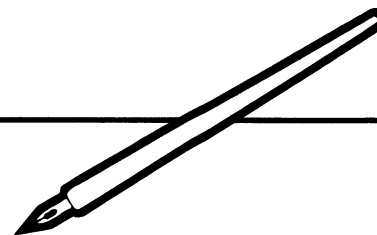


 **Clarion**
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

Volume 41, No. 14

July 17, 1992



A (Non-)Decision Regarding “God, our Mother”

In this issue the readers find a report concerning the decision of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church not to allow the ordination of women in the church as elders and ministers, although the churches are urged to have them do the work of ministers and elders. The Synod made also a decision with regard to whether it is blasphemous to address God as “She.” This latter decision is connected with the former and indicates in which light the former has to be seen.

In its “News Release” of June 13, 1992, the Reformed Believers Press Service presents the following information:

The Christian Reformed Synod in its June 11 session sidestepped an overture regarding Evelyn Diephouse, the Calvin College registrar who addressed God as “She” in a liberal Christian Reformed-related publication. Classis Hudson had submitted an overture stating as grounds for Synodical action that such actions were “modern day blasphemous violations of the third commandment” and that “this declaration will require the churches to respond with proper admonition and discipline of unrepentant members of the Christian Reformed Church guilty of blasphemy.” Synod failed to declare Goddess-talk blasphemy and instead recommended four guidelines on inclusive language, originally proposed for use by the education department in curriculum production, as “pastoral guidelines” for the church.

One of the delegates declared that the cause of this answer of the Synod was the “unclear wording in the overture.” Classis Hudson requested Synod

“to declare that the clear teaching of Scripture and the doctrines confessed in our confessions forbid all toleration, advocacy, or use of formulations like ‘God the Mother, God the Daughter, and God the Holy Spirit’ for the Trinity and all general references to God as female (e.g., the use of feminine pronouns or the term *goddess*).”

To declare that speaking about God as “She” is blasphemous and must be met with discipline was placed in one of the grounds. For this reason Synod saw no need to make a pronouncement on the blasphemous character of this feminist manner of speaking about God.

The cause of the overture was the following

The overture originated with Rev. Casey Freswick, pastor of Newton (NJ) CRC and a member of the combined Calvin College and Seminary board of trustees before the two schools were separated in 1991. In the May/June 1990 issue of *The Reformed Journal*, the Calvin College registrar wrote that “The questions we would then wish to ask about creation seem particularly germane to our world today: Is God still alive and active? Does She still care about the world and protect it? Is She making the daffodils come

up again?” Diephouse was subsequently reappointed with tenure while Freswick was on the Board.

An objection of Classis Hudson to the 1991 Synod was deemed a “communication” not requiring a response by Synod 1991. Therefore, Rev. Freswick and Classis Hudson came with a new overture to the 1992 Synod, with this result:

Synod referred the overture to an advisory committee which was also dealing with proposed guidelines on feminine terms for God by the denominational education department in upcoming curriculum. The committee reported back with a proposal for the education department that “In cases where gender descriptions or designations of God arise out of common English usage, prevalent social patterns, or traditional theological language rather than out of Scripture, take care not to offend readers needlessly by using inappropriate images, overusing masculine pronouns, and/or by naming God with feminine nouns or pronouns.”

In other words, Synod referred to guidelines which had been made before and which declared that the members of the CRC should not offend each other needlessly by either calling God “She” or; by unnecessary masculine language or images.

A News Release of June 16 tells us that a number of delegates were very unhappy with the decision and proposed “that Synod reconsider its previous action on the Goddess overture.” However, this proposal was “strongly opposed.” One delegate commented: “We’re talking about offending God...We offend God just as much by limiting God to ‘He’ as by calling God ‘She.’”

The article, mentioned above, from which the quotation is taken that speaks about God as “She” informs the readers that its author is a member of the Gender Concerns Task Force at Calvin College. Their “mandate includes reviewing all the college’s activities with respect to the needs of women.” The writer continues to tell the readers that

This has involved us in inevitable discussions about the effects of gender-distorted language on the growth and development of women, and with inescapable questions about how the church’s theology shaped their self-esteem. We find ourselves talking about the classroom climate (Is it too chilly?) and speculating about why male students become leaders so much more easily than female students. As we struggle to find models of learning environments that will foster leadership qualities in young women, we find ourselves digging all the way back to the images of God that we use and treasure, and debating about how these images (and the ways we select them) have affected our categories of thought about ourselves.


In other words, that God, the Maker and Ruler of heaven and earth, is always spoken of as “He” and not also as “She” cre-

ates a climate which is detrimental for the full development of women in total equality with men. To call God "He" and "Father" helps to keep women under the rule of men. In order to change this situation and work, for equality in every respect, so that women can truly come to full self-realization and self-esteem, God must be addressed as "our Parent" or also as "God, our Mother" and "She."

It is in this humanistic, (wo)man-centered climate that we have to understand the direction of the CRC toward opening all offices in the church for women too, in spite of the teaching of Scripture. We have here the equality of humanism as this was proclaimed by the man-centered French revolution.

Scripture does speak about equality between man and woman, both having been created in God's image. Scripture

does speak about man and woman as both equally children of God through faith in Christ. However, this equality in being God's image and in receiving the position of God's child does not take away differences in position in marriage and church. Paul places besides each other Gal. 3:28 ("...there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" [a text quoted often to press for total equality]) and Eph. 5:22ff. ("Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, ...").

This is not the place to discuss this matter further. The point is here that the trend in the CRC toward opening all the offices in the church for women is dominated by modern humanistic feminism in which woman is in the center and not what God's Word teaches, even though this Word is used. 

Educating our children within the communion of saints – whose task is it?²

By C. Van Dam

In the first installment, we considered the task and place of parents and other teachers in the Old Testament.

The purpose of education

Education in Israel was designed to enable boys and girls to be prepared for their future task in life. This does not mean that their education was only practical and not religious, for the Bible does not know of any separation between the two. Preparing oneself for life meant not only equipping oneself for the "job," but also for life with God. After all, life eternal starts now (cf. Heidelberg Catechism, Q & A 58, 103). As mentioned already, the parents have the awesome task of moulding and shaping their children after the image of Father in heaven. This is their first responsibility. As the parents were God's instruments to impart physical life, parents must also be God's instruments to give eternal life! The fact that teachers are called "fathers" in Scripture indicates that they also have obligations in this area. The situation is such that teachers cannot escape the fact that besides their primary academic task to equip their students for this life, they also have responsibilities for eternal life. After all, life in its entirety is religiously orientated and the teacher has enormous influence in the life of his students. The implications of being a teacher then are quite staggering and the responsibility is immense. For this reason, we can be very thankful for the privilege of having our own schools where

our children can be raised within the covenant community with a view to their covenant God. The parents at home and the "fathers" and "mothers" at school ultimately work for the same objective; raising our children in the fear of the LORD and equipping them for their task in this life, a life to be lived with and for God. This common goal of home and school means that the atmosphere in the school will have much in common with that of the home. It will include firm discipline, respect for the school parents, and a sense of belonging together by the grace of God, a sense that we are co-heirs of God's promises.

Home schooling

The question can be raised that if the school actually continues the work of the home and if the teachers are even called "fathers," then should not every parent strive to home school their children? Is not this then the ideal? Such a question is raised more often today than ever before and in answering this question we should carefully consider several factors.

In the first place, no one could possibly object to the wish as such of parents who desire to raise their children at their homes as long as that is possible. Too often today children do not see enough of their parents and their upbringing is left solely to school teachers. No one will argue with the fact that parents do have the first responsibility for the education of their children. It is, however, a valid point

whether all parents who wish to home school are equipped to do so responsibly; be it mentally, intellectually, organizationally, or otherwise. Furthermore, one could ask whether it is wise socially and otherwise to raise children somewhat artificially in isolation from other children of the church who attend the local parental school. What future consequences could this have?

In the second place, most of the popularity of present day home schooling is attributable to the moral bankruptcy of the public school system. Faced with the choice of either to continue sending their children to public schools or to train them at home, many are opting for the home schooling. There really is no other choice for those with no Christian day school alternative.

In the third place, in light of what has been mentioned earlier one cannot appeal to the Bible to the effect that it is more biblical to home school because they had no schools in biblical times. That is a dubious conclusion. Unfortunately, home schooling literature does not hesitate to say things such as the establishment of schools in Israel was a deviation from God's command.¹ Such statements are unfounded and irresponsible.

In the fourth place, we must be careful not to create false dilemmas. For example, the dilemma Christian School or Home school is not a true dilemma. Both are Christian and both acknowledge the primary place and responsibility of the

parents for educating our children. Our Reformed schools are our home schools! The school is parental and our meeting here tonight as parent-teacher association testifies to that.

In the fifth place, the family undoubtedly remains the first context in which the training of children in godliness should continue non-stop. The words of God in Deuteronomy 6 still apply! "You shall teach them [the words of the LORD] 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." This is the responsibility of parents and the Lord enables believing parents to do this part of their office. The question can, however, be raised whether the family unit is indeed the best place for academic teaching such as lessons in English grammar, arithmetic, geography and history. Does that not make the home into a school to the detriment of a normal and relaxed home atmosphere? One rarely reads of the tensions and frustrations that surely come with home schooling, but should this factor not be mentioned? Furthermore, do the parents always have the necessary academic expertise? The first calling of teachers is to prepare students for their task in the world today and that requires quite some training and continued effort. The demands of being a responsible teacher must not be underestimated. Can parents, with so many other responsibilities be realistically expected to be able to handle academic teaching year after year after year? Someone (writing in 1935) once said that the school and the family each has their own place and task, and I would like to underline that. Father is normally busy earning the daily bread and mother is occupied with preparing meals and tending the raising of the family. He then noted that if the school teachers start acting like parents and when parents start acting like school teachers, many questions will arise! Indeed, and many problems as well. Generally speaking, let the home be home and the school be school.

More factors could be brought forward, but it may be best to discuss those under another heading, namely, covenantal education.

Covenantal education

The Lord our God has brought us together as a covenant community. By His grace we are members of His congregation, His church. We did not choose each other but God has called and brought us together. We did not decide on whom we would associate with, but He has. As a communion of saints, we have differing gifts. We confess that we are obligat-

ed to use these gifts to the advantage of our brothers and sisters (Heidelberg Catechism Q & A 55). One of the things we use our financial gifts for is the maintenance of a parental Christian day school. We do this together. In an age of individualism, this fact needs to be stressed. We support and maintain our schools together, even if we have no children at school any more; for, we (correctly) understand education as a communal responsibility, a sacred covenantal obligation before God.

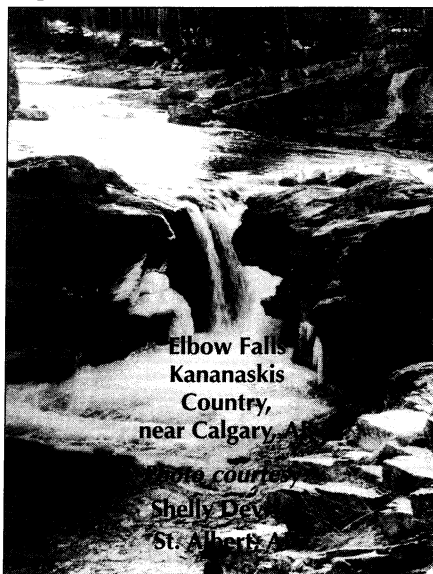
Now it can happen that a family after some soul searching decides to home school because the financial requirements for sending their children to the local Reformed school are prohibitive for them. Lack of funds is, however, of itself not really a good reason to home school. Are we not in on this education task together and do we not have varying gifts? If the real reason for home schooling is a lack of funds, then we should help each other as community to provide the money. The ministry of the deacons which Christ uses to circulate the gifts in the congregation could become involved, for example. We should not make life difficult for each other if the gifts are there in the covenant community. Do our gifts (also financial) not derive from and belong in the first place to God and are they not to be used for His glory?

It can also happen that a family decides to home school simply because they feel, after much family counsel on the matter, that home schooling is a more appropriate way for them to raise their children, at least for say the first four or five

years. They have decided that they have the gifts and the time and the discipline to proceed with this and keep it up. Such a family may have made it clear that they are not doing this to avoid paying large school fees; it is simply that they believe the advantages of home schooling are such that for them it would be irresponsible not to proceed with it. I think we should accept that from such a family. We should not harass each other on matters of conscience if that is not necessary. At the same time, what was said of the first example bears repeating with this one. We all have responsibilities for the education of the children of the covenant community, not just for our own children. If finances are not a factor, such a family would be able to show their commitment to the covenantal education offered in the schools by continuing to pay their school fees. This would have a double advantage. The school's and the community's financial position would not be adversely affected by their home schooling. Secondly, they would be able to benefit in a number of ways from the school which they continue to support. They would have access to the library resources, possibly some teaching resources, and also have the privilege of periodic professional evaluation from the Christian school on their own home program. Of course, such an approach will also enhance the good relationships in the church community. It is then obvious that not individualism, but a sense of communal responsibility continues to operate.

There is something else that needs to be said. The home schooling movement which is also making its inroads in our congregations is doing us the big favour of underlining the parental responsibilities for education. There is the ever present danger of taking it easy as parents. Our children go to elementary and secondary schools of which we know that they endeavour to teach in accordance with the Word of God. In this situation the temptation is there for parents to relax and underestimate the continuing importance of their involvement in the educational enterprise. It is, however, completely wrong for parents to adopt the attitude that the school takes care of my child's education. That is only partly true. The home continues to be the primary place of education for life in the LORD and for service in this life. The school is an extension of the home, not the other way around! For that reason, the schools and teachers will be remembered in prayer at home and the teachers and their instruction will be supported in every possible way. An important way of support is teaching our children the respect due to their school "fathers" and "mothers" and instilling in them a sense of the holy privilege they

OUR COVER



Elbow Falls
Kananaskis
Country,
near Calgary, Alberta
Photo courtesy
Shelly Dev
St. Albert, A

may have in being God's children. A truly Christian life style in our homes and a strong sense of godly priorities also go a long way to underline the instruction given at school. These are items that cannot be taught in one sitting. As parents we continue to mould our children. We delegate some of that moulding work to teachers, but we never relinquish the primary responsibility for it! Indeed, a Chris-

tian school, fully supported and enhanced by the participation of the parents according to their office in the homes truly makes that Christian school an extension of the home, a home school, if you like!

Educating our children is a tremendous task and the responsibilities are daunting. At the same time we know that we do not need to do this task on our own or in a vacuum. We can do it in the

power of the Lord at home and at school and within the communion of saints. What a blessing!

¹See, e.g., G. Harris in W. Wayne House, ed., *Schooling Choices. An Examination of Private, Public & Home Education* (1988) 182, cf. 253-255.

²A. Janse, *Het Eigen karakter der Christelijke school* (1935) 82. **C**

PRESS REVIEW

By C. Van Dam

No to Ordination, but Yes to an Open Pulpit

The 1992 Synod of the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) had to settle the contentious issue of whether to ratify the 1990 decision to open the ecclesiastical offices to women. The Synod decided not to do this and many conservatives are relieved. Indeed, it has been said that not a few conservatives are rethinking an earlier commitment to leave the CRC. There is even talk that those who have already liberated themselves from the CRC should come back. After all, did this decision not go the right way and has liberalism not been halted? Is that so? What follows is the complete text of an official news release from the Synod on this issue. (It is release 08 and dated June 17, 1992.) A brief response will follow.

News Release

Grand Rapids, Mich.-In an attempt to settle unrest in the church, Synod 1992 voted today not to ratify the church-order change proposed by Synod 1990 that would have opened the offices of minister, evangelist, and elder (official congregational leadership positions) to women. However, synod encouraged churches to "use the gifts of women members to the fullest extent possible in their local churches" which includes allowing women to teach, expound the Word of God (similar to preaching), and provide pastoral care - all under the supervision of the elders.

The deciding vote not to ratify (109-73) was taken after nearly eight hours of deliberation on the controversial issue. As grounds for non-ratification, synod said that the biblical support for ordination - as presented by a committee assigned to

gather grounds from previous synodical reports - was not sufficiently persuasive to win the confidence and support of the church. The grounds also stated that ratification may "aggravate the current unrest and divisiveness in the church."

The recommendation to use women's gifts in teaching, expounding, and pastoral care evoked a second round of

empassioned discussion; both delegates who favored ordained offices to women and those who opposed the move stated concern about the recommendation. Delegates raised many questions regarding the difference between being ordained for office versus doing the work of officebearers without formal ordination. For instance, ordained ministers "pro-



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claim" the Word of God, men licensed by classis "exhort," and now – as a result of today's action – women under the supervision of elders may "expound." The advisory committee that proposed this move said their aim was to give as much room as possible without ordination for the use of women's gifts in the life and ministry of the church.

As grounds for this decision, synod stated its conviction that Scripture teaches and our confessions affirm that men and women alike are gifted by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the church, and that any failure of the church to use women's gifts results in a serious impoverishment of the church's life.

In other action synod reminded congregations that the diversity within the denomination will result in variations in practice, but urged those churches that have introduced practices not authorized by the Church Order to bring them into agreement with the above decisions. Synod also attached to the decision of 1990 the biblical data gathered from previous synodical study reports and other publications on this issue.

Response: a regrettable decision

What the decision takes away with one hand, it gives with the other. Women are not allowed to be ordained as ministers, but they are to be encouraged to use their gifts to expound the Word of God in their local church.

As one who is outside of the CRC, this decision strikes me as a tactical move with a view to the long term goal of getting women into office in the CRC. The 1990 decision to open the offices to women had been unexpected since no formal proposal to admit women to office had come to that Synod and strategically this decision had come too hastily. The church had not been adequately prepared for it. The *Banner* (July 2, 1992, p. 5) even described the 1990 decision as "startling." The decision made at this year's CRC synod slows down the process of opening the offices to women. It does not stop it. Nowhere does the press release hint at a change of heart in the CRC on this issue. Rather women are to be encouraged to expound the Word of God in their church, i.e. from the pulpit.

This decision will have at least two negative results. In the first place, the churches will get accustomed to seeing women delivering messages from the pulpit and in the eyes of the church people such a woman will be perceived as a minister. It will probably only be a matter of time before the office of minister will be opened to her. In the second place, the distinction between officebearer and non-officebearer will be eroded in the mind of



50th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

EVERT and GRIETJE (nee Groen) DE HAAN 1942-1992

Mom and Dad were married August 29 in Leeuwarden, the Netherlands. Fifteen years later, they took their five children and immigrated to Canada in May 1957, settling in Surrey, BC.

Two more children were received from the Lord, but Mom and Dad were also the surrogate home for several dozen foster children over the years. Busy? Yes, but wonderful, too.

Having been members of Maranatha Church (Surrey) for thirty-four years, Mom and Dad recently moved to Langley where they now reside, both still being in relatively good health.

the church. Indeed, it would come as no surprise if church members started to wonder what really was the difference between someone who is a male and is an official officebearer (and who proclaims the Word from the pulpit) and one who is a female and is not an officebearer (but who expounds the Word from the pulpit). Many evangelical Christians have no clear understanding of office. The present CRC decision could very well lead to the same result in the CRC.

The concerned who have already left the CRC were justified in their action. They were also wise in not pinning any action of withdrawal on the outcome of one issue such as women in office. Many more issues are at stake and the heart of the matter is a straying from the Scriptures on several issues. (See *Clarion* November 8, 22, 1991 where biblical, Confessional, Church Orderly, and pastoral reasons for withdrawal are noted.)

It is to be hoped that the concerned in the CRC will not be lulled asleep by this decision. There is nothing in the decision as related by the official press release to indicate a true change of heart in

the CRC on this issue. There is thus also no reason for those who have already left to return.

P.S.

Just before this article went to press, I received the *Banner* of June 29. It is of interest to note the conclusion of the editorial on this issue.

Oddly enough, as synod's decision now stands, the ordination of women may be permissible after all. You will notice that in the grounds for its decision, synod did not say that Scripture forbids ordaining women but only that the biblical evidence for doing so is not sufficiently persuasive. That, I believe, places the ordination of women squarely among those things we Calvinists call the adiaphora. Such things are neither forbidden by Scripture nor specifically enjoined. All we can do is make up our own minds about them in good conscience before God.

Synod 1992 may have ratified the decision of 1990 without being aware of it.

These words are telling and underline the direction into which the CRC is heading.

CVD **C**

Erasmus and the authority of Scripture

By R. Faber

Introduction

Desiderius Erasmus (1469-1536) was perhaps the greatest forerunner of the Reformation. Although he did not break with the Roman Catholic church, he exposed it to severe criticism, thereby encouraging others to call for ecclesiastical change. For at the turn of the sixteenth century the church exercised a burdensome authority and abused numerous customs and ceremonies. Moreover, the Roman Catholic clergy taxed the people with financial and spiritual demands. The payment of indulgences, excessive fasting, and the veneration of relics are but three of the many customs which the church foisted on its people. Erasmus, however, observed that these false church practices had no basis in Scripture.

Erasmus revealed the error of such practices by pointing to the source of Christianity: the Word of God. Rather than to accept meekly the statements of the church, Erasmus argued that the decrees issued by the hierarchical clergy should be tested in light of the Bible. Consequently, decisions of councils, papal edicts, and ceremonies justified by years of ecclesiastical tradition came under the critical scrutiny of reform-minded theologians who wished to lead the church according to Scripture. One of Erasmus' contributions to the reformation of the church was his insistence that the Bible be the guide in the church's decisions of doctrine and practice. If any single work from the prolific pen of Erasmus lent support to the Reformation cry "Sola Scriptura" it was the new edition of the New Testament which appeared in 1516. For in it Erasmus showed the believer that the authority of Scripture is greater than the decrees of the medieval Roman Catholic church.



Desiderius Erasmus

In this article I shall consider Erasmus' role in the development of the confession of the authority of Scripture. The insistence of reformers such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Huldrych Zwingli that the church base its decisions regarding doctrine and conduct solely on the Bible is due, in part, to the work of Erasmus. The confession that the Bible is all-sufficient for salvation and that it is the infallible and inspired Word of God is one which characterizes all churches of the Reformation. The belief that no man-made pronouncements and no ecclesiastical tradition may supplant the authority of Scripture was articulated most emphatically in the sixteenth century. Today, when the authority of the Bible is being challenged severely, perhaps even by church federations claiming to be Reformed, it is appropriate to reaffirm our confession that the Word of God is the only guide for our lives.

"To the Sources!"

In the fall of 1499 Erasmus visited Oxford, England, where he listened to John Colet as he lectured on the letters of Paul. It struck Erasmus that Colet did not follow the scholastic tradition; instead, he focused on the *text* of Paul, and sought to explain Scripture from a careful study of the document and the writer rather than the doctrine and the tradition. E. Rummel summarizes Colet's approach to the Bible in this way: "Here was a man who applied the humanistic call *Ad fontes* to the subject of theology, directing his listeners, not to medieval commentaries and glosses, but to the words of St. Paul."¹ It refreshed Erasmus to meet a scholar who studied the Word of God and not the words of men.

Colet was not the only theologian who directed his attention closely to the text of the Bible. Jacques Lefevre was

Hymn 24:7

All blessing, honour, thanks, and praise
To Father, Son, and Spirit,
The God who saved us by His grace;
All glory to His merit!
O Triune God in heaven above,
Who hast revealed Thy saving love,
Thy blessed Name be hallowed

preparing a translation and commentary of the Pauline epistles, while Johann Reuchlin examined the Hebrew Old Testament. In numerous places theologians realized that the degeneration of the church was due to centuries of tradition which obscured the very source of the church's knowledge of God in Christ, namely the Bible. The time had come to return to that source.

In 1504 Erasmus visited a monastery near Louvain, Belgium, and blew the dust from a copy of Lorenzo Valla's notes on the New Testament. Valla, who had published his work in 1444, applied to Scripture the methods of grammatical and literary criticism which were the domain of secular literature. He argued that the student of theology should read the Bible without the burden of scholastic pronouncements. The reader required merely a thorough knowledge of the languages and civilizations in which Scripture was inspired. What mattered was the original text. Erasmus was so impressed with Valla's suggestion to "go to the sources" that he promptly reprinted Valla's work.

What Colet, Valla, and other theologians unhindered by scholasticism had done was to return to the methodology of the church fathers (especially Augustine, Jerome, and Origen). Erasmus noted that these writers were not weighed down by the heavy and cumbersome authority of a self-serving Roman Catholic church, but approached the Bible with a mere knowledge of the languages and circumstances in which it was written. The explanations of the church fathers were based on the *text* of

the Bible. Erasmus read Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, which was, to use A. Rabil's term, "a Christian hermeneutic,"² in part written to defend Augustine's exegesis of Scripture. Thus, together with contemporary theologians, Erasmus returned to the patristic approach to the Bible.

Yet despite his appreciation of the exegetical prowess of the church fathers, Erasmus did not place Jerome, Augustine, and Origen on a par with Scripture itself. In a letter to Christopher Fisher he writes: "I would prefer to see the original with my own eyes rather than through someone else's."³ Nevertheless, influenced by the patristic writings, Erasmus set his sights on editing the New Testament, in the hopes of producing the true text of the Word of God.

Erasmus' Edition of the New Testament

In February of 1516 Erasmus set the academic world on its ear when he published his edition of the New Testament. A fresh Latin translation accompanied a newly reconstructed Greek text, which was followed by extensive notes. In the preface Erasmus exhorts his readers to study Scripture and he defends his methodology. Based on a collation of some manuscripts and a comparison of the Greek text with the Vulgate and other Latin translations, the edition was nothing less than revolutionary. Motivated by his disdain for errors in the manuscripts, blunders in translation, and the inaccuracies of sleepy scribes (noted in Epistle 182), Erasmus produced a work which al-

tered the course of textual criticism. The annotations reveal that besides the manuscripts Erasmus employed classical authors, the church fathers, and the better scholastics in his arguments on matters of philology, literary criticism, exegesis and preaching. It is no wonder that John Colet, upon seeing the edition, exclaimed: "the name of Erasmus will never perish."

In dedicating the work to pope Leo Xth, Erasmus writes that the teaching of salvation is acquired "in a much purer and more lively form if sought at the fountain-head and drawn from the actual sources than from pools and runnels." Convinced that salvation is found in the Bible and not in the writings of scholastic clerics, Erasmus believed that it was crucial to produce an accurate version of the Bible. Accordingly he brought to bear all the philological, grammatical, and exegetical methods which he had employed in his study of secular texts.

The "Handmaiden" theory

As Valla and Jerome had done before him, Erasmus applied knowledge gained from the study of classical Greek and Latin literature to the Bible. Grammar, philology, rhetoric, and textual criticism were some of the tools of the sixteenth century humanist, and Erasmus saw what results these tools could produce. He was convinced that the humanist methods – which to him were the methods of Jerome and Origen – should be placed in the service of theology. In his *Adagia* (4.5.1) Erasmus writes: "Theology is rightly the queen of the sciences, but she will possess more glory and learning if she includes such useful handmaidens." For this reason Erasmus championed a thorough knowledge of Hebrew (though he himself knew very little), Greek and Latin. Like Jerome and Augustine, Erasmus was steeped in classical literature. Yet he was careful, especially in his later years, to place Scripture above all other literature. In arguing for a careful consideration of the text, Erasmus writes (Epistle 182), "the sin of corruption is greater, and the need for careful revision by scholars greater also, where the source of corruption was ignorance: but it must be done with the caution and restraint with which all books, and particularly the Holy Scripture, deserve to be treated." Precisely because the Bible contains "that teaching which is our salvation," it is crucial to establish a good text of it.

The *Ratio Verae Theologiae* appeared in 1518 to defend Erasmus' contention that "God speaks to us truly and efficaciously in the sacred books to the extent that he spoke to Moses in the burning bush...." Revealing the influence of Augustine's *On Christian Doctrine*, this work shows that Erasmus appreciated the church fathers because they, unlike the scholastic writers who taught only faith in the church, were unfettered by religious formalism, and sought to derive doctrine purely from the Scripture. Erasmus observed that the petty arguments and vain debates which characterized medieval scholasticism had clouded the reading of Scripture. As C. Augustijn observes, "Erasmus wished to explain the Scriptures, unconstrained, and not squeezed into the harness of doctrinal decisions and tradition."⁴

Reaction to Erasmus' edition

Reaction to Erasmus' edition was fast and furious. Indeed, even before the work appeared in print the Louvain theologian Maarten van Dorp claimed (Epistle 337) that the forthcoming edition would be useless. Van Dorp said that the existing Vulgate edition did not contain errors, as the Roman Catholic church, which treated the Vulgate as the received text, could not err. For generations the clergy assumed that the (Latin!) Vulgate was the inspired Word. The new edition caused traditional Roman Catholic theologians to realize that Erasmus was undermining the ill-founded practices of the church. For, as Augustijn notes, "on the basis of the text Erasmus exposed the practice and dogma of the church, and the rules of canon law, to criticism."⁵ In short, Erasmus' edition revealed not only the weakness of scholastic traditionalism in matters of exegesis and text analysis, but also the customs of the church which had no basis in Scripture. A glance at the annotations reveals Erasmus' criticisms regarding a host of vices of the sixteenth century church: penance, use of relics, vestments, ceremonies, corruption, hierarchy, and the sacramental system. Conservative Paris and Louvain theologians called Erasmus a heretic, and one opponent, Nicholas Egmond, claimed that the publication of Erasmus' New Testament was a sign of the coming Anti-Christ!⁶

The reaction of reform-minded theologians was different. Erasmus' edition strengthened the bond which united the so-called biblical humanists, scholars promoting renewal founded on the

Bible. Especially at Basel Erasmus was hailed as first among equals. To use the words of B. Hall, Erasmus "had in common with the Protestant Reformers their great principles of appeal to the Scriptures as the source of theological truth and Christian life."⁷ The influence of Erasmus' new edition upon the reformers was remarkable. In his lectures Luther used Erasmus' 1516 edition of the New Testament, while in their writings Calvin and Theodore Beza reveal more than a passing familiarity with Erasmus' annotations. Huldrych Zwingli shared with Erasmus a repudiation of scholastic methodology for the study of Scripture.⁸ Though Luther clashed with Erasmus over the doctrine of free will, both men strove to use the Bible as a basis for their arguments, and both men assumed the unity of Scripture.⁹

Conclusion

Unfortunately Erasmus did not pursue his convictions concerning the authority of Scripture to their logical consequence. Perhaps his unpolemical character prevented Erasmus from breaking with the Roman Catholic church, although he was well aware of the numerous abuses and vices therein. Even his annotations reveal a hesitation to refute the church. At times Erasmus notes that the exegete must "obey the church's decision." In one comment (on Romans 5:12) he states: "A single testimony from Scripture suffices for me; *Sometimes the authority of the church suffices even without Scripture.*" His vacillation is also seen in his note on Romans 9:5, where he again states that he wants to "obey the church's decision." However, he adds that "if the church further claims that its interpretation is the only one consistent with the wording of the Greek, a mere glance at the passage will be enough to refute that claim." Here the humanist in Erasmus allows for a difference of opinion in the explanation of Scripture.

Nevertheless Erasmus alerted both the clergy and the laymen of his time to the wrongs in the church by showing the incongruity between many false practices and the Word of God. In emphasizing the prime place of Scripture in the life of the Christian Erasmus provided the impetus for the cry which Luther, Calvin, and other reformers would cause to resound through the cold cathedrals of the medieval Roman Catholic church. And that cry was "Sola Scriptura!"

¹E. Rummel, *Erasmus' Annotations on the New Testament* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1986), 10.

²A. Rabil, *Erasmus and the New Testament* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1972), 23, note 65.

³Quoted from H. Oberman, *Forerunners of the Reformation* (New York: Holt, Reinhart, Winston, 1966), 314.


⁴C. Augustijn, *Erasmus, His Life, Works, and Influence* (Translated from German by J. Grayson. Toronto: 1991), 101.

⁵C. Augustijn, 191.

⁶P.S. Allen, *Opus Epistolarum Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906), IV, 556.

⁷B. Hall, "Erasmus: Biblical Scholar and Reformer," in *Erasmus*, edited by T. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), 110-111.

⁸On Erasmus' influence on Zwingli, see now S. Strehle, "Fides aut Foedus: Wittenberg and Zurich in Conflict over the Gospel," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, 1992, 7-8.

⁹Augustijn, 132-133. 



CALLED to Grand Rapids, MI, U.S.A.

Cand. J.E. Ludwig
of Hamilton, ON

CALLED to Maranatha, Surrey, BC

Rev. C. Van Spronsen
of Vernon, BC

CALLED to Chatham, ON

Rev. G. Wieske
of Neerlandia, AB

DECLINED to Edmonton, AB

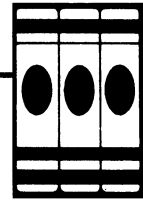
Rev. R. A. Schouten
of Calgary, AB

NEW ADDRESS:

Clerk Bethel Church Toronto
P. Van der Schaaf
107 Highland Park Blvd.
Thornhill, ON L3T 1B8
Tel. (416) 889-6964

BOOK REVIEW

By G.Ph. van Popta



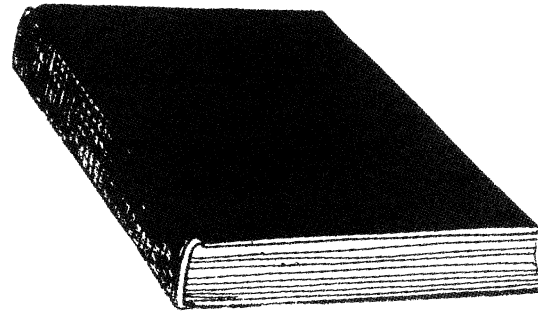
The Christian: Following Christ as Lord

Webster, William
The Christian: Following Christ as Lord;
Published by Banner of Truth, 1990 @
\$7.95 U.S. (160 pp/paperback).

In *The Christian*, William Webster explores what it means to be a Christian. He notes that although the church has often been plagued by formalism, there is a relatively new stream of North American evangelicalism which soft pedals the scriptural demand for radical Christian living. In essence it says that it is possible to be justified by the blood of Christ without being sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. This Webster rejects.

He goes to the Scriptures and shows that those whom the Holy Spirit has converted and regenerated by the Word will live new lives. The life of Jesus Christ will be manifested in their lives. The essence of real Christianity is the life of Jesus Christ. We need to follow his example as the revelation of the true nature of what it means to be a Christian. The same Holy Spirit lives in both Christ and Christians. Christ communicates new life to us. He lives through us. We become servants of God. Servanthood is not optional for Christians. There is no such thing as a Christian who is not a servant of God.

Webster then examines in detail how a humble spirit of servanthood manifests itself in practical ways in the life of a true believer. A Christian's great passion is to glorify God. A Christian sees this as the ultimate objective of all of life and of his own life in particular. In chapter 4, "The Glory of God," Webster says some very good things which need to be heard in North American evangelicalism. From much of the teaching which issues forth from this popular stream of Christianity, one could conclude that God exists for man's sake, rather than that man exists for God's sake. The "health and wealth" and "name it and claim it" perversions



of the gospel are completely man-centred rather than God-centred and focused. Webster reminds us that the Scriptures teach that man exists in order to glorify God. Christians will begin doing so as Jesus Christ did.

A Christian is saved to worship. When Webster speaks about worship, he means more than corporate worship. Corporate worship is of first order importance, but we should not think that we have fulfilled our calling to worship God after a couple of hours of worship on the Lord's day. True worship is a way of life. In all of life we give God His worth.

The life of a Christian is a holy life of obedience. This is a necessary result of conversion. Obedience does not secure our salvation, but salvation is always manifested in a transformed life. This transformed life will be seen in a deep desire to study, know, and obey the Word of God. It will be seen in a desire to have true communion with God through the reading of the Word and prayer. A Christian's life will be characterized by commitment to God, trust in God, and humble dependence upon God. A Christian will also seek to fulfil the second great commandment. He will love and serve his neighbour.


I enjoyed this book. Webster makes a very good point; namely, that the life of faith must bear the fruits of faith. Christ who redeems us by His blood *also* renews us by His Spirit. Christ saves us from self-centrism so that God may be the centre of our lives. If there are no fruits of faith, then we can only conclude that there is no faith. True conver-

sion will manifest itself in a life of good works. If there are no good works, there cannot have been a conversion.

What I greatly appreciated was the author's thorough use of Scripture. He constantly tries to repeat what the Bible is saying about following Christ as Lord. He also quotes many authors. His favourites among the old Reformed scholars are John Owens, Matthew Henry, and Jonathan Edwards. He also makes many references to scholars such as William Hendriksen, D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, A.W. Pink, J.I. Packer and John MacArthur Jr.

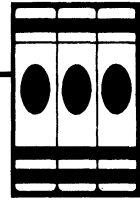
One criticism I would have is Webster's tendency to quote various authors at great length. Many quotations are at least a page long. The quotations are fitting and speak to his point, but I find such long quotations rather tedious.

Something that people who have been raised on redemptive-historical preaching may find a little disconcerting is Webster's inclination towards the exemplaristic use of biblical characters. David and Abraham are the favourites. For example, after writing at some length about how Abraham was a man of faith, Webster writes: "In the walk of faith, the Christian believer must do exactly what Abraham did" (p. 120). However, this does not take away from the great value of this book.

I can recommend this book. It will challenge you to follow the Lord in trust, in holiness, in obedience, and in humble submission to His Word. It will force you to examine yourself to see whether the fruits of faith are evident in your life. 

BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



The Life of John Duncan

Stuart, Alexander Moody

The Life of John Duncan. Carlisle, PA.: Banner of Truth 1991, 1st published in 1872 (hardcover, 231 pages, \$16.95 U.S.)

In this anecdotal account of the life of John Duncan (1796-1870), Alexander Moody Stuart, minister of St. Luke's Church in Edinburgh where Duncan was a member and elder, gives interesting biographical sketches. Stuart gives ample attention to Duncan's spiritual development from his early conversion through different spiritual trials and crises to the very sensitive Reformed preacher and scholar he became. The last chapters also highlight his character, moral features, theological views (Reformed), and his thoughts on preaching.

An important highlight in Duncan's life was his appointment as missionary to the Jews in Budapest, Hungary, by the church of Scotland in 1841. His work there was greatly blessed and it was here that he became known as Rabbi Duncan. Among those who believed the gospel were the highly re-

spected Saphir family, of whom Adolph Saphir became a missionary to the Jews as well. Another convert was Alfred Edersheim who would accompany Duncan back to Scotland to study theology at New College. He was ordained as minister in the Free Church of Scotland and became the author of books such as *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* (1883) and *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as They were at the Time of Jesus* (1874). Through converts such as these the fruits of this missionary activity were multiplied. On the basis of Romans 11, Duncan looked forward to the national conversion of Israel. He had a life long love for the Jews who were to him "beloved for the fathers' sake and for their own, and he could not endure the supposition that they were now cast off" (p. 206).

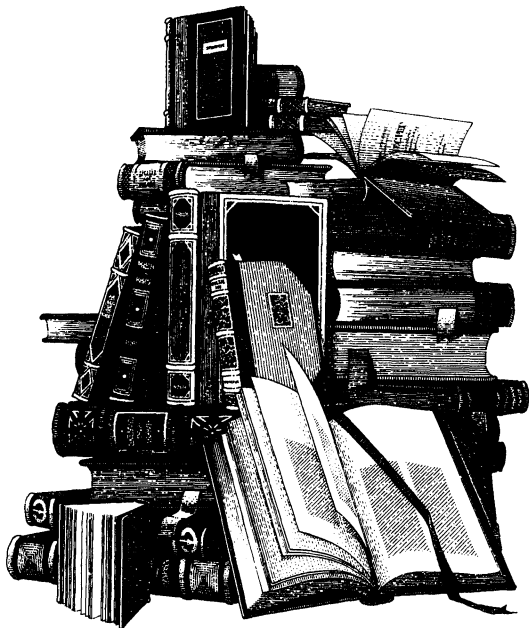
In 1843 the Disruption in the church of Scotland took place. Duncan threw in

his lot "ardently and joyfully" with those who formed themselves into the Free Church. (This is the same Free Church with which our Dutch sister churches now have ecclesiastical fellowship with.) In that same year, the Free Church appointed Dr. Duncan as Professor of Hebrew and Oriental Languages at New College in Edinburgh, the new training for the ministry established by the Free Church. He accepted believing that "he could thus best of all serve the cause of missions to the Jews" (p. 82). Thus started twenty-seven years of teaching.

Stuart very deftly and fairly describes the many aspects of Duncan as professor. Although a giant in intellect, he was a child in weakness of will in ordinary matters and duties. A.B. Davidson was appointed to help him and he proved to be a superb teacher. (His *Introductory Hebrew Grammar* is still in use, also at our Theological College.) Duncan was somewhat eccentric, but his devotion to the Lord and the gospel was obvious. Stuart gives several anecdotes to show how pastorally and with great sensitivity for the love of God Duncan could interrupt his lectures to give a moving testimony of how the passage under consideration affected him.

Professors are often caricatured as being absent minded. Duncan apparently really was! One example is that on the day of his marriage to his second wife, he went to his bedroom to change for the ceremony. After undressing he forgot why he had removed his clothes and so assumed it was bedtime. When the cab came to pick up the dressed bridegroom, he was found fast asleep in bed with a Hebrew book in his hand (p. 118)!

The Banner of Truth does an excellent job binding their hardcover books and this one is no exception. **C**





Regional Synod-West, June 16, 1992, Edmonton, AB

The chairman of the convening Church, Rev. E. Kampen, opens the meeting, requests the singing of Psalm 124:1, 3, reads Ephesians 2 and leads in prayer. All delegates are welcomed, as well as the visitors. A special welcome is extended to the grades 4 and 5 of the Parkland Immanuel School.

Credentials: All primi-delegates could attend. From Classis Alberta/Manitoba the Revs. R. Aasman, P.K.A. DeBoer, R.A. Schouten and J.D. Wielenga. Elders: L. Bredenhof, J. Kuik, W. VanWinkoop and J. Werkman. From Classis Pacific the Revs. J. Moesker, M.H. VanLuik, C. Van Spronsen and J. Visscher. Elders: R. Faber, H.H. Moes, P. VanderGugten and J. Vanderstoep.

Constitution: The following officers are chosen: chairman – Rev. J. Visscher, vice-chairman – Rev. C. Van Spronsen and clerk – Rev. R. Aasman. The chairman thanks the convening Church for the preparatory work. The agenda is adopted as presented.

Correspondence Received: Letters were received from the Churches at Winnipeg, Carman and Neerlandia appealing the decision of Classis Alberta/Manitoba of March 17-19, 1992 "not to grant the request of the Denver Church to be admitted as sister-church to Classis Alberta/Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and to advise this church to seek affiliation with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, which Presbytery received the Denver Church's initial request for membership in the OPC Regional Church."

These appeals were first given in general discussion. A Committee is formed to deal with these appeals. A second Committee will deal with the appeal of the Immanuel Church concerning the procedure of admitting a communication of Classis Ontario-South on the agenda of Classis Alberta/Manitoba.

The admissibility of a letter from the Church at Langley, BC concerning delegation to ecclesiastical assemblies is discussed. It is deleted from the agenda since

the churches did not have the opportunity to discuss these proposals.

After supper the meeting reopens in full session. Psalm 84:1, 2 is sung. Roll call is held. The Committees present their reports.

The report of Committee I is presented and adopted as follows:

I. The Regional Synod observes that:

A. The Church at Carman requests "Regional Synod to judge that Classis Alberta/Manitoba (of March '92) should not have advised the Christ American Reformed Church to seek affiliation with the OPC."

Carman states that:

1. "Classis failed to distinguish between recognizing the OPC as a "true church" and having a "sister-church relationship." Classis Alberta/Manitoba's decision contradicts decisions of these major assemblies for there we tell our own members not to have intercommunion and joint action with the OPC while Classis advises the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver to seek that kind of intercommunion and joint action (affiliation) with the OPC."

2. "The Decision of Classis Alberta/Manitoba is inconsistent when basing it on Article 28 of the Belgic Confession" because "the Christ American Reformed Church decided not to join the OPC partly because they found what we confess in Article 28 of the Belgic Confession to be lacking either in the doctrine or practice of the OPC."

3. "Classis erred when it implies that the matter of divergencies is a finished matter. It is unjust to send the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver to the OPC while we ourselves are not finished with this matter."

B. The Church at Neerlandia appeals the same decision and adds as grounds:

1. "Other divergencies have come to light which have not been studied exhaustively."

2. Classis' decision "is premature and one-sided. It did not take everything into consideration."

C. The Church at Winnipeg appeals the same decision and adds that the Christ American Reformed Church should have

been given a "full and fair hearing" recognizing that:

1. "The Canadian Reformed Churches are in an 'interim' period in their relationship with the OPC."

2. "During this 'interim' period precedents have been established by Classis Ontario-South in their dealings with the churches at Blue Bell and Laurel."

3. "Receiving the Christ American Reformed Church would not 'undermine or nullify the confessed ordinance of God concerning maintaining the unity of the Church' since the Canadian Reformed Churches at this time have only Ecclesiastical contact with the OPC and not a full sister-church relationship (Article 94, General Synods, Winnipeg 1989)."

II. The Regional Synod considers that:

a) In 1977 Synod Coaldale recognized the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (henceforth OPC) as a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ as confessed in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession (cf. Acts 1977, Art. 91). At subsequent Synods (1980, 1983, 1986, 1989) a number of Churches appealed this decision, however, these Synods steadfastly maintained the decision of Synod 1977.

b) Synod 1977 realized also that a sister-church relationship could not be established at the time with the OPC (due to some unfinished matters, as well as confusion about what form a permanent relationship should take) and instead offered them a temporary relationship called "Ecclesiastical Contact." Under the umbrella of "Ecclesiastical Contact," Synod 1977 expected the discussions with the OPC to continue and to prepare the way for sister-church relations or correspondence. Subsequent Synods, while adding various additional concerns to the agenda, have not abandoned the goal of reaching a sister-church relationship but have been diligent in charging the Committee for Contact with the OPC (henceforth CCOPC) to pursue this goal.

c) The appeals of the various Churches (Carman, Neerlandia, Winnipeg) to the Regional Synod against the classical decision to refer the Christ American Reformed Church of Denver back to the OPC must be considered within this larger context.

d) In arguing their case, the Churches at Carman, Neerlandia and Winnipeg, all place more emphasis on the divergencies than on the pronouncement of Synod 1977 to the effect that the OPC is a true Church. Synods since 1977 have steadfastly placed the divergencies within the context of declaring the OPC a true Church.

In this connection one must take note of the fact that the CCOPC was charged by Synod 1983 "to publish, for the benefit of our Churches, a detailed evaluation of the confession and church-political divergencies, showing proof that these divergencies do not form an impediment in recognizing the OPC as a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ." (Acts 1982, Art. 55, D, 2, b). This evaluation was published and received by Synod 1986 (Acts 1986, Art. 126). That Synod did not adopt the report and finalize the matter, as the Church of Carman mentions, does not detract from the fact that Synod 1986 received the report and continued to recognize the OPC as a true Church.

e) Synod 1989, in considering the appeal of the Church at Smithville, stated that this Church "fails to distinguish adequately between impediments to the recognition of the OPC as a true Church, and impediments to full correspondence with the OPC. The divergencies were not considered to be an impediment to the former, but may be impediments to the latter" (Acts 1989, Art. 94, IV, 2). Synod speaks of "May be impediments to the latter" (emphasis ours) meaning that this has yet to be determined by a future Synod.

The Church at Neerlandia is incorrect in stating that "confessional membership" and "fencing of the Lord's table" are new divergencies (see: Acts 1980, Art. 97, II, A, ii, a6, b2).

f) There is no evidence supplied by the Church at Winnipeg to prove that the admission of Blue Bell and Laurel into the federation of Churches serves as a "precedent" for the Church at Denver.

g) The Church at Carman states that the Classis decision "contradicts decision of these major assemblies for there we tell our members not to have intercommunion and joint action with the OPC while Classis advises the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver to seek that kind of intercommunion and joint action (affiliation) with the OPC." In making this statement the Church at Carman minimizes the different relationship of our Churches to the OPC and the relationship of the Denver Church to the OPC. If the Denver Church was a Church in our federation, then it would be contrary to synodical decisions for it to have intercommunion, etc. with the OPC; howev-

er, the Denver Church has never been a part of our federation and was either a part of the OPC or was well on its way to being received into the OPC upon its own request. The classical decision advises it to continue that process.

The Church at Winnipeg appears to overlook this fact when it says that Classis "erred by directing those who desire fellowship with the Canadian/American Reformed Churches away from us to the OPC with whom we do not have intercommunion or exchange of attestations." If the Denver Church and minister never had a relationship with the OPC, this would be true. Seeing their past dealings with the OPC, this conclusion is not an accurate reflection of the situation.

h) The Church at Winnipeg mentions that the Denver Church has "serious confessional divergencies and major issues of concern with the OPC...." If this is the case, then the proper course of actions would be for the Denver Church to bring these concerns to the courts of the OPC and request a judgment on these matters from them. In this way it would "serve the edification of the brothers and sisters, according to the talents which God has given them as members of the same body" (Article 28, B.C.). There is no evidence to indicate that this has been done, or has even been seriously considered by it.

III. The Regional Synod judges that:

Classis Alberta/Manitoba did not err in not granting "the request of the Denver Church to be admitted as a sister Church to Classis Alberta/Manitoba of the Canadian Reformed Churches, and to advise this Church to seek affiliation with the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, which Presbytery received the Denver Church's initial request for membership in the OPC Regional Church" (see: Article 16 of the Acts of Classis AB/MB, March 17-19, 1992).

The report of Committee II is presented and adopted. The Immanuel Church of Edmonton appealed Art. 11A of the Acts of Classis AB/MB of Dec. 10, 11/92: "A letter is received with addenda, on behalf of an ad hoc committee appointed by Classis Ontario South of Sept. 11/12, 1991, regarding the request of the Christ American Reformed Church at Denver, CO, U.S.A., which seeks affiliation with the Canadian and American Reformed Churches...This letter with addenda is declared admissible."

The Immanuel Church asked Regional Synod to judge that Classis was wrong in declaring this submission admissible because:

1) The agenda for classis is determined by the churches of the classical area;

2) It gives the impression that classes function like a presbytery, as if they are a permanent body;

3) If a classis cannot finish a matter it should address the major assembly, i.e., the next regional synod (C.O. Art. 30).

Regional Synod denied this request considering that: 1) Art. 30 of the C.O. does make provisions to deal with matters which pertain to the churches in common; 2) the letter was addressed to a particular classical meeting; and 3) Classis Ontario South found it necessary to consult with Classis AB/MB in order to finish this matter.

Reports/Proposals: The Immanuel Church of Edmonton submitted a report on the archives. They were inspected and found to be in good order.

Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O. attended Classis Pacific of Oct. 8, 9/91 and gave concurring advice to receive the Rev. W.M. Wielenga as Minister of the Word and to grant the Rev. M. VanderWel honourable retirement as of Jan. 1, 1992.

The Immanuel Church of Edmonton recommends to reword Art. 1F of the regulations of Regional Synod to read as follows: "All appeals should ordinarily be at the convening Church at least one month before Synod convenes, in 33 copies. All proposals and reports should be at the convening Church also one month before Synod convenes, with sufficient copies for all delegates and alternates, as well as a copy for each Church and the archives." Adopted.

The books of the treasurer of Regional Synod, br. H. Lubbers, were examined and found to be in good order by br. J.W. Moedt. Regional Synod decides to maintain the rates of reimbursement for travel at 27 cents per km and the loss of wage claims at \$100.00 a day (maximum of \$500.00 per week).

Appointments: As delegates to *General Synod 1992* the following are appointed:

Ministers: Primi: Revs. R. Aasman, C. Van Spronsen, J. Visscher and J.D. Wielenga. Alternates: Revs. J. Moesker, R. Schouten, E. Kampen and M.H. VanLuik (in that order).

Elders: Primi: P. Meliefste, W. Van Assen, P. VanderGugten and J. Werkman. Alternates: P. VanderPol, J. DeVries, C.T. Sikma and T. Termeer (in that order).

Regional Synod nominates for the *Board of Governors* the Revs. B.J. Berends, C. Van Spronsen (re-nominated) and Rev. J. Visscher to replace the Rev. M. VanderWel who retired from active service. Alternates: the Revs. R. Aasman, J. Moesker and P.K.A. DeBoer (in that order).

Treasurer: br H. Lubbers is reappointed.

Church for keeping Archives: The Providence Church at Edmonton is reappointed.

Church for Inspection of Archives: The Immanuel Church of Edmonton is reappointed.

Deputies ad Art. 48 C.O.: Reappointed – the Revs. P.K.A. DeBoer and J.D. Wielenga (Alternate E.J. Tiggelaar) and B.J. Berends and J. Visscher (Alternate C. Van Spronsen).

Arrangements next Regional Synod: The Church at Houston is appointed to be the convening Church. Place: Houston, BC. Date: June 15, 1993.

No matters were brought up at the Question Period.

Censure ad Art. 44 was not necessary.

Acts are read and adopted.

Press Release is read and approved.

The chairman, Rev. J. Visscher, thanks the ladies of the Immanuel Church for all their work and effort in taking such good care of the delegates and expresses the hope that the Lord will bless the decisions taken. He requests the singing of Ps. 147:1, 6, leads in thanksgiving prayer and closes the meeting.

Vice-chariman e.t.
C. Van Spronsen

Classis Pacific June 16 and 17, 1992

On behalf of the Maranatha Church at Surrey, br. G. Geurts welcomed the delegates. He requested the brothers to sing together Psalm 92:1, 2 and read the same Psalm from Scripture. He then led in prayer for wisdom and God's blessing on the assembly.

The credentials were examined by the delegates from Smithers and found to be in good order. Classis was declared constituted, and the proposed moderamen took their places. Chairman was Rev. C. Van Spronsen; vice-chairman, Rev. J. Moesker; clerk, Rev. B.J. Berends.

The chairman welcomed a number of visitors, including home missionary from Smithers, Rev. M.K. Marren. He also made note of a number of memorabilia. The church at Abbotsford has called Rev. Cl. Stam, who declined the call. The church at Port Kells has purchased property for church and manse, and is waiting for the arrival of Rev. E. Kampen who will be installed in August. Rev. B.J. Berends has returned from his sick leave and resumed his task in Smithers. Maranatha church at Surrey is now vacant, since Rev. G.H. Visscher has departed to Burlington. The church at Vernon had the official opening of their new church building. Rev. R. Boersema was struck with an eye illness, and it was

hoped that the Lord would grant him recovery so that he may continue his mission work in Brazil.

An agenda for the meeting was adopted. There were eight appeals which were all declared admissible and dealt with in closed session. At 10:00 p.m. the chairman led in closing prayer, and Classis was adjourned until the next day.

Classis was reconvened the next day. The meeting was opened with singing, Scripture reading and prayer. The delegates again met in closed session to deal with the appeals.

After the appeals had been dealt with, the chairman asked the delegates, according to Article 44 of the Church Order, whether the ministry of the office-bearers is being continued, and whether the decisions of the major assemblies are being honoured in their churches. The delegates of all the churches responded affirmatively.

According to Article 44 of the Church Order, the chairman then asked whether there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of their church. The church at Smithers requested advice in a matter of attestations, and advice was given.

The following appointments were made: convening church for next classis – Abbotsford; proposed moderamen next classis – chairman Rev. J. Moesker, vice-chairman Rev. B.J. Berends, clerk Rev. W.M. Wielenga; date next classis – Oct. 6, 1992 at 9:00 a.m. in Smithers.

Some of the brothers made use of personal question period. Mutual censure was not required. The Acts and Press Release were read and adopted. After Psalm 90:1, 8 were sung, the chairman led in prayer, and declared the meeting of classis closed.

For Classis Pacific
June 16 and 17, 1992,
Rev. J. Moesker,
vice-chairman e.t.

Classis Ontario-South, June 10-11, 1992

1. On behalf of the convening church of Grand Rapids, br. J. Ten Haaf opened the meeting of the delegates of classis in a Christian manner. He welcomed all, especially the guests.

2. After the examination of the credentials, classis was constituted. Rev. Sijtsma and Rev. Van Rietschoten were seated in an advisory capacity.

3. The chairman thanked the convening church for the preparatory work they had done. He further welcomed the deputies ad Art. 48 (Rev. Nederveen and

Rev. Feenstra) as well as Rev. Martyn Van Essen, now a member of the Canadian Reformed Church at Ancaster. He remembered a) the passing away of Edward Stam and the condition of Richard Stam; b) that the church at Smithville had now received its own minister; c) that there were still four vacant churches in the classical region of Ontario-South.

4. In the absence of Rev. Stam, classis appointed br. A. Witten as clerk. Rev. Agema served as chairman and Rev. Moes as vice-chairman.

5. After some alterations, the agenda was adopted.

6. A communication from the deputies for examination was deemed inadmissible on the ground that it had not come from one of the churches.

7. After reviewing the relevant documents, classis proceeded with the examination of Rev. T. Hoogsteen. Rev. Hoogsteen delivered a sermon proposal on Mark 10:45 which was discussed in closed session. In open session, Rev. Hoogsteen was informed that there were no objections to continuing the examination.

8. After recessing for lunch, the examination was continued. In closed session, classis discussed the examination and, with the concurring advice of the deputies ad Art. 48, concluded to a favourable outcome. In open session, Rev. Hoogsteen was informed of this decision of classis, upon which he signed the Form of Subscription. After reviewing the relevant documents, classis approached the call of Rev. Hoogsteen. Members of classis were then given the opportunity to congratulate Rev. Hoogsteen and his wife.

9. After recessing for supper, classis reconvened and examined br. J. Ludwig, after he had submitted the relevant documents. Br. Ludwig delivered a sermon proposal on Heb. 13:9-14 which was discussed in closed session. In open session, br. Ludwig was informed that there were no objections to continuing the examination. In closed session, this preparatory examination was discussed with a favourable outcome. In open session, br. Ludwig was informed of this decision of classis. After he promised not to teach anything that would conflict with the Word of God and the confessions, he was given his declaration of eligibility for call. Members of classis were then given the opportunity to congratulate br. Ludwig and his wife. Classis adjourned for the day.

10. After reconvening at 9 a.m. on June 11, classis proceeded with the request of a student to receive permission to speak an edifying word in the churches. This request was not granted.

11. After recessing for lunch, classis dealt with Question Period ad Art. 44 C.O. All the churches answered the relevant questions. One church needed advice.

12. The following items of correspondence were received: a) a letter from the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC; b) a letter from Classis Alberta/Manitoba of March 17-19, 1992; c) a letter from Rev. H. Martyn Van Essen asking to declare him eligible for call within the Canadian and American Reformed Churches after the appropriate procedure is taken. After acknowledging this request with thankfulness, classis appointed a committee to deal with this request; d) a letter from the committee ad hoc discharged by Classis Ontario-South of Jan. 29 and Feb. 11, 1992.

13. The following reports were received and accepted: a) a report from the classical treasurer; b) a report from the auditors of the financial books of the classi-

cal treasurer; c) a report from the church in charge of checking the classical archives; d) a report from the church at Chatham for the Fund for Needy Students. Classis noted with thankfulness this was the 40th anniversary report of br. A.J. Ytsma; e) church visitation reports to the churches of Lincoln, Watford, Blue Bell, and Laurel.


14. The following appointments were made: a) convening church for the next classis: Hamilton; b) suggested officers: Rev. de Gelder (chairman), Rev. Stam (vice-chairman), Rev. Agema (clerk); c) place and date: Attercliffe on Sept. 9, 1992; d) Treasurer for classis: br. D. Van Amerongen, 342 Russ Road, RR 1, Grimsby, ON, L3M 4E7; e) church for auditing the books of the treasurer: Lincoln; f) church for taking care of the archives: London; g) church to inspect the classical archives: Watford; h) church visitors (all ministers); i) examiners: Deputies for ex-

amination – Rev. Stam and Rev. de Gelder, Doctrine – Rev. Stam, Exegesis O.T. – Rev. Agema, Exegesis N.T. – Rev. Hofford, Church History – Rev. Kok, Ethics – Rev. Moes, Knowledge of Scripture – Rev. Hoogsteen, Diaconology – Rev. Moes, Church Polity – Rev. Snip; j) church for financial aid to students for the ministry: Chatham; k) the committee re: the requests of Rev. Martyn Van Essen: Rev. de Gelder (c), Rev. Agema, br. Witten; l) church to represent Classis Ontario-South at the installation of Rev. Hoogsteen: Smithville.

16. Censure ad Art. 44 C.O. was not necessary.

17. The Acts were adopted and the press release approved.

18. The chairman closed classis in a Christian manner.

On behalf of Classis Ontario-South of June 10-11, 1992,
D. Moes vice-chairman e.t. 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers

It's a summer TRADITION of our Club!

EVERY summer we have a big QUIZ CONTEST!

We've had a Summer Quiz Contest for so many years!

Here's your chance to join in one great tradition.

See how many of the quizzes you can answer ON YOUR OWN.

Then think of what HELPS you have – a children's Bible, a Bible handbook, a Bible encyclopedia. A concordance works great, too!

Have fun joining in!

Lots of success!

Quiz Time!

Quiz #1 – MIRACLES

Match the miracle with the person.

___ 1. Devils were cast out of him

___ 2. Survived a snake bite

___ 3. Walked on water

___ 4. Increased the widow's oil

___ 5. Saw a burning bush

___ 6. Had a vision of an angel measuring Jerusalem

___ 7. Journeyed to heaven on a whirlwind

___ 8. Wrote about a vision of heaven

___ 9. Turned water into wine

___ 10. Survived a flood on a boat he built

a) Elisha

b) John

c) Noah

d) Legion

e) Zechariah

f) Moses

g) Paul

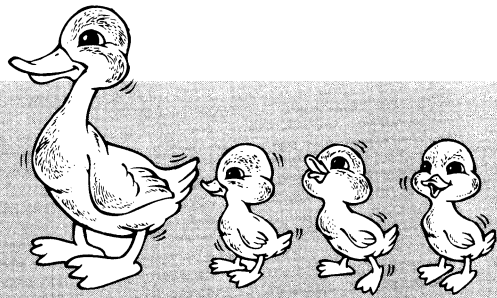
h) Peter

i) Elijah

j) the Lord Jesus

Quiz #2 – THIEVES

Match the thief with what is stolen and from whom it was stolen.

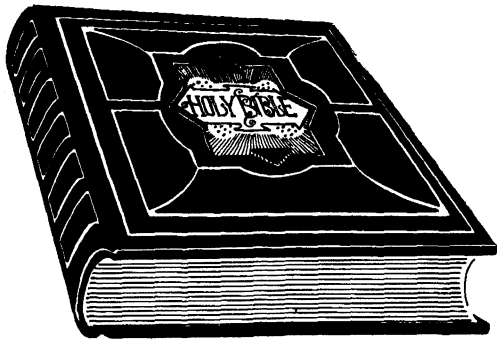


- | | | |
|---------------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| ___ ___ 1. Ahab | A. Joash | a) Jerusalem temple |
| ___ ___ 2. Jacob | B. images | b) the king's house |
| ___ ___ 3. Achan | C. birthright | c) mother |
| ___ ___ 4. Absalom | D. brass pillars | d) Naboth |
| ___ ___ 5. Jehosheba | E. silver | e) Esau |
| ___ ___ 6. Rachel | F. vineyard | f) Athaliah |
| ___ ___ 7. Shishak | G. treasures | g) Jericho |
| ___ ___ 8. Micah | H. hearts | h) David |
| ___ ___ 9. Nebuchadnezzar | I. spoils | i) Laban |

Quiz #3 – THEY CRIED OUT

People often "cry out" to someone about something. Match the persons who cried out with what they cried out about.

- ___ 1. The people when the Lord Jesus entered Jerusalem
- ___ 2. The Israelites before the golden calf was made
- ___ 3. The crowd at the Lord Jesus' trial
- ___ 4. The sons of the prophets to Elisha
- ___ 5. The disciples as Jesus walked on water
- ___ 6. The people at Jerusalem when Paul gave his testimony
- ___ 7. A man with an unclean spirit
- ___ 8. Two blind men
- ___ 9. Stephen as he was stoned
- ___ 10. David, upon hearing tragic news
- ___ 11. The Lord Jesus on the cross



- a. "O man of God, there is death in the pot!"
- b. "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"
- c. "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth?"
- d. "Up, make us gods, who shall go before us...."
- e. "Away with such a fellow from the earth! For he ought not to live."
- f. "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"
- g. "Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!"
- h. "Lord, do not hold this sin against them"
- i. "It is a ghost!"
- j. "O my son Absolom, my son, my son Absolom!"
- k. "Crucify Him."