodical decisions well, it is *not* a "new proposed melody for Hymn 1A," for Synod 1986 (Art.189) spoke of "whether a new melody can be found for this 'new text,'" and Synod 1989 (Art.145) spoke of an "alternate

melody for Hymn 1A" and "to make the new melody with the 'new text' ... available to the churches and evaluate any response from the churches." My conclusion is that the "new melody" is not intended to replace the present one used for Hymn 1A, but one to fit the "new text."

With the expected arrival of the Rev. VanPopta and family the need for a parsonage prompted a search, which was crowned with the purchase of a suitable residence in Taber. Coaldale is still struggling with the question what to do regarding water and sewer connections for their church-building-under-construction. The completion date is still the end of June, the pews are scheduled to arrive in the beginning of July, and the organ may be expected towards the middle of August. What a joy it will be when the congregation is able to meet in their new building!

The Evangelism Committee requested "the church at Coaldale to have a name." The consistory, however, saw no need for this.

The same committee requested an "order of worship including songs and text to be handed out before the service." For practical reasons the consistory "decides this is not possible, but feels there is merit in only order of worship for strangers."

If songs and text are to be included in an order to be available before the services start, this means that the minister will have to have everything ready well before Saturday evening, so that it can be multiplied. Perhaps several of my colleagues are able to achieve this, but for many, many years I was unable to accomplish such a feat. More often than not, the songs were selected well into the Saturday night, and by "night" I mean "night" indeed. I am sure that no one wants to spend part of the night to multiply orders of worship in which the songs are included! Perhaps this was one of the "practical reasons" that prompted Coaldale's consistory not to accede to the request.

At the Abbotsford consistory meeting, "the brothers discuss at length the matter of extended holidays to places where there is no sister church. It was advised to use caution and discretion in this regard." It is good that our consistories pay attention to this point. The financial means which the Lord has given to us enable many members to undertake long journeys and to spend a considerable time "down south." I, too, have my questions about the point whether this is the proper course. I do not condemn anyone who does it, but I myself do not feel free to do likewise. To me there is more to the Sundays than listening to a tape-recorded service. I see the brothers and sisters and meet them, experiencing and enjoying the communion of saints.

Abbotsford's consistory also tabled for later discussion "the topic of evening worship services."

Whoever drives to the Chilliwack church building is in for a bumpy ride on the Chilliwack Central Road. There are plans to widen it, which will also result in great improvement to the road surface. Widening a road, however, has its consequences for the properties that line the road. The Chilliwack congregation, too, experiences this. They have a couple of beautiful chestnut trees at the edge of the property and these will have to fall victim to the road widening. "The City of Chilliwack will pay \$922.00 for the strip of land to widen Chilliwack Central Road and \$4,000.00 for the trees." That is nice, but what value can you put on mature trees that have taken many years to grow to their present size?

The Lynden consistory, as all others in Western Canada, received "copy of an appeal from the Church at Winnipeg to upcoming Regional Synod; passed on to the delegate."

There are two things wrong here. In the first place: appeals should not be sent to the churches. One appeals to the broader assembly and this assembly isn't there yet. All a church can do is send an appeal to the convening church.

In the second place: that a member of a certain consistory happens to have been delegated to a regional synod is just coincidence. The submission should have been declared inadmissible and been returned to sender. It is equally incorrect when other consistories decided that the document should circulate among the brothers. Local churches and office-bearers have nothing to do with appeals sent to broader assemblies. Local churches will receive the Acts of the broader assembly and can then see whether also the decisions made on appeals contain anything why such decisions must be rejected.

Sometimes one enters the auditorium and sees a beautiful flower arrangement in front of the pulpit. Occasionally this is a left-over from a wedding ceremony, but in other cases there is a brother or sister who makes sure that there are fresh flowers every Sunday. I do not know whether there are any among our congregations or in sister churches where "It is decided from now on every Sunday to put fresh flowers in the front of the church building. (What is meant is the auditorium, of course VO) According to the estimate given by a number of sisters this will cost about R 20 per week, which looks like a fair amount to the brothers. After the services these flowers will be given to people who are ill and/or elderly. It is decided to pay for these flowers from the church treasury." Anyone who is familiar with monetary units will have understood that this was a quotation from the Pretoria SA bulletin.

And since we are abroad anyway we may as well visit Australia. The churches there are having a synod right now, and there is quite an agenda. The various consistories have been busy with the study of the reports submitted and the members of synod have their work cut out for them.

The consistory of Bedforddale (as well as the one at Byford) "agrees with Deputies' concern at the speed and lack of prior consultation associated with the decision of the Synod of the sister churches in the Netherlands to establish sister relations with the Reformed Church in the U.S., the Free Reformed Church in the Philippines, and the Evangelical Reformed Church in Zaire." The same complaint has been heard among us.

We shall return to Bedforddale shortly, but first pay attention to the Rockingham development. Byford's consistory report states that "In His grace the Lord directed circumstances in such a way that a five-acre block came available on Kerosene Lane... for a very attractive price. This block is now owned by the Rockingham group!" Rockingham also got a shot in the arm, for "The meeting decides to give Rockingham a minimum of \$100,000.00." I am certain that a property this size has been chosen also with a view to having a school in the future.

And now back to Bedforddale. The consistory received a letter "from principal John Calvin Senior High School requesting use of church building for a drama production. Some brothers hesitate to agree because of the nature of the production. The school will be asked to try and find another venue." However, since the school apparently could not "find alternative accommodation," the church building was made available. The advice was given in the future first to secure accommodation and then to make definite plans.

50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY



JOHN and THYSIENNA HUIZING (nee Oosterhof)

hope to celebrate, the Lord willing, their 50th Wedding Anniversary on June 26, 1992. They immigrated from Enschede, the Netherlands in 1954 and settled in Toronto along with their 2 daughters and 1 son. In 1956 a second son was born. They are both blessed with good health and enjoy visiting with their 14 grandchildren and 2 great-grandchildren.

I do not know what the "nature of the production" was, but I would advocate to get out of this business of "drama production" altogether. I am convinced that these things should not take place among us. During the last ten years it has become more and more customary to have such things among us, but I do not consider this to be a sign of progress, rather the opposite. In decades past our Reformed people may have been called too conservative in their outlook and life style, at least they had a certain style and endeavoured to show the difference between church members and non-church members. I see in this whole "stage-play-business" more a sign of deterioration and secularization.

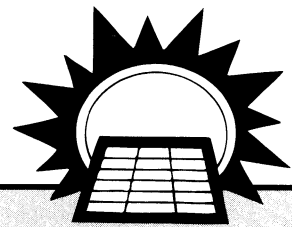
Students can study poetry and other literature without trying to act it out themselves. It won't affect their knowledge and understanding of the English language at all if they refrain from "stage plays" and "drama productions." Let's not go into the line of the world with its theatre, movies, and idolatrous worship of sports and sports heroes.

I would rather go along with the "Festival Fanfare Concert Band" of which the Kelmscott section of the Western Australian bulletin tells us: "I might just mention that our sharply-dressed-and-marching festival fanfare band looked quite in place on Anzac Day. It must have been an honour and thrill to march alongside those war veterans."

Attention!

And: Bravo!

RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Spring is here, and very soon it will be summer. It is wonderful to see everything come to life again. The buds on the trees turn to leaves and blossom, the grass is yellow with dandelions, the birds are busy with their nests and young, even the fish in the ponds survived the long, icy winter. People seem to get busier too. You see them mowing grass, and planting their gardens. Pretty soon they'll start making preparations for their holidays.

Yes, that is part of summer too. While nature is so very beautiful, most people take a break from their regular routines. The schools are closed for a few months, meetings, choir practises, etc. come to a stop, and whoever has the opportunity to do so takes time off to go on holidays.

It is very nice that we are able to enjoy another summer. The Lord allows us to do so. And if we see our holiday time as a gift from the Lord, then we will find many reasons to give thanks to Him, and to stand in awe of God's beautiful work of creation. Then we will not try to take a break from serving the Lord, but we will feel more reason to thank Him.

But not everyone is cheerful and happy with the summer and the holiday season. Some people are seriously ill, or have other handicaps that exclude them from enjoying the outdoors, and swimming, hiking, or camping. Other people are mourning because they have lost dear ones. Some don't have the freedom to go where they want, and have to struggle through a summer season far away from their dear ones, or even from the church. There are even people who are not allowed to thank the Lord openly, because they are persecuted; they get punished when they read the Bible or go to church.

It is because of man's fall into sin in Paradise that God's beautiful world is not that beautiful anymore. That is why there is so much unhappiness in the world. The worst of all is, that there are so many things going on in the world that grieve the Lord! Because of sin the world has changed. But the Lord has not changed. He is still the same as when He created the heaven and the earth.

We do not know why some people have to carry a very heavy burden such as illness, a handicap, the

loss of a partner, a parent, or a child. But we do know that God is in control. He rules the world, nothing escapes His attention, and He does not make any mistakes. When we ask Him, He also will give us the strength to carry the burdens He places upon our shoulders. With His help we can all rejoice in Him, and praise Him for His mighty deeds.

So when we prepare to enjoy our summer, let us not forget that we cannot go on holidays without the Lord! Let us also remember to pray for those who are in difficult circumstances, so that even they will receive the strength to rejoice with us in the Lord, "Who so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

*I love the LORD, the fount of life and grace;
He heard my voice, my cry and supplication,
Inclined His ear, gave strength and consolation;
In life, in death, my heart will seek His face.*

Psalm 116:1

Birthdays in July:

James Buikema

"Anchor" Home
30 Road, RR 2

Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

On July 4 James will be 31.

Charlie Beintema

29 Wilson Avenue

Chatham, ON N7L 1K8

On July 20 Charlie will be 17.

Jim Wanders

538 Wedgewood Drive

Burlington, ON L7L 4J2

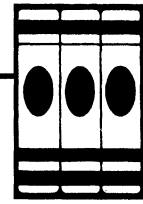
On July 28 Jim will be 31, just like James.

Happy Birthday to all of you.

Until next month,

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

BOOK REVIEWS



A COMMENTARY ON EPHESIANS

By G.Ph. van Popta

Hodge, Charles
A Commentary on Ephesians
Republished by Banner of Truth Trust,
1964 (reprinted 1991) @ \$21.95 U.S.A.
(296 pp./clothbound).

The Banner of Truth Trust has performed a great service by republishing Hodge's *A Commentary on Ephesians* which was first published in 1856.

The eighteen pages of introductory material, although good, are rather scanty. Hodge subscribes to the Pauline authorship of this letter and argues in favour of the traditional opinion that it was written from Rome. The discussion of the textual evidence is, of course, dated.

In the main body of the book, the commentary, Hodge begins every section with a translation of a pericope. He then provides a brief analysis in which


he tries to make clear the form and structure of the pericope. This is followed by his extensive comments.

As he comments on the text, one verse at a time, clause by clause, often one word at a time, Hodge, the Calvinist professor of systematic theology, shows himself to be a fine and exacting biblical exegete. This commentary has both depth and breadth. Its unique strength is that while it addresses the fine points of grammar and word meaning, it does not get lost in the detail. Hodge manages to keep the sweep of the argument in view even while looking intently at the parts.

Since it is a commentary on the Greek text of Ephesians, one will find quite a few Greek words and phrases spread throughout the book. This need not be intimidating because Hodge always adds an English translation. As

well, when he quotes Latin authors, e.g., Calvin or Beza, he usually provides an English translation. Latin as well as German quotations found in the footnotes, however, are invariably left untranslated.

Anyone who uses this book as an aid while studying the apostle's letter to the Ephesians will be richly rewarded by Hodge's wonderful insight and his great gift of opening up the Word of God; however, it will probably be most useful to preachers and teachers because of its rather technical nature.

There seem to be a few misprints/mistakes; e.g., on page 42 the Greek for "heart" is translated as "head." The book is bound exceptionally well. It is sewn, not glued, and clothbound with gold stamping. In every respect, it will be a fine addition to your library. 

THE LIVES OF ROBERT AND JAMES HALDANE

By R. Gleason

Haldane, Alexander
The Lives of Robert and James Haldane
Edinburgh: Banner of Truth Trust, 1990,
710 pp. hardcover. ISBN 0 85151 567
3, \$34.95 (U.S.).

The Banner of Truth Trust, in keeping with its desire to publish books of solid quality has reprinted Alexander Haldane's biography which was first published in 1852. Alexander Haldane was one of the evangelical leaders in the Anglican church of the previous century. This volume tells the story of his father, James Haldane (1768-1851) and his uncle, Robert Haldane (1764-1842).

Both Robert and James Haldane were Scottish laymen active in the promotion of the Evangelical Awakening in the 19th century. Their story is somewhat remarkable in the sense that they were both members of the aristocracy. James was the captain with the East India Company and Robert was the owner of Gleneagles and other estates in Perthshire when they were converted to the Christian faith in the last decade of the 18th century.

After their conversion they founded chapels, established Sunday schools and were active in philanthropy. In 1816 Robert travelled to Geneva, Switzerland and in 1817 to Montauban, France, precipitating the evangelical awakening known as the *Reveil* which

later spread to Holland. Their influence also extended to Denmark and Sweden, and through Thomas and Alexander Campbell to the United States as well.

Interestingly, Robert welcomed the French Revolution, but after he became a Christian he decried the Revolution

CHURCH NEWS



NEW ADDRESS

Rev. J. Van Rietschoten
6 Trundy Place
General Delivery
Carman, MB R0G 0J0

CLASSIS ONTARIO SOUTH
of June 10, 11, 1992 declared

Br. J.E. Ludwig
eligible for call.

CALLED to Immanuel,
Edmonton, AB

Rev. R.A. Schouten
of Calgary, AB

CANADIAN REFORMED CHURCH
at Port Kells, BC

7949 202 A Street
Langley, BC V3A 4P7

and dedicated his life to missionary labours. The influence of the Haldanes was strongly felt in Scotland. Gathering other eminent evangelists around them they helped spread the message of the gospel. The General Assembly (1800) forbade field-preaching and discouraged the revival.

As a consequence of the Assembly's actions, Robert Haldane seceded from the Established Church and erected places of worship at his own expense. He called these places of worship Tabernacles. They were established in all the large towns of Scotland. He

helped finance the training of 300 young men for the preaching of the gospel and organized a theological school in Paris. From there he turned his attention to Africa.

James Haldane retired with a fortune of 15,000 English pounds with his wife in Scotland in 1794. His hours were not wasted, however. He devoted himself to the study of religious inquiries. He later involved himself in itinerant preaching and the opening of Sabbath-schools. He worked with a certain John Campbell, a very zealous Christian. Haldane and Campbell made successive tours

throughout all Scotland as far as Orkney, and those who were awakened by their preaching were, through the liberality of Mr. Robert Haldane, accommodated with suitable places of worship. James eventually accepted the office of stated pastor in the Tabernacle, Leith Walk, Edinburgh, and in that capacity he laboured for fifty years. Although he vacillated on some points of Church government, he and his brother remained steadfast in their adherence to the general principles of the Scotch Baptists. Although this work is somewhat expensive, it is well worth reading. **C**

PRESS RELEASE

Combined Meeting of the ILPB and the Administration and Marketing Committees held on March 27, 1992, in London, Ontario.

Representing the Men's League:

G. Helder and K. Sikkema

Representing the Women's League:

M. DeGelder and L. Schutten

Representing the Young People's League:

T. Van Raalte

From the Administration Committee:

P. Engbers, T. Heyink,

R. Pieterman, E. Spriensma,

H. Van Middelkoop,

T. Van Middelkoop

From the Marketing Committee:

R. Pieterman

1. The meeting was opened in the usual Christian manner by the Chairman of the ILPB, Mr. G. Helder. Changes in the Administration Committee were noted.
2. Agenda was set and adopted.
3. Minutes of the previous meeting were adopted as presented.
4. Various matters from the minutes were dealt with:
 - a. Feasibility of future publications done in hard cover was discussed. It was felt that this would make the price prohibitive.

b. Advertising in "In Holy Array" will begin in September, 1992.

5. Progress was reported on and discussed:

Galatians: will be ready for sale by end of May.

Philippians: is being made camera-ready by Administrator, will be ready to print by June.

Christ in the Last Judgment: is still with the editor.

Luke vol. 1: is still being edited (re-translated).

Luke vol. 2 & 3: no change.

Acts vol. 1: is still being edited.

Acts vol. 2: is waiting to follow vol. 1.

Colossians: is being edited to prepare for reprint.

Christ in the Family: is being edited to prepare for reprint.

Believe & Confess, vol. 1 & 2: no change.

1 Corinthians: new manuscript by Rev. L. Selles has been input, and is being edited.

Hebrews: final edit almost complete.

Where several volumes of manuscript are indicated, it was decided to publish as one volume.

The reprint of *Christ in the Family* was delayed until finances have eased.

The Board (League representatives) are to investigate new projects in

line with the mandate to provide Bible study material.

Several projects being handled by Pro Ecclesia publishers in Australia were discussed.

6. Sales report was tabled and discussed. Sales are stable, not quite as vigorous as we would like. New marketing strategies should help stimulate sales.

7. Financial report was tabled and discussed. The Board may ask a suitable individual for advice in managing our finances.

8. Marketing report was tabled and new ideas were discussed.

It was decided to initiate sales on several titles of which stock is high. Minor Prophets will be first to go on sales, until mid-summer.

Contact with congregational reps has improved, and will continue to improve. Dialogue will be encouraged with Marketing Committee. Each rep's performance will be monitored.

9. New Administration and Marketing Committee members were constitutionally approved and welcomed. The motion to apply for charitable organizational status was defeated by the Men's League. It was felt that this status would be of a very limited benefit to the ILPB.
10. The Administration Committee was given permission to purchase a

suitable laser printer for layout work on manuscripts.

The ILPB's original copy of WordPerfect was registered and updated to version 5.1. This was necessary to perform desktop publishing functions with the WordPerfect program.

11. Question period was held. Decision was made to allow *Genesis* to go out of print temporarily.

Suggestion was made to publish a newsletter four times a year for marketing purposes.

Subscriptions to Dutch society magazines would not be renewed. Suggestion was made to set up an annual budget.

Notice was made that the long-time, faithful, Board member Martha DeGelder would soon be leaving

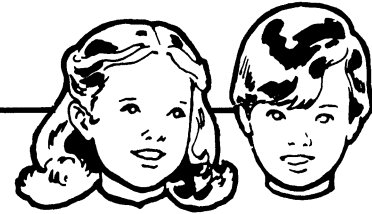
ILPB, as her (5?) consecutive terms will soon expire. Next combined meeting will be her last.

Next combined meeting will be held, D.V., October 2, 1992, at 8 p.m., in Hamilton Canadian Reformed church building.

12. M. DeGelder closed with thanksgiving and prayer. **C**

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

There it was, big as life!

A map of Canada on the pavement of their Geo. R. Allan School yard in Hamilton, Ontario.

The cheering students and their teacher had drawn and painted that huge map there.

The newspaper had taken a picture and everybody could see it.

What a great idea!

What a big country!

What a big celebration now that our country is 125 years old!

And we have so much to celebrate.

Here we live and enjoy so many blessings.

Here our heavenly Father loads us with blessings every single day.

This *big* beautiful country is the place He chose for us.

Here we may live as children of the *King!*

Here we may enjoy His blessings.

Let's always remember where they come from!

Then we'll remember to *share* those blessings and to be really *thankful* for them.

Thankfulness, that's what anniversaries are all about, right?

Happy anniversary, Canada!

Happy 125th!

No wonder those Hamilton kids were so proud of their huge Canada map!



"Guard in Ottawa"
by Busy Beaver
Richard
Oosterhoff

Yes, Richard they will be very busy on Canada Day 1992.

Especially when our Queen Elizabeth II will be there!

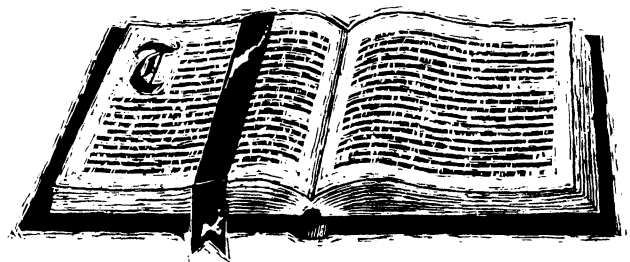
Quiz Time!

FATHERS AND CHILDREN

Can you match the fathers with what they did?

- | | |
|------------|--|
| 1. Aaron | a. in his day first public worship services began. |
| 2. Abraham | b. he and his sons built the ark of gopher wood. |
| 3. Elijah | c. was willing to sacrifice his only son to God. |
| 4. Philip | d. gave orders to his brothers to have his coffin buried in the land of promise. |
| 5. Enosh | e. called Timothy his son in the Lord. |
| 6. Joseph | f. prepared models and material for his son to build God's temple. |
| 7. Zebedee | g. blessed his 12 sons on his deathbed. |
| 8. Paul | h. his sons were to be highpriests. |
| 9. Noah | i. his spiritual son parted the Jordan with his cloak. |
| 10. David | j. his four daughters were prophetesses. |
| 11. Jacob | k. his sons were fishermen who became "fishers of men." |

(See answers)



BIRTHDAY WISHES

Here's hoping all the Busy Beavers celebrating a July birthday have one super day! Have a great time with your family and friends, Busy Beavers.

May our heavenly Father bless and keep you all in the year ahead!

JULY



Brenda Oosterveld	3	Andrea Feenstra	17
Joanna Vink	3	Eric Brown	19
Natalie Veenman	5	Angela Dijkstra	19
Linda Verhey	5	Denise Hoeksema	20
Heather Muis	6	Karen Terpstra	20
Richard Schouten	6	Margaret Nijenhuis	21
Sara Plantinga	7	Vickie Aikema	23
Donald Van Leeuwen	7	Cecilia Barendregt	25
David Aikema	9	Trina Jelsma	26
Tim Hordyk	12	Charmaine Swaving	26
Janine Swaving	12	Julie Van Sydenborg	27
Jeremy Koopmans	14	Nicole Roodzant	30
Henrietta Breukelman	15	Evellyn Bos	31
Rachel Wierenga	15		

FATHER'S DAY MAIL-IN

Your Dad is special, right?

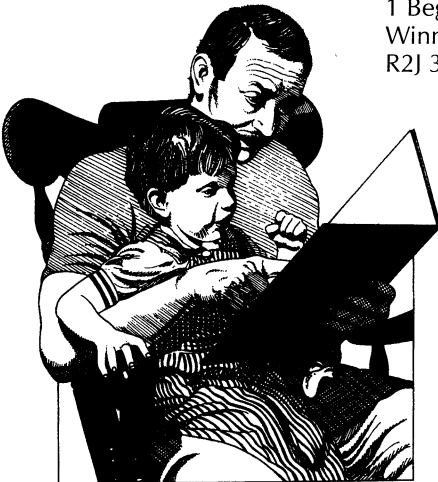
So how did you let him know you love him?

Please share your *Father's Day story* (long or short) with the Busy Beavers.

You will earn a reward!

Please send your story to:

Special Dads
c/o Busy Beaver Club
Premier Printing Ltd.
1 Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2J 3X5



Thank you, thank you to all the Busy Beavers who sent in their pictures.

I really enjoyed them!

Some were big, some small.

Some were very pretty. Others were very interesting!

It was *very hard* to choose the winners!

Here they are:

SENIOR WINNER: Busy Beaver *Michelle Hordyk* with second prizes to Busy Beaver *Jason Vandeburgt* and Busy Beaver *Jessica DeHaas*.

JUNIOR WINNER: Busy Beaver *Miranda Barendregt*
Congratulations to you all!

Thanks again to all the Busy Beavers who participated. I'm already looking forward to our *next* picture contest!

Answers

1. h 2. c 3. ! 4. j 5. a 6. d 7. k 8. e 9. b 10. f 11. 8
"Fathers and Children"



From the mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Linda Ludwig*. I hope you soon get a pen pal. I would have to hear from you if you do, Linda. Bye for now.

A big welcome to you, too, *Esther Snyder*. Thank you for the pretty puzzle. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already! Write again soon!

Welcome to the Club *Breanne Meyer*. You are lucky to have so many pals to play with, Breanne. Do you still write to your best friend?

Hello, *Heidi Dehaan*. Thank you for a pretty picture and poem, along with your letter. It was nice to hear from you again. Sounds as if your school had a real *talent evening*, Heidi!

Thanks for the riddles and the picture, *David Aikema*. Sounds to me as if you really keep busy! Is your fort finished now, David?

You are a good puzzler, *Vickie Aikema*! How are your plants doing? Did you put them in the garden? Thank you for the jokes and riddles. I think you mean to keep us all busy, Vickie!

Pen Pals Wanted!

Breanne Meyer
313 Nicholas Cr.
Aldergrove, B.C.
VOX 1A0

Linda Ludwig
2115 Glanaster Rd.
Mount Hope, ON.
LOR 1W0

I want to wish you all very safe and very happy holidays, Busy Beavers!

Bye for now.

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

