

A black and white photograph of a park scene. In the foreground, there is a dark, calm pond that reflects the trees and sky. The middle ground is filled with a variety of trees, some with bare branches and others with sparse leaves. In the background, a fence and more trees are visible under a bright sky. The overall atmosphere is serene and quiet.

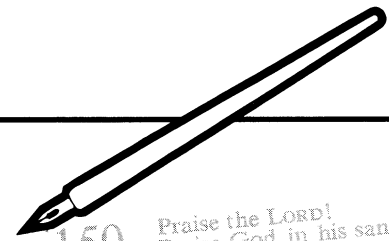
Clarion

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By J. Geertsema



Psalms, Hymns and Spiritual Songs

A Suggestion to our Choirs – Sing our Psalms and Hymns

Singing in joy to the LORD

Music and singing can lift up and bring joy to the heart. Music can calm down, but it can also stir up. David's music calmed the turmoil in the mind of King Saul. On the other hand, the beat and rhythm of music can stir people up to wild debauching dancing, as happens with certain kinds of rock and roll. The connection between rock and roll music and rebellion and illicit sex is obvious.

Not even a century ago music and song could only be heard live. Today, with the modern electronic media, music has become a mass product. Radio, television, and audio and video tapes bring music into our homes whenever and wherever we want.

Much of this mass music is far from holy. Often both the lyrics and the music show total disregard for God and God's commandments. They fit in and generate a sinful atmosphere. There are, especially for the youth and their so-called youth culture, the Music Television and the Much Music programs with rock music and dancing. The antithesis between God and Satan, between church and world, between holy and unholy, applies to music too.

God's Word speaks about singing and making melody in a positive way. Singing and making melody were part of the temple worship. The Book of Psalms, in particular, combines joy and singing, as well as praise to God and playing musical instruments. The New Testament shows the same combination when Paul writes to the Ephesian believers, "Do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father" (Eph. 5:18-20, cf. also Col. 3:16, 17).

The apostle of Christ writes through the Holy Spirit. Thus, singing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, and making melody are means, given by God, for giving thanks to God for all God's gifts. Giving thanks to God and living in the joy of faith belong together. This joy in the LORD results from listening to His Word. Listening can be done not only when reading, but also when God's Word is sung, specifically in psalms and biblical hymns. We can do this alone or by singing along with a tape or record. Either way God receives praise from a thankful heart. In this way God's children do on earth what they will later do in heaven. The

Book of Revelation says that the Bride of the Lamb will sing praises to God and His Christ (read, for instance, Rev. 5, 7, 15, 19).

In the word of the apostle Paul to the Ephesians something strikes our attention. The singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs is connected with being filled with the Holy Spirit. Paul says first, "Be filled not with wine but with the Holy Spirit." Then he adds, "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." When we are filled with the Holy Spirit, we will speak to one another with psalms and hymns, thereby giving thanks to God. (The Holy Spirit is not present when wine and other alcoholic drinks are in our blood and cloud our brain.) This being filled with the Holy Spirit is commanded by the apostle when he says, "Be filled with the Holy Spirit." Paul then goes on to say that this must be accompanied by the singing of psalms and hymns in which God is praised.

Besides the fact that we have a command here, there is the aspect of the church. Paul says that, being filled with the Holy Spirit, we are to address one another in or with psalms and hymns. This "addressing one another" points to the church as the communion of the saints. Families in the church are also part of this communion. Our conclusion can be that the Lord teaches us here that we, as church people, are to sing and make melody together in order to build each other up in the faith and help each other to live in thankful joy in the LORD. One can say that this singing and making melody is part of our worship services. This is correct. It is a rich part. However, the singing of psalms and hymns and making melody should not be restricted to the worship services. Just as our fathers did in earlier centuries, we can enrich and build up our Christian life by doing more of this singing and making melody. These things count for us personally, as well as for our families.

The challenge

Therefore, let us make use of the modern electronic means available to us to intensify this singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs in our lives. Let us use them to increase our joy in the LORD as a common treasure, and, at the same time, build up our holy living for the LORD personally and in fellowship with each other. Let us purchase tapes or even CDs with psalms and hymns and fill our homes with these melodies and songs.

Are such records and tapes and compact discs available?

They are. For many years already records and tapes, and now also CDs, with psalms and other spiritual songs in the Dutch language have been made in the Netherlands. Male and mixed choirs sing the well-known psalms beautifully. They are a joy to listen to and sing along with. Inheritance Publications in Neerlandia, Alberta, for instance, makes them available to us.

However, we live in English-speaking North America. Should we not have the psalms and hymns available to us in the English language? In the course of the years a number of records and tapes have been made by church and school choirs, many of which were recorded by br. Harpert VanderWel of Burlington, Ontario. They are also available for general enjoyment.

What can be done to make this more of a reality? In the first place, together we must show that we want to listen to this singing and making melody of psalms and spiritual songs. We have to buy what is available and ask for more. In the second place, let our choirs make the singing of psalms and hymns an important part of their program. Is it not possible to do here in North America what has been done and is still being done in the Netherlands? The singing of psalms and hymns to the glory of God and for the joy in the Lord will greatly serve the communion of saints.

Let us remain Reformed, also in our music and singing to the glory of God. Let not the music of the world characterize our homes. May this be a challenge for the communion of saints as a whole and also for our choirs. **C**

Educating our children within the communion of saints – whose task is it?¹

By C. Van Dam

Slightly changed text of an introduction given at a meeting of the Parent-Teachers Association for the John Calvin School in Smithville on April 3, 1992. I have benefited from discussing some of the issues with Mr. T.M.P. VanderVen, principal of Covenant Canadian Reformed Teachers' College.

Anyone who is not a stranger to the Bible and the Reformed way of life knows that educating our children in the fear of the Lord is a holy God-given task that falls in the first place on the shoulders of the parents. Did we as parents not all individually promise at the baptismal font to instruct our children in this doctrine as soon as they are able to understand? Yet, we also have schools. How do we relate the two responsibilities, those of parent and teacher? What does educating our children within the communion of saints entail? What about, for example, home schooling?

In order to introduce this topic to you this evening, let us first go through the key biblical and related evidence and subsequently turn to current issues.

The parent in the Old Testament

The primary responsibility of parents is clear from the Old Testament. Already of Abraham God says: "I have chosen him that he may charge his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD by doing righteousness and justice; so that the LORD may bring to Abraham what He has promised him" (Gen. 18:19). The LORD's words in Deut. 6:6-9 are well known:

⁶And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; ⁷and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise. ⁸And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

In like manner we read in Ps. 78 that the LORD established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel,

which He commanded our fathers to teach to their children; ⁶that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, ⁷so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments. Thus the parents had the holy obligation to teach their offspring the way and will of the LORD! This concerns both parents, father and mother. Think of the admonition in Prov. 1:8. "Hear, my son, your father's instruction, and reject not your mother's teaching" (also cf. Prov. 31:1). The parents stand at the forefront in the great task of moulding and shaping their children after the image of Father in heaven. Though the children are born in the image of their sinful parents, they are God's children, and the Lord wants to use the parents for the renewal of their children in Christ.

Other teachers?

Were the parents the only teachers of Israel's youth or were there also professional teachers? Not that much is explicitly stated in the Old Testament. This

relative silence is, of course, not surprising since it is not the purpose of Scripture to inform us of such details. There are a number of factors that we should, however, take into consideration. We do know that the tribe of Levi, particularly the priests, were charged with teaching Israel the ordinances and laws of God (Deut. 33:10; 31:10-13; Lev. 10:11). We may, therefore, assume that the Levitical cities (cf. Num. 35:1-8; Josh. 21) functioned as important centres of learning. Furthermore, prophets were involved in education by teaching and preaching. Scripture informs us of prophets who lived together in various places as “sons of the prophets” under the leadership of Elijah and later Elisha (2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15; 6:1-2; cf. 1 Kings 20:35; Isaiah 8:16). We can assume that these so-called “schools of the prophets” had an educational function in keeping alive the knowledge and worship of the true God in the northern tribes in a time of apostasy. A similar situation seems to have existed earlier in the days of Samuel with the destruction of Shiloh. Bands of prophets were then active (1 Sam. 10:9-13; cf. 3:1; also see 19:20). Later Isaiah can speak about his teaching and disciples (Isaiah 8:16; cf. Ezek. 33:30-33). Finally, wisemen can be mentioned as being involved in education (cf. the Book of Proverbs and Eccl. 12:9-12), although here too not that much is known about them or their activities.

But did schools exist, more or less as we know them? Are the above not geared more to the “religious”? What about schools with a broader curriculum? To begin with, it would appear that one must not underestimate the importance of the Levitical cities as centres of learning. Although the Levites were charged by God to teach His revelation to His people (Deut. 33:10), there are factors that could suggest that instruction did not stop there. After all, the Levitical cities apparently served as administrative centres and Levites had responsibilities in “the affairs of the king” (1 Chron. 26:29-32). It would be most reasonable if at least some of the Levitical cities included scribal schools which besides writing skills also taught administration and other skills necessary to keep the royal bureaucracy going. Such schools existed in Egypt and Mesopotamia as early as the third millennium B.C. There is no reason to suppose that Israel was a primitive society without such institutions. Literacy was widely spread. Think, for example, of

the young man of Succoth who was able to write down the seventy-seven names of the officials and elders of that city for Gideon (Judges 8:14; also cf., e.g., Joshua 18:4, 8-9).¹ Furthermore, school exercises dating from before the first millennium BC to the exile have been found in Israel.² Also, judging from architectural and related evidence throughout Israel, technical education must have been available in Israel as well.³ It is, therefore, not surprising that most scholars appear to agree that education outside the home took place in schools in ancient Israel.⁴

The first actual mention of schools occurs in the apocryphal book Sirach (51:23) and can be dated about 190-175 BC.⁵ The Synagogue became the centre of public Jewish education since that is where the law was taught. There is evidence to suggest that compulsory attendance at elementary schools was established by the first century BC.⁶ There does not seem to be any doubt that in New Testament times most children attended elementary school (to age 15).⁷

The character of education outside the home

One of the aspects of the subject of education that makes it difficult is that teachers are rarely called as such in the Bible. References to teachers do occur. I think of Prov. 5:13: “I did not listen to the voice of my teachers or incline my ear to my instructors,” or, Ps. 119:99, “I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Thy testimonies are my medication.” These passages are, however, the exception. Often teachers are referred to by a term that reminds us of the family circle, the term “father” and students are called “sons.” When David wanted to give the term “father” and students are called “sons.” When David wanted to give instruction, he set himself up as father. “Come, O sons and listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the LORD” (Ps. 34:11). These sons are not his natural offspring, but are the saints (cf. v. 9). When Elijah was taken up into heaven by a whirlwind, Elisha cried: “My father! my father! the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!” (2 Kings 2:12). The meaning of the term “father” used here certainly includes the meaning of teacher, especially when one considers that Elisha was a student of Elijah and that the students of the prophetic schools were called the “sons of the prophets” (cf. 2 Kings 2:3, 5). We can also think here of Christ’s call-

ing the students of the Pharisees who perform exorcisms “sons of the Pharisees” (see Matt. 12:27). Paul, a student of Gamaliel, a Pharisee, calls himself “a son of the Pharisees” (Acts 23:6).⁸

Now it is remarkable that in the book of Proverbs we cannot always tell whether the natural father or the teacher father is referred to. In Prov. 1:8 it is clear: “Hear, my son, your father’s instruction, and reject not your mother’s teaching.” Elsewhere it is not so obvious. As a matter of fact, it is widely agreed that when the “son” is addressed then we should usually think of the teacher-father who instructs him and not the natural father.⁹ (So, e.g., 1:2ff.; 3:1, 11, 21; 4:10, 20; 5:1; 6:1; 7:1 etc.) The fact that some of the passages are open to debate whether it is indeed the natural father or the teacher father who is speaking indicates that in a sense the distinction between the two types of fathers is in Proverbs somewhat blurred. The use of this parental terminology underlines the fact that the parental character of the education to be received is essentially the same, whether received at home or at school. This important point is underlined by the common purpose of education at home and at a school. About that, the next time, D.V.

¹Cf. A. Millard, “An Assessment of the Evidence for Writing in Ancient Israel,” in *Biblical Archaeology Today. Proceedings of the International Congress on Biblical Archaeology, Jerusalem, April 1984* (1985), 301-312, esp. 308.

²See A. Lemaire, *Les Écoles et la Formation de la Bible dans l’ancien Israël* (1981) 7-33. Cf. Isaiah 28:9-13 which seems to allude to a classroom setting.

³B.S.J. Isserlin, “Israelite Architectural Planning and the Question of the Level of Secular Learning in Ancient Israel,” *Vetus Testamentum* 34 (1984) 169-179.


⁴See A. Lemaire, “The Sage in School and Temple,” in J.G. Gammie and L.G. Perdue, eds., *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (1990) 167.

⁵Lemaire, “The Sage in School and Temple,” 166.

⁶S. Safari, “Education and the Study of the Torah,” in S. Safari and M. Stern, eds., *The Jewish People in the First Century* (1976) 947-948.

⁷See A.W. Morton, “Education in Biblical Times,” *Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible*, II, 211.

⁸See C. Van Dam, “A School of Sons and Daughters,” *Clarion* 24:9 (1975) 2-4.

⁹See, e.g., W.H. Gispen, *Spreuken* (1952) I, 25. 

Using our Creeds in Philosophy

By Theodore Plantinga

Subscribers to *Clarion* have twice had the opportunity to read some reflections and observations about my recent book *Christian Philosophy Within Biblical Bounds*. In the issues of August 30 and September 3, 1991, Prof. N.H. Gootjes, a systematic theologian who also teaches a course in philosophy as part of his duties on behalf of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches, discussed it under the heading "A book about Christian philosophy." And in the year-end issue for 1991, Mr. Steve Foster, who also appears to be well acquainted with philosophy, devoted some attention to the book under the title "Christian philosophy."

I have the impression that both men would like me to have said something about *creedal* bounds for philosophy – and perhaps about a *creedal* basis as well. Prof. Gootjes asks: "Would it not be good to use the confession of the church in philosophy, in order to maintain this connection with the whole of biblical doctrine?" (p. 408). Mr. Foster speaks of "utilizing the creeds and confessions" and appeals to "the protecting context of the creeds and confessions" (p. 570). He explains: "Without this context, Christians have good reason to mistrust and shy away from philosophy. For philosophy, approached and studied from outside of the protecting context we are referring to, is rooted in pagan and secular culture" (p. 571).

In this article I will respond to the question posed by Gootjes and Foster. In the process I'll stay away from philosophical terminology that would not be familiar to readers of *Clarion* who have never had the opportunity to study philosophy.

As we consider this general issue, we should bear in mind that in Reformed circles, philosophers are often regarded as distressingly broad-minded on all sorts of issues relating to the arts, society, and even church affairs: to some they might appear to scorn "the protecting context of the creeds and confessions." (I think, for example, of Dr.

Hendrik Hart of the Institute for Christian Studies, who is a controversial figure.) Hence my conservative reputation in my own community makes me an unusual philosopher. But I did not always have such a reputation. It has come my way in the last decade or so mainly because of the church struggle that is now coming to a head in my own community (the Christian Reformed churches), a struggle in which I felt I had no choice but to speak up as a *church member*. If I am perceived as conservative on political and theological issues and on church affairs, it is not *because* I make my living as a philosopher (I teach philosophy at Redeemer College) but in spite of this fact.

The slight degree of uneasiness which Reformed people often feel about philosophers has a good deal to

do with the fact that philosophers draw on a very wide range of sources. Whereas the Christian *theologian* relies heavily on Scripture, creeds and other materials that have been generated within Christendom, the Christian *philosopher* draws in addition on all sorts of writings and ideas external to Christendom, including natural science, human experience as reflected in the arts, the writings of psychologists and anthropologists, and speculative works of many kinds. If he is to take these writings seriously in the sense of learning something from them, he must be broad-minded by nature. If he were not, he could not feel at home in the intellectual milieu within which philosophy operates, a milieu in which we are regularly confronted with unusual ideas. (Think of Acts 17 and the



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picture it paints of Athens, that great city of the philosophers: "Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.")

Thus, if you are acquainted with a Christian philosopher, you may be surprised at the sorts of things he reads and the range of questions to which he devotes serious attention: you might even conclude that he is a bit peculiar.

Christian philosophy is also broad in terms of its intended audience. Much of what is written within the framework of Christian *theology* contains terms and presuppositions that make the material difficult to grasp for people who stand outside the Christian tradition. In other words, the Christian theologian tends to present his thoughts within a vocabulary *specific to his tradition*. But the Christian *philosopher* addresses a wider world. While he may – and presumably should – use some terms which are not recognized within the secular vocabulary (how else could he talk about creation?), he does have an obligation to enter into dialogue with thinkers and scientists outside his own tradition, a dialogue in which he must try to make his ideas clear to people who do not accept them. Theology stands at the core of the Christian intellectual community; philosophy is more of a mediator between that core and the secular world that stands incomprehensibly outside.

Now, some Christian philosophers carry these tasks and responsibilities too far, in my judgment. It could almost be said that they pride themselves on *not* referring to the historic creeds of Protestant Christianity, and that they are embarrassed to quote from the Bible or refer to it in their writings. Some even seem to think that they can operate successfully without much knowledge of Scripture and the creeds of the churches. Such a mode of operation is a mistake, in my judgment.

There are also Christian philosophers who, in their desire to be as broad as possible and to be understood outside their own community, downplay their connection with their own church and creedal tradition. I think of Herman Dooyeweerd, who at first was happy to identify himself as a *Calvinistic* philosopher, but later wished to be known simply as a *Christian* philosopher. Now, the desire to have Christians in other traditions, such as Catholicism and Lutheranism, study one's works is understandable, but it should not lead to any sort of denial of one's roots and sources. No

philosopher who is Reformed ought in any way to deny or hide that fact: indeed, in many cases one's Dutch name is a giveaway! I read the works of Roman Catholic philosophers, and I have studied under Roman Catholic professors during my university days. I hope that Catholics read what I and other Reformed philosophers have written.

It is generally acknowledged that the most influential Protestant philosopher in North America today is Alvin Plantinga (a distant cousin of mine), who teaches at Notre Dame University in Indiana. Plantinga's position on Christian philosophy has been worked out in close collaboration with his old friend and former classmate Nicholas Wolterstorff, who now teaches at Yale University's Divinity School. Both these men were my teachers when I was a student at Calvin College in the 1960s and were my colleagues when I taught at Calvin before coming to Redeemer. Thus I have watched their position develop over the years and have learned from it. They deserve a good deal of credit for making the notion of a Christian philosophy more credible in our time.

While there are some differences between these two thinkers, the common core of ideas through which their names have come to be linked is their defense of the integrity of Christian experience and belief, which needs no justification from reason or experience or science. The believer, they maintain, is "rationally justified," as philosophers like to say, in supposing that there is a God, and so forth. But in spelling out their position, they place too much emphasis on *man and his experience*, which then tends to be thought of as autonomous, and not enough on *God's revelation*, which we must accept as authoritative.

Wolterstorff's key book on Christian philosophy is entitled *Reason Within the Bounds of Religion*. He maintains that our fundamental convictions as Christians must be allowed to set limits to what we will accept in terms of scientific theories ("reason"). I agree, but I would prefer to see the point reformulated: what must come first and receive the emphasis is the given revelation, which is in turn the source of what we believe. Therefore I would rather speak of Christian philosophy (and the scientific work undertaken by Christians) as proceeding *within Biblical bounds*. I fear that Wolterstorff's formulation leaves room for subjectivism.

It is at this juncture that the comments of Gootjes and Foster come into play. Could one not make *the creeds*,

such as the Three Forms of Unity of the Reformed churches, perhaps supplemented by the three ecumenical creeds, part of the basis (Foster prefers to speak of "context") for Christian philosophy? To answer this question properly, we must bring education into the picture as well. The fact of the matter is that most people today who function as Christian philosophers are teachers in colleges or universities of one sort or another. Therefore the question of the creeds can first be formulated in terms of their role in relation to their teaching duties. Is the Christian philosopher, as a teacher (or professor), bound to the creeds and directed by them in his work?

This question can be answered first of all on the factual level. When I taught philosophy at Calvin College, I had to sign the form of subscription, as all Christian Reformed officebearers do, for the College is owned and operated by the churches and functions as a denominational agency. Alvin Plantinga and Nicholas Wolterstorff, of course, did the same thing when they were Calvin professors. At Redeemer I signed no such form, although in signing my employment contract I was formally promising to work within the "Statement of Basis and Principles." More recently Redeemer has moved to another approach to this matter of "binding" professors, one which I do not understand and will not try to explain here. But Christian teachers generally have to signify in writing that they assent to something or other which the school accepts as basis and foundation.

In the Christian Reformed community, there has been talk for decades that the Three Forms of Unity are largely irrelevant to education, however helpful they may be for churches. I have never been of this persuasion; I believe that a Christian school ought to include the Reformed creeds in its basis and ask teachers to do their work in harmony with them, as is the practice in schools established by Canadian Reformed people. I was part of the group of people who laid a basis for Redeemer College in the 1970s: in the course of that work, I made my position on this matter known. It was supported by others in the group, but we did not carry the day. Thus Redeemer operates with what amounts to an "educational creed."

If someone therefore asks me whether my work as a Christian philosopher at Redeemer is "bound to the Reformed creeds," I must answer factually and say no. But that does not mean that the creeds are out of the picture for me. Am I bound to the creeds in my

role as a husband and father? Clearly not in any organizational sense, but as one who has made public profession of his faith on the basis of those creeds, the link with the creeds is relevant for everything I do, including the teaching of philosophy at Redeemer. But faculty members at Redeemer who do not belong to Reformed churches would probably not be able to make such a statement about the relation of their own work to the creeds.

My practice in my teaching is to make considerable reference to both Scripture and the creeds. If I happen to be making a philosophical point that is in harmony with what this or that creed says, I sometimes quote the creed or give a reference to the section in question. Because many of our students come from non-Reformed churches, I usually identify the creed from which I am quoting as one of the doctrinal standards of the Dutch Reformed churches: sometimes I add that I am a member of such a church, and that therefore the creed in question is also my own confession. Occasionally a student wants to know why he is being subjected to Reformed creeds in my classes. I answer simply that the charter given to Redeemer by the Government of Ontario specifically identifies the College as Reformed (its full name is Redeemer Reformed Christian College) and that I am therefore within my rights to make appeals to the Reformed creeds in my lectures. Sometimes I also appeal to other creeds, such as the Westminster Confession, which I then identify as a doctrinal standard of the Presbyterian churches.

I'm sure this practice on my part will sound commendable to the readers of *Clarion*. In fairness I should mention that it cannot be done in the same way – or perhaps to the same extent – by those who teach college-level courses in such areas as accounting, computer science, French grammar, mathematics, and English composition. If I refer to the Reformed creeds more often than certain of my Redeemer colleagues, this does not make me more Reformed than they are.

There is some truth to the claim that the creeds are not directly relevant to certain of the activities undertaken within Christian educational institutions. To be an effective Christian teacher, it does not suffice to be faithful to the Reformed creeds when thinking about the matters which the creeds address. One also needs to do some careful thinking about issues *specific to the subject-matter* being taught, even if it

is accounting. One way to do this, of course, is to pay attention to what other Christians working in the same field have written, and to exchange ideas with them.

It is often observed that the creeds arise out of specific historical circumstances (think especially of the Canons of Dort) and therefore address themselves especially to certain questions of their time, which may not be the major questions of today. When we reflect on this limitation of the creeds, we come to see that it is helpful to be knowledgeable about theology in addition. Now, theology is also a difficult field of study, as ministers can tell you when they think back on their seminary training. Nonetheless, theology, as an academic or scholarly discipline, is very valuable for bridging the gap of some centuries between the Reformed creeds and the questions of today. Therefore, I maintain that a teacher or professor in a Reformed institution needs to know both the creeds and theology – not as well as the theology professor, of course, but to a substantially greater extent than the ordinary church member. He needs that extra knowledge of theology to bridge the gap between the creeds and his own academic discipline.

I don't believe this is an unreasonable requirement. I know many Christian teachers and professors who are not theologians but nevertheless have a good grasp of theological questions. Someone who is able to master the intricacies of chemistry or French litera-

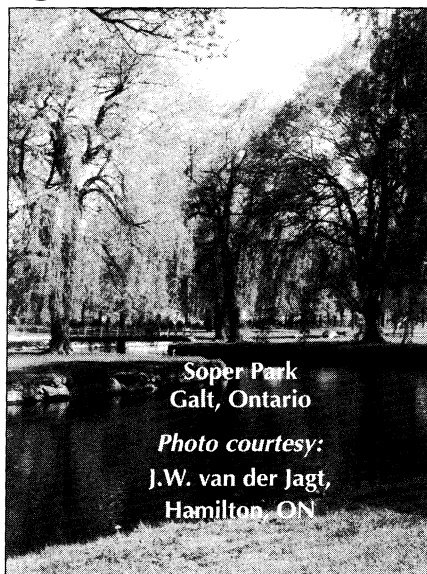
ture and earn a Ph.D. in the subject also has the intellectual capacity to learn theology and can be expected to devote some free time to extra reading in the subject. And to learn theology well in order to see what is at issue in certain controversies, one must not only learn orthodoxy and one's own tradition, but also have some knowledge of the major alternatives, e.g. Roman Catholic thought, contemporary Protestant liberalism, and neo-orthodoxy. While I was in college, I took an excellent course in contemporary (liberal) theology from which I benefitted greatly. In this course taught by Prof. Lewis Smedes, we studied the fathers of liberal thought (especially Lessing and Schleiermacher) and also took up more recent figures, such as Rudolf Bultmann and H.M. Kuitert. Studying Protestant liberalism helped me to gain a deeper appreciation of the Reformed creeds.

Today I would add that a professor needs some knowledge of the theology and philosophy embodied in the major religious traditions that are challenging Christianity all over the world, such as Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. A Christian professor should be an amateur theologian, one who can explain the essentials of Reformed thinking to a person from another stream of Christianity, or even to a Buddhist. But what I am often told at Redeemer is that a professor is responsible mainly for Reformed thinking *in his own discipline*. As long as he is Reformed in his approach to computer science or economics or art, he is living up to his calling as a Christian teacher.

Theology is my first love, academically speaking. Just as Christian theology and Christian philosophy interacted and fertilized one another throughout the Middle Ages, so they must do today. Thus, to be a successful Christian philosopher, one must stay in touch with theological developments. A thorough knowledge of the Reformed creeds fits in naturally here. Such is my practice. But my current teaching role does not "bind" me to the creeds officially.

In conclusion, then, I believe that I do practice what Gootjes and Foster would have me practice: I work within the "context" of the creeds and allow myself to be guided by them in my use of Scripture. If there is a disagreement between us, it lies in what I say – or perhaps don't say, or even decline to say – about Christian philosophy in general. **C**

OUR COVER



Soper Park
Galt, Ontario
Photo courtesy:
J.W. van der Jagt,
Hamilton, ON

— Reaction to Dr. Plantinga

By N.H. Gootjes

Some time ago I received the preceding article of Dr. Plantinga. It is his reaction to an article which I wrote in the Sept. 1991 issue in *Clarion*, and to an article by Mr. Steve Foster, published in December of that year. After consultation it has been decided that I would react briefly to it. Mr. Foster may take up the discussion later and in a different context.

Since it is so long ago that I asked my question to Dr. Plantinga, let me repeat it here. I asked Dr. Plantinga whether it would not be good to use the confessions of the church when one is studying philosophy. In that connection I was especially concerned with avoiding one-sidedness. No one should pick those doctrines out of the Bible which he likes, leaving the others aside. In order to escape the danger of one-sidedness it is very important to bind oneself to all doctrines, as they are summarized in the confession of the church.


I had a special reason for asking this question. In some circles in Canada it was denied that the confessions of the church can be used when we study.

It was emphasized that the confessions of the church are at the same time limited to the church. For schools they cannot function, a special educational confession should be made to regulate the teaching at schools.

From Dr. Plantinga's article it appears that such a school confession, an educational creed, functions at Redeemer College, where he teaches. He also indicates that he himself thinks that the Reformed creeds ought to be used. He tried, with others, to have this included but failed. As a result the College does not oblige him to work within the Reformed confessions.

Dr. Plantinga continues that someone who has made public profession of faith is bound to the confessions in everything he does. This means for him that the link with the creeds is relevant also for teaching philosophy. I am glad with this answer, for in this way the confessions state the norm after which philosophy should be studied (and not only philosophy, of course, also accounting, art and French literature).

I do not mind it if a philosopher draws on a wide range of sources. He may draw on everything that is available to him, and include far more than theology would ever dream of doing. But it would be a problem if Scripture no longer functions as a norm to evaluate the material found in all those sources. Dr. Plantinga emphasized this critical function of Scripture when he called his book *Christian Philosophy Within Biblical Bounds*. Agreed.

The next step is then to make concrete those "biblical bounds." This is done in the confessions of the church, there we find briefly formulated what the Bible says on some fundamental issues. We hold to the Reformed expression: The Scripture alone. The only basis to build on, is Scripture. At the same time, how often does Scripture function as a vague generality to which even a polite Hindu would agree. It is therefore important to add that the confessions show what the "Biblical Bounds" are. 

Regional Women's Society Meeting – April 22, 1992

The Role of Women in the Church Titus 2:3-6

By Jackie Bultje

The topic of the role of women in the church usually causes quite a stir. It is a controversial topic on which people have many and varied opinions. Even the main-line churches cannot agree on the proper role of women in the church. One of the major problems is that people often have preconceived ideas and then turn to the Scriptures to prove their ideas to be correct. This is obviously the wrong approach. We must guard against conforming Scriptures to our opinions. "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to

test and approve what God's will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will" (Eph. 12:2 NIV).

Let us then look in the Scriptures to see what God's will is for our lives as women in the body of believers. We will see first *what* Paul is saying to Titus concerning women; second, *why* this is so very important, and third, *how* we can apply this in our lives.

What is Paul saying to Titus? He first addresses two vices that were very prevalent among the women of Crete: slander and alcohol abuse. First century culture greatly admired heavy drinkers; it was something to be proud

of rather than ashamed of. Christian women are urged to set a different example. The Cretan women were also known especially for their gossiping. Gossip is strongly denounced throughout the Bible, and it is a sin of which each one of us is guilty. "Beware of your friends, do not trust your brothers. For every brother is a deceiver and every friend a slanderer" (Jer. 9:4 NIV). James, in chapter 4:11, tells us not to slander one another. When speaking of the qualifications for deacons, Timothy states in 1 Tim. 3:11, "In the same way their wives (other translations read 'deaconesses') are to be worthy of respect,

not malicious talkers, but temperate and trustworthy in everything." We are to lead a holy life. In demeanour we are to be what would be fitting for temple service. We are to be *holy* and pure for in our lives we are to serve God in everything we do.

The older women are told to be *reverent* (worthy of respect) in the way they live *so that* they can train the younger women primarily by their good example. The Greek word used for "train" refers to informal teaching by word and example.

There are two problems with the concept of older women training the younger women. On the one hand the younger women want what the older women had with respect to a stable, happy family life, but they are unwilling to make the "sacrifices" that the older women have made, i.e. staying at home to work, taking along children whenever possible (few babysitters), and firm, consistent discipline. On the other hand it is sometimes hard to find such an older woman who is willing to give assistance. They are busy with new career plans or retirement plans. They hop into the Winnebago and vanish over the horizon. They have no time for their daughters' babies or to give housecleaning lessons or cooking tips, or to hold a new couple's hand while they adjust to married life.

The younger women are to love their husbands and children, to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands.

Two phrases here are often difficult to understand and accept. What is meant by "to be busy at home"? The Greek word used here, *oikourgos*, is a rare word that literally means "homeworking" and describes one whose calling it is to work in the home at household tasks. I can already hear your reactions. What boredom. What drudgery. What about equal rights? Will it fulfill me? What do I get out of it? We should not ask those questions. God speaks to us. We should only ask "How do I do it Lord?" The true fulfillment is only possible for those who know God, for He gives fulfillment in any circumstances. As Christians our fulfillment and satisfaction is found in obedience to God. To God be the glory! Homeworking does not have to be stifling or boring. Just read Proverbs 31 for a different and diverse view of housewifery!

The other so-called stumbling block is the phrase "to be subject to your hus-

bands." Who wants to be a doormat? But this is not what God asks of us. If we look at Ephesians 5:22 "Wives, submit to your husbands *as to the Lord*." In submitting to our husbands we are submitting to the will of God for our lives. Our husbands likewise are to submit to God's will and are to love their wives *as Christ loved the church*. That's a tall order too. So we see an aspect of mutual submission – we yield our own rights in obedience to God. Malachi 2:14 states that husbands and wives are partners. Partnership means that God determines our roles and our goals, and both parties submit to God.

So we see, there are different roles for women of different ages. Younger women are primarily busy in their own home with their own family. Older women now have a broader perspective, with particular emphasis on service within the communion of saints. *Why is this so very important?* So that no one will malign the Word of God. To malign means to speak ill of, to slander. Outsiders should not only refrain from blaspheming or maligning the gospel, but should actually be attracted to it by the believers' behaviour (Tit. 2:10). This is witnessing by our walk of life. We should be bold and very clear in this witnessing. We are God's treasured possession (Deut. 26:18) who should be eager to do good – full of zeal to do good works – which are the proper response to God's grace revealed and made effective in the saving death of Jesus Christ.

How can we apply this to our lives? This is the hard part. It is one thing to read Scriptures and to understand what it is saying to us.

It is quite another to take this knowledge and submit to it and to change our lives and habits accordingly.

1 Tim. 5:13-14 speaks of younger widows (but it applies to each one of us) who "get into the habit of being idle and going about from house to house. And not only do they become idlers, but also gossips and busybodies, saying things they ought not to" (NIV). Paul gets right to the point, doesn't he? Things haven't changed all that much over the centuries.

We must build one another up in Christ. Gossip tears apart and is far from upbuilding. The elimination of gossip from our lives must be a daily struggle and we must help each other also by refusing to *listen* to gossip. Listening to gossip is just as bad as gossiping. The most fun in gossiping is the eager audi-

ence you get. Bad habits must be replaced with good ones. Praise each other; speak of God's goodness in your life. Boast in the Lord!

In Titus 2 the word "self-controlled" is used four times. Self-control relates to chastity and purity as opposed to drunkenness and carousing. It is essentially a fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23). As the NIV Bible Dictionary states, "this passion to be good soldiers of Christ expresses itself not in excess but in sober discipline, it is the true imitation of the Master, whose life was the very mirror of temperance." Do our life styles reflect this temperance, or do we tend more to excess in all manner of things? Now you might say, "I never get drunk or party excessively," but are you pure and chaste in the way you dress, speak and act. Does your entertainment and leisure time compare to this model of temperance and purity?

What about working outside the home? We must closely examine our reasons for doing this. Is it truly God's will for our life? In doing so are we giving God greater glory than by homeworking? Does working outside the home cause you to sacrifice things that should not be sacrificed, such as private devotional time with the Lord, time spent with your children, whom you promised to raise in the fear of the Lord, yourself along with your husband? What about involvement with Bible Study Societies, volunteering for the church and the school and other worthy organizations that seek to bring light into this dark world?

What about separate Women's Societies? Is this really based only on the language differences? The older people in the church are needed to share the biblical parts of their experience and expertise. They should not retire and make way for the younger ones but should teach them. What about the many older and younger women who do not even regularly attend a Bible study society? Are they that much more diligent in their personal Bible study at home?

Do we not see a similar situation with respect to involvement in church committees: nursery committee, Willing Workers, Vacation Bible School, Home Mission, etc.? Do we see the young women being trained by the older women? Or have the older ones "done their share" and are now comfortably settling in for a well-deserved "break"?

Doubtless you will ask "You haven't mentioned anything about the role of women *in the church*. No. You are right. Women can be very active in church life, but their primary and most important role is in the home. If that role is fulfilled in obedience to God then the women will be raising their children in the fear of the Lord, in all godliness, teaching them daily also by her obedient example to serve God *joyfully*. By nurturing and leading God's children to Christ and for service in His kingdom, she is performing one of the most important roles in the church.

Indeed the Bible teaches a distinct role for women, which is different from that of a man and *just as important*. Having the talent to do something doesn't mean that you should therefore

do it. For example, I can preach, therefore I should. The same talent can be used in different ways. 1 Cor. 12:6 states that there are different kinds of service, different roles. The church is a body made up of many different parts. Each part has a different function. Each Christian has a different job to fill that God has set aside especially for her or him. These roles are *not* interchangeable. We must understand our role and conscientiously attend to it. We should do our jobs instead of hankering after every one else's. If we flee our God-given callings we will not be blessed. Let us conclude with a passage of Scripture, Colossians 3;12-17:

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness,

humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. (NIV) **C**

Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

Kenya - a closer look

To much of the world, Kenya exemplifies the best and most beautiful of Africa. Roughly half the size of Ontario, this sub-saharan country straddles the equator just below the Horn of Africa. With its magnificent variety of wildlife, it has been the setting of much exploration and research, the site of numerous safaris, and the subject of countless photographs, movies and literary works.

Scenic and wondrous though it is, such a view of Kenya is idealized and very limited. For scenery cannot be equated with serenity. Poverty and need are no stranger here and the political situation is far from stable. In fact, there has been much unrest over the past few years as pro-democracy rallies indicated displeasure with President Daniel Arap Moi's dictatorship.

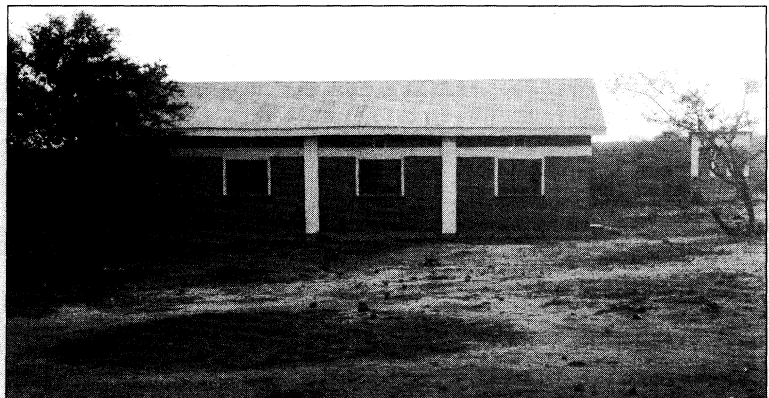
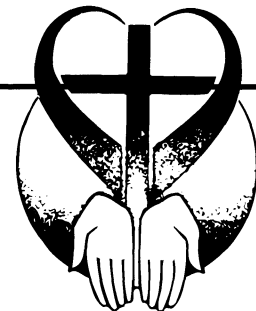
Though a tolerable despot compared with many other African leaders, and accepted because Kenya's economy was not faring badly, again when compared with that of its neighbours, Moi has nevertheless been under attack of late. Since the assassination of a

government minister in 1990, apparently to prevent exposure of high-level corruption, the pro-democracy movement in Kenya has gained strength.

And last December, after thirteen years in power, President Moi finally succumbed to pressure – both internal and from abroad – and declared his decision to establish a multi-party system in Kenya. The external pressure came from many foreign governments, most notably the U.S.A., as well as the World

Bank, whose donors voted to deprive Kenya of funds for six months until Moi agreed to accept opposition parties.

It remains to be seen whether the plans will materialize and true democracy ensue. That is not at all certain at this point, though it is something we all hope and pray will happen...also for the sake of "our children" at Kodich and Achege. We greatly desire a stable country and a hopeful future for them, one in which they do not lack life's ne-



Kodich Children's Home – a view of the boys' dormitory with pit latrine in the background

cessities and may grow to their full potential, becoming light and salt in Kenyan society.

At present it is quiet in the areas in which our homes are located, and the children are doing well. Mrs. Florence Randa (whose husband, you may recall, was killed in a tractor accident last Fall) is still running the Achego home as Assistant Manager until a new manager is found. The arrangement seems to be working well for the time being. We were glad to read her assurance recently that "I am fine and God is keeping us going together with my family and the other children in the home." Let us continue to remember her and her children in our prayers.

Last month we were able to answer a request for funds (\$8,600) needed for repairs and maintenance at Achego. The manager's home needed to be finished and the entire children's home was in need of a paint job, some new windows and other minor repairs. For all expenses incurred, we receive detailed reporting on how funds are spent through Stichting Redt Een Kind ("Save a Child") which serves as our "agent," supervising the home and ensuring that things run smoothly. We are very thankful for the good co-operation which exists between us.

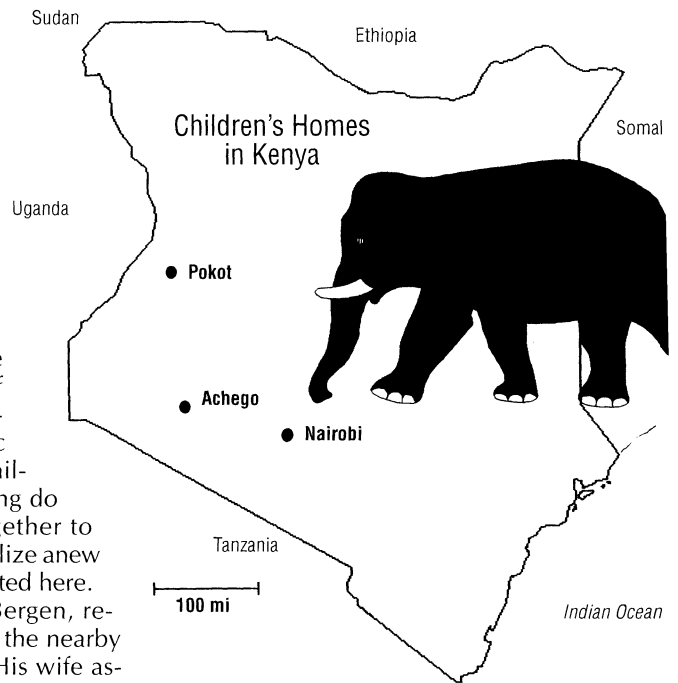
Pastor Joel Bergen, manager of the new **Kodich** home, writes also that the children there are well and are making good progress in their studies. The area in which the home is located (see map) is extremely dry and this has resulted in water problems. A government well exists nearby, but it provides very little water. This lack has forced the staff to use public means to take their clothes to a river about 20 km away for washing. With a household of forty children plus several adults, that is a mammoth task!

"Save a Child," together with the African Inland Church (which supervises day-to-day running of the home) is looking into drilling a bore-hole to solve the problem. Hopefully this can be done very soon!

We recently sent a little money to cover the costs of purchasing a sewing machine, camera and basic sports equipment for the children. They had been making do with tying old clothes together to serve as a ball. Makes us realize anew how much we take for granted here.

A young man, Pastor Bergen, recently married a teacher at the nearby Christian primary school. His wife assists wherever possible in the home also. Pastor Bergen writes that he enjoys his work very much. One of his responsibilities is purchasing all of the food required – a large task since the nearest town is 60 km away. At times, he can be found supervising recreational activities and gardening, e.g., last year he managed to grow some soya beans, ground nuts, beans, tomatoes and cow peas. He also takes a real interest in the spiritual upbringing of the children, seeking to ensure that they are nurtured in the fear of the Lord.

All forty children in Kodich have now been sponsored – a wonderful response for which we are thankful. However, sponsorships at Achego are still available to individuals, groups, families, schools – anyone interested! Sponsorship lets children know that Christians elsewhere are praying and caring for them *personally* and allows those who sponsor a more personal face to their expression of Christian charity.



Many of the children at Kodich are too young as yet to write, but they can and do send drawings. At Achego, where those who request sponsorships now are directed, the average age of the children is higher and regular letters are received.

Request for sponsorships are still trickling in and are most welcome. Thirty dollars a month covers all ongoing expenses for one child. Anyone interested is invited to write us at the address below. The success of the sponsorship program has freed up funds for other work, allowing us to consider the possibility of supporting yet another children's home – an exciting development! We will keep you posted.

Please continue to support our work as the Lord enables you. And do not neglect to pray for the Children's Homes – for political stability in Kenya, for good growing conditions for crops, for wisdom and strength for the staff. That is a request we regularly receive from the managers and wish to pass on to you. For we know that it is only as the Lord blesses our work that it will prosper. *Ora et labora.* **C**

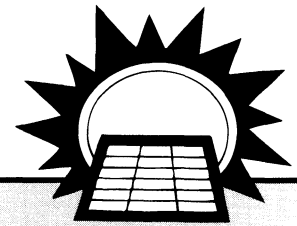


Florence Randa teaches sewing and knitting to the girls at Achego

Gifts for the works of CRWRF may be directed to:

Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund
PO Box 85225
Burlington, ON L7R 4K4

All gifts are gladly received.
Donors of \$10.00 or more will be issued a receipt for tax deduction.



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

It is not always easy to sing this song. If you are in any of the difficult circumstances of which we spoke last month, then it can be hard to give thanks to the Lord. Especially when you are faced with the same limitations day after day, how can you be thankful? Your sister has a well paid job, your workshop does not even pay minimum wages. Your brother bought a house and is going to get married, you will never be able to do that. Everybody in the family is quietly reading, you don't know how to read. Everybody goes for a dip in the pool, you can only watch them out of your wheelchair. You have to go to the wash-room, but you have to patiently wait until somebody comes to help you. You are used to that, but every time it is a scary experience: will they come before you have an accident? You want to ask something, or say something, but nobody understands you for the words come out funny.

Sometimes you become depressed, and you are told not to be so grumpy. At times you become frustrated, or angry; you say angry things, or throw something, or hit people; you know it is wrong, but you just can't control yourself. You are told you are bad, and everybody avoids you. All they need to do is to put an arm around your shoulders, but they are afraid of you because you lost your temper.

When your days are filled with experiences like these, can you still thank the Lord? Yes, you can! For you are not alone.

Do you think there is nobody who really understands you? You are wrong. The Lord is there. He made you, He understands you. He wants you to come to Him. He gave you the handicap, or the illness, or He took some very dear person away from you. But He does not forsake you. When He gives difficulties to His children, He helps them too. For He gave us His Son, Jesus Christ, who died for our sins and promised us a new life. Therefore God wants us to serve Him, to praise His Holy Name, to trust Him, to pray to Him, and He, the mighty God, will help you. Everything seems so difficult to us, but nothing is too difficult for the Lord. He will help you, so that you will be able to carry your load, and yet be happy, so that you won't remain depressed, and won't always throw temper tantrums, and won't feel lonely always. You will be able to praise God, and to give thanks to Him. When you know that Jesus, our Saviour, died for

*O give thanks unto the LORD, for He is good,
for His steadfast love endures for ever!
Psalm 106:1*

you on the cross, because the Holy Spirit works faith into your heart, you will look forward to that new life with the Lord in heaven.

So, in faith and through grace, you can cope with difficulties. You can accept the fact that the Lord gives you a special task here on earth: to live with your handicap, your limitations, your grief, and still praise Him and thank Him. With His help you will be able to look past this life here on earth, and into the future to the new life with Him. When you think of what Jesus Christ accomplished for us through His suffering, you cannot do anything but praise Him and give thanks to Him, "for His steadfast love endures for ever."

*The righteous man may grieve;
He many troubles may endure.
The LORD will free him from them all;
His help is ever sure.
Why should he then despair?
God keeps his bones from injury;
Not one of them will come to harm,
For great and good is He!*

Psalm 34:8

Birthdays in August

Philip Schuurman

"Anchor" Home, 30 Road, RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B0

It is Phil's 33rd birthday on the 5th.

Rose Malda

Oakland Centre, 53 Bond Street
Oakville, ON L6J 5B4

Rose will be 35 on the 9th.

Fenny Kuik

Box 35, Group 606 SS 6
Winnipeg, MB R2C 2Z3

On the 18th Fenny will be 40.

Jack Dieleman

307 Connaught Avenue
Willowdale, ON M2R 2M1

Jack hopes to have his 20th birthday on the 23rd.

I wish you all a very happy birthday.
Until next month,

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

Official Opening of Mount Nemo Lodge Nursing Home Burlington, Ontario

By L. Knegt

On Saturday, May 16, 1992, we arose to a beautiful bright, clear day: an absolutely perfect day for the official opening of our nursing home. Although many years of planning and hard work had gone before this day arrived, the Board of Directors of the Society, the Management Committee of the nursing home, the staff, residents and families, volunteers and others were on hand to participate in this big event. Rev. Mulder from Burlington West opened the assembly with reading Psalm 23 which was aptly chosen since these words are also inscribed in the cornerstone which was to be unveiled. He led us in prayer in which he acknowledged the hand of the Lord in bringing us to this day.

The former chairman of the board, Mr. Leo Knegt, then welcomed all those present and gave us a history of the society, The Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged, Inc. He reviewed how and why this society was formed to take care of the needs of the elderly in our community. In due time, Ebenezer Villa in Hamilton was built but this did not take care of nursing requirements. Later a 30 bed nursing home was purchased on this site in Burlington. Soon plans were underway to expand this to a 60 bed home. After several years of hard work and many frustrations due to all kinds of red tape and bureaucratic delays, construction finally began and the end result is before us today. Shelterclad Construction Co., owned by Gary Aikema was given the contract and we all were amazed at the changes that took place. First the large addition was built and the residents were transferred to that section in May 1991. Then the reconstruction of the original building began and by August it was complete. This brought the total number of residents to 60. We have a very capable and dedicated staff

The unveiling of the plaque. To the right is Mrs. Nancy McCullough, former Administrator and looking on is Mr. Tony Vanderhout, former Chairman of the Board of the Society



to care for these people who are in the evening of their lives. The love shown to them is apparent in all departments, nursing, housekeeping, laundry, dietary, maintenance, etc. They work together as a team so the home can operate smoothly.

After these opening words, the mayor of Burlington was introduced. Mr. Mulkewich extended congratulations to all on behalf of the city. He also expressed the wish that this home will serve the community well and wished us every success in this endeavour. Alderman Ralph Scholtens added his congratulations on this special day on behalf of the Halton Region Health & Social Services Committee.

Mr. Joe Boersema, our present chairman of the board, gave a presentation on behalf of the building committee of which he was the convener. More details on the process which took them from the planning stages to this present day were given. The size of the building is about 4 times the original with much better facilities not only for the residents but also for the staff. There

are 3 wings all colour coordinated and each wing has its own lounge area. The largest is used for a majority of activities and includes the piano. Sunday services are also held here. Each wing also has a spa with complete facilities. There are two outside patio areas fenced off for the safety of residents. The original plans were for a separate Alzheimer wing. This was planned in cooperation with the Alzheimer Society. They also intended to assist with financing of this wing. However, due to the many delays and a change in the Alzheimer Society, locally, this funding was never received. However, the wing still has some of the special features. The end result is a very pleasant and functional building. Many compliments were received since the opening and many people are on a waiting list for a bed in this home.

The next speaker was Mr. Jack Poort, Secretary of the Board and Treasurer of the New Horizon committee. He briefly outlined the background to New Horizons. It is a federally funded committee which assists seniors with



◀ *Mr. George Osmond, our oldest resident of 99 years, is assisted by Mayor Mulkewich (on right) with the ribbon cutting*

▼ *Mr. Ralph Scholtens, Ward 3 Alderman, conveys best wishes on behalf of the Halton Region Health & Social Services Committee*



special projects. He is pleased to announce a receipt of a cheque of over \$11,000 for special purchases for the residents. For example patio furniture, microwave, piano, fridge, stove, sound system, etc. are all to be purchased for their use. We are very happy to receive these funds.

The final portions of the program and the highlights of the afternoon are next.


The ribbon cutting ceremony took place with the mayor and our oldest resident doing the honours. Mr. George Osmond, age 99, cut one section and Mr. Mulkewich the other section. A big cheer from the crowd was their reward.

The unveiling of the cornerstone was next. The honour for this went to Mr. Tony Vanderhout, also former chairman of the board and member of the building committee. He was assisted by Mrs. Nancy McCullough who was administrator of the home until ill health forced her to resign in February of this year. It was an emotional moment for her as well. The death of her husband only weeks before was still on her mind when the plaque was unveiled. The stone is inscribed with these words: Psalm 23, The Lord is my Shepherd - 1991 A.D. We as Board chose these words with the hope that those who enter this building and see these words each time will also be able to cling to their comfort. The official ceremonies were then concluded. Inside the building volunteers gave tours through the facilities in small groups so all could see the end result for themselves.

Refreshments were served downstairs so guests could socialize and mingle for a while. It was indeed a joyful, glorious day. The staff worked hard

to have the entire building span and residents were excited about this special day. We may be truly thankful to our heavenly Father who guided all things to this end.

For those who do not live in the Burlington area and do not receive the newsletters we will give some additional information. Although it is mentioned earlier that there is a long waiting list, we could mention that Canadian Reformed members are given priority above all others and persons with other Reformed backgrounds are next in line for available beds. At present we have 5 Canadian Reformed residents and 5 residents with other Reformed backgrounds. About 30% or more of our staff also have these or similar Christian principles. Our present administrator, Mr. Peter Dykstra, who comes to us from Holland Christian Homes in Brampton, also has a Reformed, Dutch background. We as board strive to make this a Christian home for our residents. Although we are constantly looking for ways to improve on the operation of the home, many changes have already made quite an impact to date as is attested by many who have come here as visitors and volunteers for years. We pray the Lord to bless all our endeavours in the years ahead.

If you would like additional information on either Ebenezer Villa in Hamilton or Mount Nemo Lodge Nursing Home in Burlington, please direct your inquiries to the secretary of the board, Mr. J. Poort, c/o Canadian Reformed Society for a Home for the Aged, Inc., P.O. Box 20052, Upper James Postal Outlet, Hamilton, Ontario L9C 7M5. 

CHURCH NEWS



CALLED to Brampton, ON, and London, ON

Cand. J.E. Ludwig
of Hamilton, ON

NEW ADDRESS:

Rev. E. Kampen
7949-202A Street
Langley, BC
Telephone (604) 888-1087

News from Support MERF Committee

Recently we sent out a newsletter to all the consistories. Because ultimately the support we receive comes from the church members we would also like to share that information with all of you by publishing our newsletter in *Clarion*.

More funds forwarded

A number of congregations had questions after reading our last financial statement. We showed a bank balance of \$10,981.35. However, this can be explained by the fact that a number of congregations sent in money just before the end of our fiscal year. In December we sent a further \$10,000 to MERF to be used once again specifically for radio broadcasting. As of April 13, 1992 we have a bank balance of \$4,250.

Appreciation expressed

In February we received a letter from Rev. Atallah, general director of MERF thanking us for the cheque of \$10,000. Allow me to quote from his letter:

We are very grateful for the prayers and support generated in Canada by your Committee. It is always a source of encouragement, joy and assurance to know that other faithful Reformed people can be partners in the Lord's work in the Middle East. Nothing is more valuable and rewarding than being part of the ongoing building of Christ's Church.

The Lord continues to bless the work. We had our 1992 first study term at the Study Centre. Two good Reformed men (from the U.S.A. and Australia) gave the instruction from both the O.T. and N.T. and there was a very good spiritual atmosphere. I am now working on a new series of broadcasts aimed at pointing out to Muslim listeners that the promises of God have all been fulfilled in Christ. I am using themes from Exodus and Jeremiah. Many Muslims are listening and ask good questions. These days much internal soul-searching is going on in the lives of many people in the Arab world. The Lord seems to be using the circumstances to make some wonder about His ways.

In February we once again received a regular newsletter from MERF. In order to keep you up-to-date we pass on the following information taken from the February 1992 Report.

Meet Sudanese Evangelist Gabriel B. Darwich

For several years MERF has been involved in the training and support of indigenous workers in the Sudan. The Lord continues to bless the efforts of the local MERF administrative committee as it serves the growing needs of the believers and churches there. Mr. Gabriel B. Darwich is one of the growing team of evangelists approved by local churches for MERF's sponsorship. He recently attended a study term at the Evangelical Study Centre in Cyprus.... [At the age of 14] one of his childhood friends from his own Nuer tribe invited him to attend literacy classes in the Nuer language....The literacy instruction included readings from the newly published Nuer New Testament, one of very few books available in the language. His literacy instructor was a committed Christian eager to see all his fellow Nueri pupils respond to the Christ about whom they were reading. Gabriel was one of several young men converted as a result of his literacy classes. He was driven by a steady desire to get a deeper understanding of his new found faith. Gradually his pastor and the elders of his local church discovered Gabriel's gifts as he volunteered service in Bible teaching and evangelism over a period of eleven years. They encouraged him to attend a one year non-academic Bible school in Malakal, after which he was assigned to Khartoum for work among the Nueri refugees....He spends his time visiting, preaching and catechizing among the people of his Nuer tribe in Northern Sudan under the oversight of the pastor and the session.

A New Church-Extension Effort in Syria

Many have been praying for the declining churches of Syria and encouraging signs are surfacing! Yes, there are prayer meetings and a renewed hunger for the study of Scriptures as well as a growing zeal for evangelism. Two gifted laymen have been chosen for a special training workshop in village outreach.

Good News from Beirut

Evangelist Fadi, who coordinates much of the work in East Beirut, shared with us some very encouraging news in his last telephone contact with MERF's

headquarters. He and his colleagues are being met with much openness as they seek to present the Gospel to Lebanese families and challenge them to read the Scriptures....It is specially encouraging to know that most are quite young in age, the generation who is now largely preoccupied with material success.

An Encouraging Beginning for MERF's 1992 Biblical Training

Dr. Noel Weeks of the University of Sydney, Australia and Mr. Mark Bube, General Secretary of OPC foreign missions (U.S.A.) started off the 1992 biblical training as guest instructors in the Augustine Programme. They offered complimentary sessions of applied Bible instruction from the Old and New Testaments to the Arab men who were trained at the Study Centre January 13-24....In addition to the January 13-24 study term, ten other study terms are scheduled in the 1992 Augustine Program. Please, pray with us for the 150-160 who will be brought from Arab countries for training during these study terms.

We hope that the above has given you a better idea of the work being done in the Middle East by MERF. A recent Press Review in *Clarion* was also devoted to MERF. We thank you for your contributions which continue to come in faithfully. Soon we hope to send another cheque to help cover the high costs of radio broadcasting. Possibly in the future we can also be of assistance in the Reformed training of evangelists by having one of our own ministers teach a course at the Study Centre in Larnaca, Cyprus.

Individual Donations

If you would like to make a personal donation please make your cheque payable to "Support MERF Committee" and send it to

Support MERF Committee
1225 Highway 5, RR 1
Burlington, ON L7R 3X4

Unfortunately, we are not able to give a tax receipt at this time because we are not a registered charity.

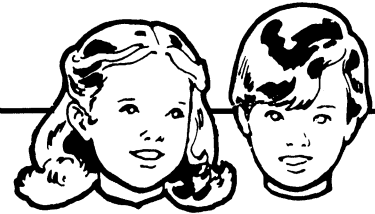
On behalf of the Support MERF Committee of the "Rehoboth" Canadian Reformed Church at Burlington-West,

J. Mulder, chairman
J. Van Dam, secretary



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,
Isn't summer great!
Yes, it's time for SUMMER FUN!

Here is one Busy Beaver's story of how he enjoys summer.

"I play soccer every Wednesday and Saturday. Last week we went to a pancake breakfast and at 10 o'clock we went to the parade. Some people threw candies and gum. I got six pieces of gum, candies and peanuts. Next year we might be in the parade. Last of all we went to the fair. We went on three rides. We went on a Ferris wheel, bumper cars, and a thing that your back sticks on the back of the seat you go so fast. I won two prizes at the fair. It was lots of fun. The week before that we walked six kilometres long at the Manitoba desert. It was hard work. At least there were three wells along the way. So we soaked ourselves. We went zooming down the sand dunes. This was at Spruce Woods Provincial Park. We went swimming after the walk. On the beach there was a big hill of sand. We got really dirty and then zoomed into the water and got cleaned off. We also had a mud fight in the water. I think we had a big day then! It is around one and a half hours to Spruce Woods. It is fun in Manitoba. You should come sometime.

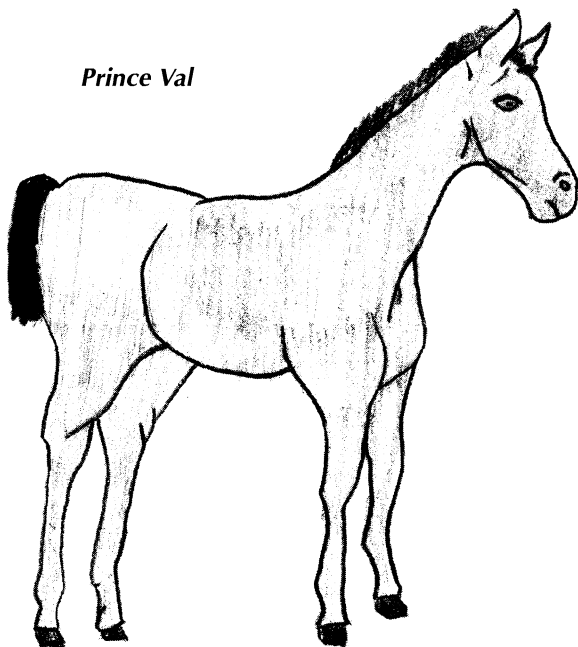
My favourite book is *The Pee Wee Scouts* and *Nancy Drew*....

by Busy Beaver Peter Vanderzwaag

A foal born in the Springtime

Picture by Busy Beaver Thelma Blom

Prince Val



Quiz Time!

GARDEN WORDS

by Busy Beaver Ruby Knol

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beans
beet
broccoli
cabbage
carrot
cauliflower
chives
clean
cucumber
endive
flowers
kale



lettuce
onion
parsley
potatoes
pumpkin
raspberry
~~soil~~
spinach
strawberry
tomatoes
weeds

SUMMER COLOURS

Can you unscramble them?
by Busy Beaver Michelle Hordyk

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For You To Do

Sure, it's time for summer fun.
To keep summer fun, how do we do safety?
In the water, around machinery, on your bik –
what do you think is the most important safety rule
to keep?

Please think about it and share your ideas with
the other Busy Beavers.

Send your ideas to *Fun & Safety*
c/o Busy Beaver Club
Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2J 3X5



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Alisha Dokter*. We are happy to have you join us. You are a good puzzler, I see! Thank you for the poem, too, Alisha.

Welcome to the Club, *Pauline Boeve*. Are you spending lots of time in your pool? I enjoyed the picture you sent, Pauline! Thank you! Will you write again and send me your address, please, Pauline? Then I'll send you your club membership card.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Christopher DeBoer*. I see you're a good puzzler. Keep up the good work, Christopher. Will you write and tell us about your family and how you will spend the summer?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Earle Veenendaal*. I think you will have a busy summer on the farm, right, Earle? Do you have some chores that you like to do better than others? Thanks for the riddles!

Hello Charla Meyer. Thank you for your letter. It was nice to hear from you again. Have you got a safe place in your wallet for your membership card? Look in Our Little Magazine of #18 *Clarion* of last year (Aug. 30/91) for a surprise for you, Charla.

I see you keep very busy with sports and Lego, *Jeremy DeHaan*. You are lucky to have a family that enjoys playing hockey together, Jeremy. Thank you for your letter.

Thank you for your letter with the puzzle, *Shelley Groen*. How are you enjoying your holidays? Do you miss your friends?

Hello *Jeremy Linde*. Thank you for your letter and the puzzle, too. It was good to hear from you again. I hope you have a great summer holiday, Jeremy.

Pen Pal Wanted!

Who would like to exchange letters with
Charla Meyer (age 10)
313 Nicholas Cr.
Aldergrove, BC V0X 1A0

Next time, Busy Beavers, watch for our big SUMMER QUIZ CONTEST!!

Look for it and be sure to JOIN IN THE FUN!
Till then,

Yours,
Aunt Betty

With thankfulness to our heavenly Father, who has guided us through this special time, we joyfully announce the birth of our son and brother

DAVID PHILIP ALEXANDER
Born June 1, 1992, at 7 lbs., 9 oz.
Proud parents,
Phil and Janice Bultje
Extra-proud sister *Lauren*
RR 7
Chatham, ON N7M 5J7

*All glory and honour
and praise be to God!*

With great thankfulness to the Lord who made all things well, we are proud to announce the birth of our son

SCOTT ANTHONY
Born June 16, 1992
A brother for *Michelle, Joel and Trevor*
Tony and Ruth Linde (nee Buist)
RR 2, Canfield, ON N0A 1C0

With great joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we are pleased to announce the birth of our third child, a daughter

ASHLEY JENNEFIR
Born June 8, 1992
A sister for *Brandon and Jeffrey*
Fred and Simone Oosterhoff
(nee Buist)
RR 2
Beamsville, ON L0R 1B2