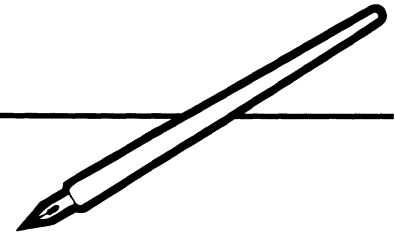




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By J. Geertsema



Mopping the floor while leaving the tap open

With these words one could quite well characterize much of modern “wisdom.” It is striking how many actions are undertaken and organizations set up to prevent bad things to happen. Let me mention a few things. One can read that boards of the public high schools vote in favour of condom machines in the school’s bathroom. In this way the bad consequences of venereal diseases and AIDS, as well as unwanted pregnancies, can be prevented.

Then there are the cries of many women that they need more protection. The streets are not safe for them anymore, in particular when it is evening and dark. Those who come home from work in the evening live in constant fear that they may be assaulted. Other women complain about sexual harassment with words or hands in the place where they work. Therefore, something has to be done to make the workplace more safe.

We can agree that something should be done to make the streets and the workplace more safe and to prevent contracting AIDS or teenage pregnancies out of wedlock. It is terrible when women are harassed and assaulted. It is horrible when young girls are abducted and murdered after who knows what was done to them. Premarital, teenage intercourse causes so much trouble and pain. It shatters the basis for marriage. Something should be done! But what?

In the meantime, the movie industry, video producers, radio and television people, newspapers and book publishers, they all can continue to make money with their products in which free and often perverse sex and violence continue to pervert the minds of the readers and viewers. This is done in the name of human rights and freedom. Some time ago the television in Ontario paid much attention to a girl that wanted to go, and went, bare-breasted on the street. She called all the women in Ontario to follow her example some day in July. Some tried to heed her call. As for the workplace, there are women and girls who present themselves in tight, low-necked, and short dresses, attracting the attention of the other gender. Again, much of this is done in the name of freedom and human rights.

This does not mean that all the blame should come upon women and girls. On the contrary. Not only are men often the designers of women’s clothing; it is men in the first place who indulge in “unchaste acts, gestures, words, thoughts, desires, and whatever may entice us to unchastity” (Heidelberg Catechism L.D. 41). In his perverted mind, man dishonours the female gender, and therewith their Maker. Instead of controlling himself, he lets himself, that is, his mind go on its perverse trip, which then results in words

and acts of sexual immorality against God and against a woman or girl. Here is the opposite of what Job said about himself: “I have made a covenant with my eyes; how then could I look upon a virgin.”

There is therefore certainly reason for this protesting against male perversion and cruelty, for this crying for protection. However, this crying and protesting, this setting up actions and organizations, is mopping the floor while leaving the tap wide open.

It is the foolishness of humanism that has rejected and continues to reject the wisdom of God. This wisdom teaches us, first of all, that man without faith in the true God (in God the Father and our creation through Him, in Jesus Christ, His Son, and our redemption from sin through Him, and in God the Holy Spirit and the sanctification of our life through Him) is lost in his sinfulness and sin. Modern mankind does not want to know about sin and the call for repentance and conversion from sin. Modern men and women want to have and to allow the (devilish) “freedom” to sin. They want to have and allow all the things that can provoke to sin. Movies in theaters and on videos, and on television, books, magazines and papers, they all arouse the sex drive in the minds and bodies of many with dominating force. And so does the way in which sometimes girls and women dress.

Besides the refusal to listen to God’s Word when it teaches about sin and the sinful nature of man, there is the refusal to live by what God, the Creator and Redeemer, has commanded in His Word as the proper way of conduct for man. This is the refusal to believe in Christ as the only Saviour both through His blood unto the forgiveness of sin, and through the Holy Spirit unto the renewal of life. Renewal is a return to the Word and wisdom of God, and so to a holy life in true love for Him and for the neighbour, a love that is rooted in obedience to all that God has revealed.

If we want to mop the floor and get all that dirty water out of the house we live in, let us begin with closing the tap through which we allow all the dirt to come in and defile everything.

This is the world. The church of the LORD is wiser because it lives by what God says. This is what one would expect. Is the church really wiser? Or must we say that the same often happens in the church? When we look in the church’s history, or when we look around us in the present ecclesiastical world, the same thing is happening. People are mopping the floor of their church house, while they leave the tap wide open. Many a church complains about

decrease in attention and membership. In the report of the synod of the Christian Reformed Church we could read that great concern was expressed about the ecclesiastical finances, specifically of Calvin Seminary. Education was offered as a cure. The church members had to be educated about giving for the service of the Lord and His church. One delegate said: The problem is not in lack of knowledge about giving for the Lord; the problem is lack of trust in the seminary because of its direction. Another problem was the great number of young people leaving the church. It was proposed to set up a special youth committee with a full-time worker. This youth problem is not only present in the CRC. But is another special committee the solution? Or is the solution a return to a firm and clear "Thus says the LORD" in the weekly preaching?

If we, in the church, as in the world, want to clean up and solve problems, the first thing we ought to do is closing the tap through which the dirty water enters our "house." Close the tap through which a worldly lifestyle in thinking and conduct enters. Close the tap through which

doctrinal deviation from God's Word dominates and defiles the sphere. God said and says to His people: You shall put the evil out of your midst (e.g. Deut. 13:5, 1 Cor. 5:13). He does not say this to others only. We, too, have to take this to heart.

That which counts for the world and for the church, counts also for our own personal life and for our families. If we want to drive out evil, sinful conduct, let us close the taps which bring evil into our homes and minds and life. Hereby, let us not forget that as church and as church members, we are called to be the light of Christ for this dark world. We are to show this light of Christ as Saviour from sin in our good works, in our Christian, that is, biblical conduct, that has to accompany our message. God places this responsibility upon our shoulders. That our Western world is what it is today is for a large part the consequence of the unfaithfulness and apostasy of the churches during the last centuries. God wants to call the world to repentance and faith through the faithful church (cf. Rev. 11). **C**

Reformed three times over?¹

By Rev. Harm J. Boiten

This article is taken over from Lux Mundi, published quarterly by the Committee on Relations with Churches Abroad of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands.

Rev. H.J. Boiten presently serves one of the churches of Enschede, the Netherlands, as minister.

The Synod of Leeuwarden 1990 appointed him as one of the deputies for the contact with the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken.

Ecclesiastical unity a calling?

In this article we will deal with the relationships between:

- The (Liberated) Reformed Churches, related to the Canadian and American Reformed Churches,
- The Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken (Christ. Geref. Churches), whose sister churches in North America are the Free Reformed Churches, not to be confused with the Christian Reformed Church in North America and
- The Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken (=Netherlands Reformed Churches; called hereafter in this article: Ned. Geref. Churches), which split off from and left the (lib) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in the late sixties;

they must not be confused with the Netherlands Reformed Churches on this North American continent.

These relationships are baffling to say the least, especially for those who have not witnessed their development.

For a better understanding a brief review of the recent history may be helpful. After the liberation in 1944 the (Lib) Reformed Churches and the Christ. Geref. Churches met again. How did that happen? What took place? At the outset, what was the purpose of that dialogue? How did these churches regard each other as prospective partners in that discussion?

The (Lib) Reformed Churches have clearly expressed themselves in their stated intentions. Their aim was nothing less than ecclesiastical unity, to live together as churches. Not in an arrogant manner of "let those Christ. Geref. Churches come and join us." No, they used the humble language of the Act of Liberation and Return ("Acte van Vrijmaking of Wederkeer"): "being ready and willing, as soon as this can be, to exercise communion with all those, who in the unity of the doctrine which is in accordance with the Word of God, desire to live with us in an accepted, or

to be accepted church order based on that Word."

Therein the Christ. Geref. Churches were not specifically targeted. The aim was principally to reach out to "all who with us are founded on that same basis of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity." But for practical reasons the efforts were concentrated on the Christ. Geref. Churches. It took until the synod of Leeuwarden 1990 before deputies were mandated to seek ecclesiastical unity in a wider range than the Christ. Geref. Churches alone. Apparently practical considerations can narrow down a field that is in principle very wide.

The first ordinary general synod of the (Lib) Reformed Churches after the Liberation, the one of Groningen 1946, did contact the Christ. Geref. Churches in order to "explore through discussion and correspondence what unites us and what keeps us still separate, and to search together for ways which under God's blessing may lead to ecclesiastical unity." (Acts Art. 88)

The (Lib) Reformed Churches have never lost sight of that purpose. Not even when at the General Synod of Amersfoort W. 1967 it was decided to terminate the contact in the form of

exchange between synodical committees. The reason was not that the Christ. Geref. Churches were no longer regarded as true churches of the Lord Jesus. But it was the fact that the Christ. Geref. Churches refused to come to terms with respect to all kinds of obstacles and objections that had been raised on their side. The contact was terminated, because the synod was convinced that "only through clearly articulated decisions by the Christ. Geref. Churches can the road be found which will lead to ecclesiastical unity." The synod was of the opinion that "there is no other way to proceed."

Later synods did write letters, but no longer appointed deputies. This status changed at the Synod of Spakenburg Noord 1987. This synod appointed new deputies, "with the heartfelt desire to seek the Christ. Geref. Churches in accordance with the calling of the gospel." The exchange of letters between synods had proven to be unfruitful, but the calling of the gospel remained. The word of God does not change. It demands creative initiatives when things have run stuck. When Holy Writ (See John 17:20,21, Phil. 2:1-4, Eph. 4:1-6) urges us to aim for ecclesiastical unity, then the Lord will not withhold His Spirit from those who unceasingly pray for it.

For this drive to seek ecclesiastical unity the (Lib) Reformed Churches need not be ashamed. Three matters are important in this respect. In the first place one must be weary of activism, as if the achieving of unity would be totally dependent on human efforts. Human pride has never created anything good. The realization of ecclesiastical unity is in the hands of the sovereign Lord. He must be called upon in prayer.

On the other hand there is the risk of passiveness; a dangerous trap. One can cross one's arms and do nothing except repeat that it must come from the Spirit. The Holy Spirit binds us to His Word and He calls us through that Word. Therefore there is a call for obedient active work through the power of the Holy Spirit for all those who stand on the basis of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity.

In the third place it must be understood that ecclesiastical unification is a process in which the parties must grow towards each other. That is not effected overnight, with a jump from speed zero to one hundred. All manner of stagnation and all kinds of obstacles must be overcome.

It is thereby also important to note how the (Lib) Reformed Churches and the Christ. Geref. Churches have regarded each other and accepted – or not accepted – as churches of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Mutual recognition

In the discussions the (Lib) Reformed Churches have never made it a secret how they regarded the Christ. Geref. Churches. This should be very clear. We have often been asked whether the (Lib) Reformed Churches could indeed declare that the Christ. Geref. Churches are true churches of Christ. In my opinion the (Lib) Reformed Churches have never given cause for such questioning. The first Synod of Groningen simply described the Christ. Geref. Churches as a church "which with us stands on the same basis of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity." This is not at all an ambiguous formulation. It did not state "desires to stand" so that you can hint at the presence of good intentions, but meanwhile leave the actual status in the dark. No, honestly and openly the (Lib) Reformed Churches spoke of the Christ. Geref. Churches as churches who stand on the same basis, God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity. And this was declared, while the Reformed Churches wanted to have nothing to do with Dr A. Kuyper's theories about the "invisible church" and about "pluriformity."

In 1987 the (Lib) Reformed Churches have approached the Christ. Geref. Churches again and in the same manner. Dialogue was sought again. God's word commits us to aim at ecclesiastical unity with all those who with us, through the one Spirit, adore the one Lord, and confess the one same faith, so that all may let themselves be gathered in the unity of the true faith.

The first request for verbal exchanges from the (Lib) Reformed Churches arrived at the Synod of Utrecht 1947 of the Christ. Geref. Churches. That synod received a similar request from the Synodically Reformed Churches (SynRC). The Christ. Geref. Churches responded by appointing deputies for contact with Reformed confessors. Their mandate was to establish contact with the SynRC and the (Lib) Reformed Churches and with other churches and groups who accepted the Reformed confessions. The Christ. Geref. Churches spoke of a calling to establish contact with those who profess to be standing on that same con-

fession and to examine whether they do indeed, with us, build on the same foundation in order to then promote the unity that is demanded in that Word and confession.

From the beginning the Christ. Geref. Churches aimed at broader contact. Not only with the SynRC, but also with the Reformed Alliance within the Dutch Reformed State Church. Furthermore, the Christ. Geref. Churches refused to declare of the (Lib) Reformed Churches that they stood with them on the same basis of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity. For them the purpose of the exchanges was not in the first place to come to ecclesiastical unity, but rather to examine whether there was indeed an adherence to that same foundation.

The latest synod of the Christ. Geref. Churches at Groningen 1989 still valued that wider contact. In the meantime no mention is made any more of contact with the SynRC. And the era of Christ. Geref. Churches participation in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod is also a matter of the past. But there is still contact with the Reformed Alliance in the Dutch Reformed State Church. And there is contact with the Ned. Geref. Churches. With respect to our churches this synod recognized, notwithstanding serious differences, that the "Reformed Churches (Liberated) in every respect desired to stand on the foundation of the Reformed Confession" (italics added). And those differences ended up still so serious that they do form an obstacle for ecclesiastical unity.

From this it is obvious that after 46 years of discussions, exchanges and correspondence nothing has changed very much, and no appreciable improvements were reached. The Christ. Geref. Churches continue to aim at broader contacts. And notwithstanding explanatory declarations to the contrary, the synod of the Christ. Geref. Churches refused again to state that the (Lib.) Reformed Churches stand on the foundation of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity, but only that they desire to do so. Therefore the primary task of the deputies of the Christ. Geref. Churches is still to work at removing those obstacles and serious differences, and to help each other to be truly Reformed churches. Ecclesiastical unity is presently not achievable.

What is the reason that there is so little real progress in this contact? Is there a lack of wisdom in the search for the actual realization of this unity,

hich is called for by the Scriptures? Or it only unwillingness, and hence, sobedience?

Both churches presented themselves to each other as an ecclesiastical communion. And in that manner they accepted each other as partners in the discussion. But are those communions indeed a true reality? True, the Christ. Geref. Churches in their major assemblies are one federation. But are the Christ. Geref. Churches indeed a spiritual unity? The same question could be asked about the (Lib) Reformed Churches. Were they indeed a unity during the last several years? Is here reason for self-reproach?

Are the Christ. Geref. Churches ecclesiastically one?

The ecclesiastical unity in the Christ. Geref. Churches has always been assumed in the official church correspondence. But was that rightly so? For years there were three groups whose influence was recognized as a presence in the Christ. Geref. Churches.

First there is the reformatoric middle group, then there is the group directed by the "Further Reformation" often indicated as the "Guard what has been entrusted" (Bewaar het Pand) group (the name is based on 1 Tim. 6:20), and then there is the group which is not altogether free from the influence of modern theology, also called the Amersfoort group. More refined subdivisions are possible, but for now we leave it at that. It is not my intention to provide a detailed chart of the development of these groups. But a few points should be mentioned.

Initially very little was said in public about these three different groups, but that has changed in recent years. Not that so much came to the fore at the ecclesiastical assemblies. Most of it took place in the press. In 1977 P.A. Bergwerff published a series of interviews in the *Nederlands Dagblad* with Christian Reformed ministers, each one of whom spoke from his own orientation. Rev. G. Bouw was most attracted by the "Guard what has been entrusted" circle. Rev. J.H. Velema presented himself as the man of the middle. Rev. W.C. Moerdijk considered the variety within the Christ. Geref. Churches to be legitimate. In an evaluating interview with Prof W.H. Velema the matter of mutually refused access to the pulpit within the federation was discussed.

The "Guard what has been entrusted," people feel somewhat akin to the

Reformed Congregations [in North America called the Netherlands Reformed Church] and to the Reformed Alliance in the Dutch Reformed State Church. Against the practice of so called objective preaching they cite the danger of covenant idealism and covenant automatism. According to them such preaching leads to taking lightly the questions of eternal importance. This "experiential" movement places a great and in my opinion incorrect emphasis on God's election, which leads to an underemphasis on the gospel of God's grace. In their "subjective" preaching the emphasis is placed on the necessity of regeneration, personal repentance and on the application of the work of the Holy Spirit, the so called appropriation of salvation.

The modern direction lives with entirely different questions. There is a search for answers to the challenges of the contemporary culture. There are tensions about the authority of Scripture, about the bond with the old confessions. There are questions about the liturgy and about ethical issues. This movement is sometimes called "the group of Amersfoort," after a study and reflection session of Christian Reformed Ministers in the vicinity of Amersfoort. Several of those ministers

have since joined the Dutch Reformed State Church.

The opinions expressed by Prof Dr. B.J. Oosterhoff and the late Dr. J.P. Versteeg about the authority of Scripture also posed questions. Prof. Oosterhoff perceived "symbolical language" in Genesis 2 and 3. These matters were discussed internally, but not openly before the outside world. Yet the Christ. Geref. Churches can act publicly and decisively, when the confession is at stake: Lecturer Drs. J. Kruis was suspended and deposed. Financial aid to the Young peoples' magazine *DIA* was terminated.

The middle group, rooted in the Reformed tradition, desires to hold fast to the foundation of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity and wishes to maintain the unity within the Christ. Geref. Churches.

Discussion of these differences in the press and at conferences of office-bearers now takes place more often than in the past. Take for example the conference held at Amersfoort in October 1991. At that occasion Prof. Van 't Spijker underscored the seriousness of the internal division within the Christ. Geref. Churches. He called the unity of those churches, whom he serves as professor at the Theological University of Apeldoorn, no more than a sham.



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Typical of the division is the fact that several pulpits are closed to specific ministers. To top that off, church members can decide for themselves to which congregation they wish to belong. (*Nederlands Dagblad*, March 10, 1991). Rev. P. den Butter also speaks of inner divisions and the closed pulpits. He is not surprised that the phenomenon of the selective access to the pulpit has found its way into the Christ. Geref. Churches, because the differences were becoming so serious that people lost confidence in each other. Pulpits are not only closed into one direction. (*Bewaar het Pand*, January 28, 1992)

Such problems, overt or under cover, have, without a doubt, made the contacts with the (Lib) Reformed Churches more strenuous.

Are the Reformed Churches a unity?

In view of the lack of progress in the contacts between the Christ. Geref. Churches and the (Lib) Reformed Churches we should also ask the question whether the (Lib) Reformed Churches are really such an ecclesiastical unity. In the official documentation that unity was always assumed as a fact. But was that rightly so?

After the Liberation the (Lib) Reformed Churches experienced a great deal of unrest for a considerable length of time. The controversy about the pros and cons of a conference with the Synodical Reformed Church ((Syn.) Ref. Church) never quite died down, and it became acute as a result of the so-called "setting aside": in 1959 the synod of the (Syn.) Ref. Church set aside its earlier doctrinal pronouncements about baptism and regeneration. Things did not become any quieter when Rev. A. van der Ziel, minister of Groningen Zuid, on his own initiative, entered into private discussions with the (Syn.) Ref. Church. It resulted in his suspension by the consistory. This decision was opposed and those who placed themselves behind Rev. Van der Ziel (who a little later joined the (Syn.) Ref. Church) formed their separate "TeHuis Congregation" (named after the place where they met). The decisions of the Synod of Rotterdam Delfshaven 1965 of the (Lib) Reformed Churches about the validity of the suspension grounds and the suspension process, did not bring the desired peace either. With the publication in October 1966 of the Open Letter as demonstration of support for the

"TeHuis Congregation" in Groningen, the tension reached the breaking point.


In the meantime Rev. B. Telder, minister at Breda, had published his book *Sterven en dan?* (What after death?) Telder clearly deviated from the accepted confession in Lord's Day 22 of the Heidelberg Catechism. He also ended up in violation of the subscription form. This led to a schism in the South. As a result of the conflict regarding the Open Letter the church of the city of Kampen, seat of the Theological University broke up. In the province of North Holland two regional synods contended with each other. Notwithstanding the heart-warming and powerful appeal by the Synod of Hooerveen 1969/70 a considerable number of ministers and church members ended up outside the federation and formed the *Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken* (Ned. Geref. Churches).

It was quite clear then, and later it became clearer yet, what was at stake, namely, whether one would stand unequivocally on the foundation of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity, in accordance with the subscription form. Also at stake was the right of the independent existence of the (Lib) Reformed Churches over against the (Syn.) Ref. Church. Furthermore, the (Lib) Reformed Churches clearly denounced an independent approach in the relationship among the churches.

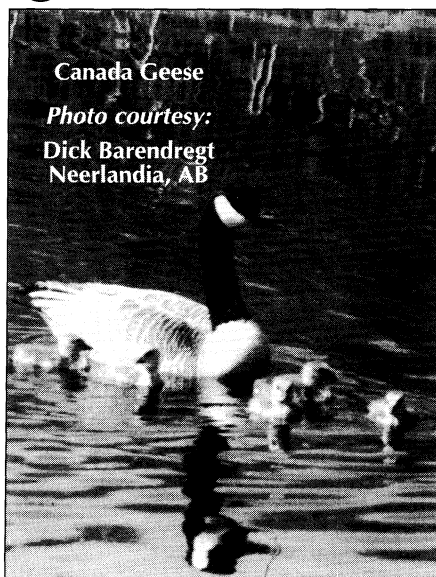
After that the churches witnessed a peaceful rebuilding of church life and a growing ecclesiastical unity. That

unity became apparent in the unanimous rejection of the heresy of Rev. J. Hoorn about the church. This issue was not about the question whether there are true believers outside the church of Christ according to Art. 27 Belgic Confession and Lord's Day 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism. It was maintained that apart from the gathering by the Son of God, no one shall be saved. Neither Heemse 1984 nor Spakenburg North 1987 placed believers outside the church of Art. 27 and L.D. 21. Rev. J. Hoorn, however, sees the gathering of the church as nothing else than that the Lord Jesus brings the members of the congregation together for the worship service on Sunday. Art. 28 Belgic Confession, according to him, does not speak about bringing believers into the congregation from the world or from the false church. For him the coming together of the congregation and the bringing together by Christ cover each other completely. This places an "equals sign" between the gathering of the believers and the coming together in the Sunday worship. According to him Art. 28 means only that the believers must faithfully attend. The article does not reach out. It is only for internal use. It is simply a rule of conduct for those who are already in the church.

The synod judged that in that teaching Christ's gathering of the church was limited in an unacceptable manner. After all, it is no one else but the Christ who through the centuries brings people to the faith, makes them congregate together, and adds people to that congregation. The teachings of Rev. J. Hoorn is an unacceptable narrowing down of the work of the Son of God, who through His Word and Spirit gathers His people from the entire human race.

In short, the (Lib) Reformed Churches have had to decide against a relativising ecumenism, a self-styled independentism, and against an intolerable "churchism." It is without a doubt a sad truth that this struggle has hindered the progress in the relation with the Christ. Geref. Churches. The consolidation that took place does not mean that all people think about everything in exactly the same manner. There may be difference of opinion on several issues. But in those the confession is not at stake. And we have no pulpits that are closed within the federation. The (Lib) Reformed Churches accept each other on the basis of God's Word and the confessions. 

OUR COVER



Canada Geese

Photo courtesy:
Dick Barendregt
Neerlandia, AB

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Maharishi Veda Land

We thought Niagara Falls, Ontario, already had it all. The waterfall, which gave the city its name, is the world's greatest by volume. One hundred and sixty-nine million litres of water flow over the Niagara Escarpment every *minute*. Charles Dickens, trying to describe the effect the falls had on him, wrote: "I seemed to be lifted from the earth and to be looking into Heaven." There is a rich history of daredevils who defied the falls in barrels, boats and rubber balls. The most celebrated daredevil was Blondin who performed on a tightrope stretched over the gorge.

Niagara Falls has more. The motel strip along Hwy. 20 is thought to be the longest in the world. It has museums from the impressive to the zany. A family can go to Niagara Falls for wholesome entertainment; however, Niagara Falls also whets fringe appetites.

We thought Niagara Falls already had it all; but, apparently, we were wrong. It will soon have a \$1.5-billion theme park named Maharishi Veda Land. We must understand that this new theme park is like no other theme park. It is nothing like Canada's Wonderland, Marineland, Disney Land or Disney World. It is nothing like any of the Exes. We must understand that Maharishi Veda Land is founded upon certain heathen religious principles. It is a place from which we, as Christians, must stay away.

Maharishi Veda Land will have the typical rides. You know, the rides meant to make you part with your lunch. However, it will also include exhibits with exotic names like: The City of Immortals; The Courtyard of Illusions where you will not be able to be sure of what you see. The Corridor of Time will supposedly take you up on a magical mystery tour of the universe from creation to the end of time. You will be invited to Dive into Veda, an experience which will make you feel like you are shrinking.

The park will include a university for 7,000 students, a health clinic, several hotels, and a conference centre.

What is Maharishi Veda Land all about?

If we understand whose brainchild this new park is, the significance of the word "Veda," and the object of the enterprise, then we will understand that, as Christians, we must shun it.

The two partners behind the project are Doug Henning and Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. Doug Henning is a 44-year-old magician from Winnipeg. For years Henning entertained people by doing harmless slight of hand tricks. The garden variety stuff: pushing a knitting needle through a blown up balloon without making it pop; card and coin tricks; make the pretty girl levitate – stuff like that. But Doug Henning has gone New Age. He is now a disciple of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi.

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is, by training, a physicist. However, in 1959, he left India and began a ten-year series of tours in the West proclaiming the gospel of Transcendental Meditation (TM). A person who signs up for TM lessons will receive a secret mantra from his guru. This is usually a one syllable word, e.g., "Om" (remember the Moody Blues?). If the devotee meditates on this one word, chanting it over and over, he will slowly evoke the presence of one of the Hindu divinities. His consciousness will ascend to transcendent heights until, for a moment, it transforms into the likeness of the divinity. Yeah, right.

By means of TM, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi brought the Hindu religion to North America. His friendship with the Beatles boosted his popularity. For a while, he served as the Beatles' "pastor." Those who remember George Harrison's song "My sweet Lord/Hare Krishna" will know what we are talking about.

Maharishi Veda Land is named, first of all, after the Maharishi. The word

"Veda" is the Sanskrit word for "knowledge," and then, specifically, sacred knowledge which has come by revelation. The Vedas are the scriptures of the Hindus. Hindus believe that the Vedas are not the utterances of any person. They do not owe their authority to any individual. They are eternally existent and were expired by God. They were heard by men of old, transmitted orally, and inscriptured when writing was invented.

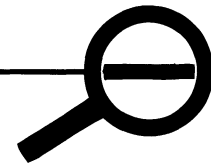
The stated goal of Maharishi Veda Land is to create heaven on earth, to bring visitors in touch with natural laws, and to let them experience the constitution of the universe.

All of this should warn us to avoid Maharishi Veda Land. Doug Henning looks like a pretty harmless guy – a little light in the loafers, but pretty harmless. Believe me, he is not. He recently ran as a Natural Law Party (NLP) candidate in the last British election. The party's spiritual mentor is none other than Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. The NLP's goal is to create heaven on earth by ridding the world of war, crime and poverty. The NLP says that if we follow the transcendental techniques of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, we will create heaven. Henning hopes to get the NLP to contest the next federal election in Canada.

Doug Henning has swallowed the New Age lie that man, by his own efforts, apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, can bring about perfection on earth. He is actively propagating the lie that man can save himself, that we don't need the Lord Jesus Christ. The Maharishi is a teacher of the Hindu religion. He teaches that we can transform ourselves into the godhead by meditation.

Clearly Maharishi Veda Land is an anti-Christian amusement park whose purpose is to propagate the New Age lie and eastern religions. Dangerously, it is being advertised as an amusement park. But for whose amusement? Let us not amuse the devil and his demons by going to it.





Assembly Notes

During the past months several different ecclesiastical assemblies have met and made decisions. What follows are some highlights of some of the decisions made.

Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA)

Our sister churches "down under" met in Synod from May 18 to June 8. *Una Sancta* (20 June 1992) published an extremely brief press release. With respect to relations and contacts with other churches, we read that

Synod could gratefully continue relations with sister churches in the Netherlands, Canada, South Africa, Korea and Indonesia. Although the FRCA will not establish Temporary Ecclesiastical Relations with other churches in the future, it maintains this relation with the Free Church of Scotland and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Ireland. Deputies have been given mandate to continue contacts with the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia, the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Reformed Church of New Zealand, the Reformed Church of Singapore and the Evangelical Pilgrim Church of Timor (GMMT).

It is interesting to note that representatives of our Dutch sister churches, as well as Rev. W.P. Gadsby of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA), urged synod to recognize the PCEA as a true and faithful church. Synod did not do this and the Press Release does not give any information in this regard.

With respect to the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC), the FRCA will apparently remain a member and send two delegates to the next ICRC. The purpose of the ICRC will receive further study by synodical deputies.

Bible translations also had the attention of this synod.

Deputies served Synod with a report containing the results of their study of several Bible translations (NASB, NIV, NKJV). It was decided to recommend to the churches the New King James Version (NKJV) for study, instruction and family purposes and to allow the use of the NKJV in church if the consistory so wishes. Final endorsement of the NKJV is withheld until the churches evaluate it from "hands-on" experience, and until more study has been made of the NKJV in comparison with the NIV.

This is an important decision. It is unfortunate that the press release gives no grounds for this decision, particularly since the previous study committee on Bible Translations had also studied the New King James Version and concluded that they could not recommend it. That committee had decided on the basis of their study that the New International Version (NIV) should be recommended. With such very different reports submitted to two successive synods, the question arises whether a subsequent synod can actually bring this matter to a conclusion.

Confessional Fellowship of Reformed Churches

The independent Reformed Canadian churches which are in the Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC) met for an all day meeting on Saturday, May 23, 1992. Observers in attendance included Rev. C. Pronk of the Free Reformed Churches and from the Canadian Reformed Churches, Dr. J. Faber, Rev. J. Mulder, and undersigned.

The first substantial point on the agenda was a five hour examination of candidate J. Bouwers which resulted in his being approved for ordination. He is

now minister of the Immanuel Orthodox Reformed Church in St. Catharines.

The second major item of business was to agree "that the independent churches come together to form an alliance to be known as the Confessional Fellowship of Reformed Churches." As J. Van Dyk noted (*Christian Renewal*, June 22, 1992) "delegates expressed a reluctance to move toward a new denominational structure, opting instead for an organizational structure which would allow the churches to assist each other for the interim without committing to anything more permanent." Areas of cooperation include: continuing the mutual cooperation and support that has already begun; assist congregations coming on stream; offer mutual advice regarding serious discipline cases, and discussions and relationships with congregations of other "denominations"; stimulate youth activities; share resources, and seek ways to be active in home and foreign mission. It is gratifying that these churches do not want to form a new "denomination." May the unity of the faith that exists between them and other Reformed churches such as the Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches, the Canadian Reformed Churches and the Free Reformed Churches eventually be brought to expression in a united church.

Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS)

The RCUS is now a sister church of our Dutch sisters and their common efforts in Zaire also had the attention of this year's synod. The work in Zaire is very difficult at the moment because both politically and economically it is a chaos in that country. Nevertheless, the work continues in cooperation with the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in the Netherlands who have workers fluent in French willing to travel to Zaire on behalf of both the Dutch and Amer-

ican supporting churches. A building will be bought "for the central congregation in Lubumbashi that can also serve as a mission centre for training elders and ministers" (*Reformed Herald*, June, 1992).

The Synod also decided to join the ICRC and to apply for membership in the North American Presbyterian and Reformed Council (NAPARC) for three years. The RCUS also hopes to send observers to the Confessional Confer-

ence to be organized by the ARC in the fall of 1993.

A RCUS church in California has great interest in Hungary. Synod decided to make funds available to support a student from Hungary who wants to study at Mid-America Reformed Seminary. "In this way the RCUS can have a positive Reformed influence on a church that has not only suffered terribly under communism, but also from the inroads of liberalism and Barthian theology over the years."

Support was also given to growing home missions projects as well as the Independent Presbyterian Church of Mexico, with which relationships are just starting. This church has Juan Calvino Seminary in Mexico City.

Finally, with respect to the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, a report on this year's General Assembly will have to wait for a future issue since I have not yet received an account of what happened there. **C**

Plea for the Book of Praise

By G. VanDooren

Starting at their first General Synod in 1954 the Canadian Reformed Churches have spent about twenty-five years, thousands of dollars, and untold thousands of "man-hours" in order to produce an English-Genevan Psalter, the first and still only one of its kind in the English speaking world. The purpose was to secure the Reformed heritage of Psalm-singing.

Following Synods dealt with and decided on, not only the wording of the rhymings or versifications, but also the music, the melodies, the "Genevan tunes" as such.

Two examples from that quarter of a century "Canadian Reformed culture" may suffice to prove that those Synods indeed decided on the musical aspects of the steadily growing *Book of Praise*.

First, it was decided that for the time being a number of Psalms from the Christian Reformed Psalter-Hymnal could be used, but only those set on Genevan tunes.

Then, when later on the Committee for the *Book of Praise* suggested (also because of the immense task to provide 150 new rhymings) to put together a Psalmbook with selections from other sources, i.e. with a different kind of tune, long meter, common meter, short meter, Synod rejected this out of hand and maintained the mandate: preserve the complete Genevan Psalter, that is, nothing but Genevan tunes.

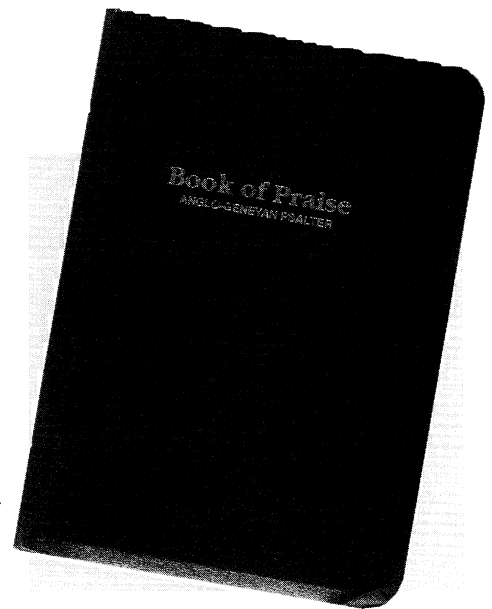
While working on this grand project, we (the present writer who chaired the *Book of Praise* Committee

for 25 years, included) did not sufficiently realize that the uniqueness of the English-Genevan Psalter could cause problems. Would not such a Psalter put the churches in a position of *isolation*?

While in the Netherlands attempts were being made to produce a Churchbook, that could be used in various "denominations," that small federation of Canadian Reformed Churches went their own way, all alone in the big English world! A month in Lower Sackville confronted us with that "problem" in a drastic way. One wonders how things are going in some of the American Reformed Churches for whom the Genevan Psalter was a *novum*. It is easier to adopt the Three Forms of Unity than to start using the Genevan tunes!

And what about the coming years when, as we hope and pray, unity may be found with the growing number of Independent and Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches?

The suggestion (or fear?) has already been expressed that for the sake of such a union we might have to drop the *Book of Praise*, the Genevan tunes. That suggestion came, not from one of these churches, most of which would not mind to get rid of the newest edition of the Psalter Hymnal, but from a Canadian Reformed, though private, source! For some that may be reason for fear, for others possibly a reason for hope, that we might get rid of those difficult Genevan tunes, and join the crowd of hymn-singing believers.



Once having chosen the path of the Genevan Psalter, did the churches, did we all realize that with the completion of the 1984 edition, the preservation of the Anglo-Genevan Psalmbook was not finished by far? Now we had to learn them, to teach them to our children. Now we had to train a generation of organists, to whom was given the difficult task to learn to play these tunes the way they should be played, and thus support the worship of the congregation. Now we should try to "export" this wonderful heritage, as indeed in some cases has been done. Now we altogether should leave no stone unturned to keep the heritage for the coming generations, and it should not ever become a stumbling block for the union of all Reformed believers; on the contrary, it should bring them together. In ongoing contacts with other Reformed believers we should not only talk about the concept of the church, or the meaning of "Article 31," but certainly also about that most-

important aspect of Reformed life: Reformed worship!

The pleas for all this is born from a growing concern.

It is possible among us to attend a concert of a Canadian Reformed community, and not hear a single Psalm! It may start with "How Great Thou Art," a beautiful hymn but not included in the *Book of Praise* which was meant for congregational singing. In such context we should not start with "chorus" in distinction from the proper hymn. And then, yes, at the end use the words of Psalm 150, but not sung on that majestic Genevan tune, but the (very popular) hymn with the twenty times repeated "Praise the Lord," louder and louder, and very repetitious.

There is no doubt whatsoever that in that school the children have to learn the Psalms, and to learn to sing them, but we wondered why that was not demonstrated in that public concert?

The same can be said for other concerts, in other contexts.

Oh yes, there are a lot of nice tunes, popular tunes, sung in a modern fashion, a bit "droning" to my ears, but yes, young people like them, and let them sing to their hearts content; but one wonders, are all these tunes crowding out the Genevan tunes?

One's opinion is asked, if it is alright when a Young People's society hardly ever uses the *Book of Praise*, but sings different songs on different tunes?

What about the programs of our choirs? Is the singing of Genevan tunes, with the use of the four voices setting of Claude Goudimel, or others, a substantial part of the rehearsals and concerts, as was the case in previous years, and is still the case, for example, in the Hungarian Reformed circles?

Of the concert programs at our disposal (far from complete!) there is one that not only starts and ends with communal Psalms singing, but the choir sang two Psalms, 25 and 150 in the annotation of Claude Lejeune. The name of the choir: *Soli Deo Gloria*.

What about "The Voice of the Church"? One may wonder what this name exactly means, but one may readily agree with the fact that a Canadian Reformed Voice is broadcasted by radio. We are thankful for this program and for all the efforts that go into it. But, – if it is the voice of the church, where is the voice of the congregation? Our program has its little nook in between other religious programs. You hear a lot of singing there. But why not

let the listeners hear the singing congregation? Once, after an evening of Psalm singing we heard two Canadian-born ladies say that they had never heard such congregational singing before.

But how long is it ago (we are not able to hear all broadcasts) that the message of the Gospel was set within the framework of our *Book of Praise*? This may be our only opportunity to show forth the beauty of what the LORD has given us in congregational singing.

The Genevan tunes are not old-fashioned or obsolete, as little as the choruses of J.S. Bach and Mozart.

The Genevan Psalter can only be preserved by the full cooperation of home, school and church. In many cases we have already lost the home in this respect, yes, more and more children in this generation learn to play musical instruments, but do the families sing the psalms at home?

As to the churches, it was already suggested that they may not always have realized their responsibility for not only giving the Genevan tunes to their organists, but also support these organists, in order to become good "Genevan organists." With the limited experience of a travelling preacher the present writer, ex-organist himself, dares to state that not all our organists are good in supporting the congregational singing of the Psalms by playing them as they should be played. Some of them have problems with expressing the difference between major and minor tunes (of the latter there are many in our *Book of Praise*). Should we blame the organists, or should we blame the consistories, the churches?

Some time ago we lost a real "Genevan tune organist" in Burlington. A committee was formed to start a fund in memory of him. The purpose: to train and support organists. The response of the churches, when asked for their (financial) support was nearly 100% negative. Some said, this is not a business for the consistory.

Hundreds of thousands of dollars are given to prepare for the pulpit; should we, who after all have "created" the Anglo-Genevan Psalter, not also support the preparation for the organ, when Psalm-singing is such a very important part of Reformed worship, together with the preaching? Is there not something unethical in mandating organists to play the Genevan heritage and refusing to help them in doing this? Should the churches not enable their

organists to (as Dr. K. Schilder phrased it) "prophesy from the organ bench"?

Another reason for concern – and maybe the worst one – is what General Synod '89 decided re: the Genevan tunes. While refraining from a more accusatory terminology, one wonders whether this synod did go in the path of its predecessors since 1954?

Synod '89 decided that, with regard to the Genevan Tunes, "the synod would not compel consistories, organists and congregations of the Canadian Reformed Churches (why do we always use this long name when we speak about ourselves? vD) to change the traditional practice of singing certain Psalms with the use of chromatically altered notes, since it is not in the province of synod to make such a decision," Acts Synod Winnipeg p. 109.

One tastes the self-contradictory wording of this decision. At the one hand: not in the province of synod; at the other hand music-technical language, and indeed making a decision that in fact opens the door to singing the Psalms in a way different from their source in Geneva, and from the official (indeed!) edition adopted by and belonging to the churches.

For this matter we refer to the *Reformed Music Journal*, which was started in Jan. '89 by the Brookside Publishing, 3911 Mt. Lehman Road, Abbotsford BC, V2S 6A9; an excellent publication, written by experts in the field, and for the defense and preservation of the Genevan music heritage.

Deplorably, this magazine is not very well known by the Canadian Reformed community, and equally deplorable is the fact that its very interesting and important contents has not been more "popularized," so that this community may benefit from it.

From the very start this Journal expressed concern for the survival of the Genevan tunes.

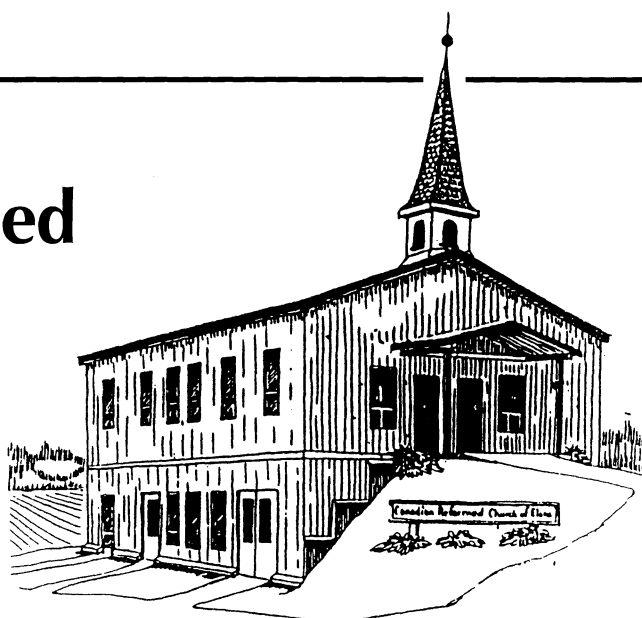
In reaction to the '89 synodical decision, P. Janson wrote,

"One can observe the astonishing paradox that the Canadian Reformed Churches have laboured for decades to develop an Anglo-Genevan Psalter for nought. It is obviously of little use to provide Genevan melodies and have no provision in the Church Order to have the Psalms sung on those tunes," Vol. IV, 1, p. 8.

Indeed, in a Church Order that was supposedly adapted to the Canadian Reformed situation, unique in its production of the *Book of Praise*, such a

The Canadian Reformed Church at Elora

moved into her new building



Pictorial view, with (future) steeple

During the warm hazy days of summer as we worship in our church building, one cannot help but to reflect back on the changes our small congregation here at ELORA has experienced during the last year. It seems such a short while ago that we sat for the last time in the Alma Community Centre on December 29, 1991 as a congregation of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was with joy and thankfulness that on the first day of 1992, we as a congregation could bring our gifts of praise and listen to God's Words of Promise in our new building. As many brothers and sisters in the Lord wished to share in this historic event, the building was quickly filled to capacity.

On Friday evening January 17, 1992, those family members, friends and guests who braved the blizzard like weather conditions, joined the congregation in attending the Open House and Dedication Evening. The theme selected for the program of this festive

event was "to God in the Highest, Hosanna and Praise."

The Chairman, br. A. Nijenhuis opened the evening with Scripture reading from Matthew 6 and prayer. In introducing the program, the chairman gave a brief review of history of this congregation, highlighting the rich blessings received from our God in the growth in numbers and also now in receiving this building as a testimony. He also expressed the wish that this building remain a testimony of these rich blessings, to the praise of our heavenly Father and Provider of all things.

The members of the congregations and their guests could joyously sing songs of praise, after which the chairman gave the floor to the different delegates who were present. The Rev. J.

Huijgen brought congratulation on behalf of the sister church at Fergus. He elaborated on the amazing fact how some concrete and steel beams could bring a congregation together, giving the advice to look at the reality of God's work and care, and must be grateful for receiving the framework in which God's service can take place, that His name may be glorified.

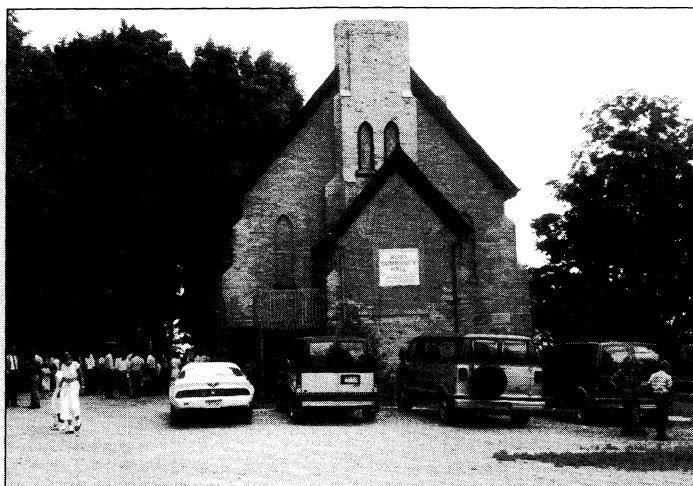
Br. J. Hutten on behalf of Burlington-West, brought their congratulations, and admired the community spirit, which resulted in a great outcome, since it was done in fear of the Lord and part of His service.

Dr. C. Van Dam, on behalf of the colleagues at the Theological College, mentioned that the building is just a building, but the church is the congregation. The building is a shelter and a meeting place with God, a place to worship, to sing praises, to receive the glad tidings of Jesus Christ. It is the workshop of the Holy Spirit, who provides comfort, guidance, discipline and encouragement.

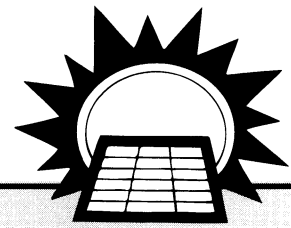
Mr. Jim Bell and Mrs. Shirley Shoemaker welcomed the congregation in the neighborhood, and presented a gift, a plant for the auditorium.

Br. John VanderWoerd brought the congratulations and best wishes from the sister church at Grand Valley.

After reading several congratulatory letters, the chairman gave the floor to



Congregation at the Alma Community Hall



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 Corinthians 5:1

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We all know that our Lord God and Father in heaven is with us, and ensures us of the promises of His covenant. When we believe these promises, then we know: blessed are those who live and die in the Lord. God's grace and mercy are not only with us until the day of our death, but they are there eternally.

Christ Jesus says that whoever believes in Him, shall live, even when he has died. When Christ our Lord is the centre of our lives, then death will be gain!

Of these words we have to think, when we hear that one of us has gone to the Lord. On Sunday, May 31, 1992 the Lord called to Himself Rob Lunge. His seventeenth birthday would have been on November 13, but Rob did not live to be seventeen. His short life here on earth was not easy. He had to live with muscular dystrophy. As a result he was in a wheelchair, and very limited in the things he could do. But Rob was a child of the Lord. He did not feel sorry for himself, and he did not want other people to pity him, either. He knew that he was a child of the Lord, and from the Lord he received the strength to live with his difficulties.

We have so much reason for thankfulness. Rob knew it, and we all may know even in difficult times, about our salvation through Jesus Christ. When we see the difficulties, the handicaps, the illnesses, the suffering in the world, then God's faithfulness to us in His covenant, and His love to us in Jesus Christ His Son shows even more clearly! For Jesus died, and His sacrifice on the cross was enough to pay for all our sins. The result of that sacrifice is, that the joyful light of Easter shines over all the darkness of the life here on earth, with all its limitations and brokenness. It gives us reason to look forward to all the beautiful promises, for Jesus Christ, our Saviour lives! Death does not have the final say, our Lord and Saviour is the Victor.

We are thankful that there is much comfort for us when we hear of the death of our friend Rob. We pray that that comfort may be there too for his

family. His family members will be daily confronted with an empty spot in the house. It will be hard for all those who surrounded Rob with so much love and care. Rob does not need any special care anymore. Where he is, there are no handicaps. He is relieved from all his suffering. And we all may look forward to the day that we will join him, so that we can be with the Lord forever, just like Rob!

*The Lord is just in all His will and way,
And all His works His steadfast love portray.
All men who seek His mercy find Him near;
He satisfies all those who Him revere.
He hears the cry of those who seek Him truly
But shall destroy the wicked and unruly.
My mouth to Him its praises shall deliver
And all flesh bless His holy Name forever.*

Psalms 145:5

Rob's parents would like to thank everyone for remembering his birthday, and showing him their Christian love.

Birthdays in September:

Mary VandeBurgt

32553 Willington Crescent
Clearbrook, BC V2T 1S2

On September 11 Mary will be 36.

Jerry Bontekoe

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

Jerry will be 28 on September 14.

Paul Dieleman

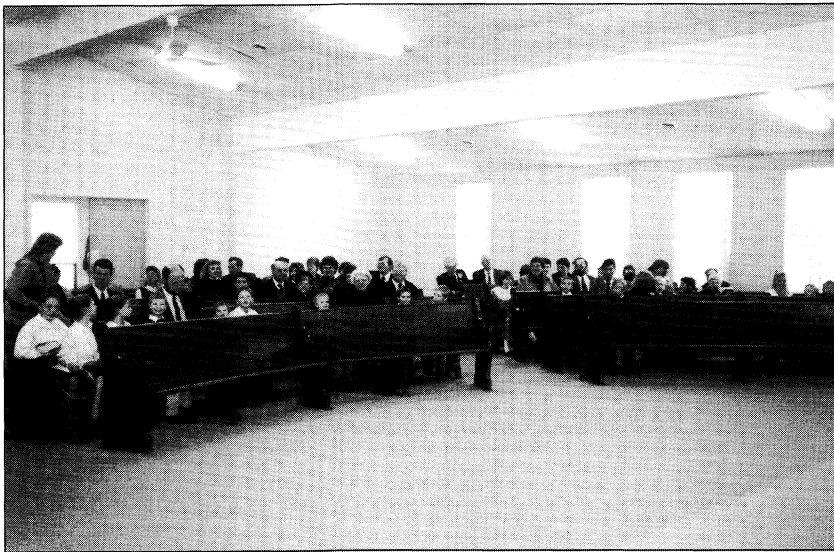
307 Connaught Avenue
Willowdale, ON M2R 2M1

Paul's 23rd birthday is on September 29.

Happy birthday to all of you.

Until next month,

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



Congregation in the new building

the different presentations from the congregation. Sr. Claire Hutten described the history of the Elora church from the June Classis 1987 on to present date, highlighting humorous events. The Women Study Society Genesis made a presentation based on Canadian Re-

formed Church of ELORA, stressing that we recycled a church building, a very unique feat. The Elora Singers sang 4 pieces, followed by some more congregational singing. The br. Ron DeWitt read a poem regarding the purchase, move and completion of the building.

The schoolgoing children of the grades K through 6, sang their songs and recited several Scripture passages in an enthusiastic and refreshing manner. It is always wonderful to witness the enthusiasm the little ones display. Then followed the presentation of the older children, belonging to grades 7-10, who made their poetic and gift contribution displaying the word "congratulations."

Then the stage was set for a presentation by the Young People Society who mimicked a typical work party of the congregation discussing church matters and future considerations regarding the final layout of pews, future organ, etc....

As a final presentation, the Committee of Administration, showed slides of the different stages on the construction of the building, followed by the presentation of a symbolic key by br. Will Reinink on behalf of the Committee.

In closing we sang Hymn 47:1,9,10, after which Prof. C. Van Dam closed in prayer of thanksgiving to our heavenly Provider who had indeed blessed us greatly.

Paul Broekema 

Welcome Evening

Rev. and Mrs. J. DeGelder and Family

On the evening of Monday, March 30, 1992, the official welcome evening for Rev. and Mrs. J. DeGelder and family took place. At 8:00 p.m. the DeGelder family was escorted to the front pew by br. A. Muis, who had coordinated the activities for the evening. Then we, as congregation of Smithville, were ready to welcome the DeGelders not only to Smithville, but also to Canada.

Br. J. Bartels, chairman of the consistory, opened the evening by asking us to sing Psalm 145:1 and 5. He then read from Scripture Psalm 145 and led in prayer. He spoke a few words of welcome to Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder and their five children, and then the entertainment got underway.

The Smithville children of the John Calvin School sang a welcome song, followed by some welcoming remarks by Helena Beijes, a Grade 8 student.

They also sang and recited Psalm 23 and the welcome song was repeated while Joni Dekker presented a huge

welcome card signed by all the Smithville students.

The Seniors Club "Gezellig Bijéén"



Smithville students of John Calvin School singing



Rev. DeGelder – closing remarks

then came forward and sang Psalm 84 in Dutch. Br. H. Kroes then showed the DeGelders that the Fergus area did not outdo Smithville when it came to family trees. Br. Steltman made a presentation on behalf of the mannenvereniging "Trouw aan het Woord."

Brs. Case Heemskerk and Bill Dekker then entertained everyone by playing guitar and banjo, among others, "This Land is Your Land." On behalf of the Men's Society, br. Ken Jager read a poem about Smithville. Br. Roy Hummel presented Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder with a large map of the Smithville area so they would never get lost, and also a book on the History of West Lincoln.

The Women's Societies mentioned all the members of the congregation in song, story, and riddles. They also sang a song comparing some Dutch and Canadian customs. Mrs. VanderHeiden then read a poem entitled "Prayer for our Pastor." All three Women's Societies presented the DeGelders with more, much needed, small appliances.

The Young People's Society showed off their skills in the Dutch language by doing an amusing skit about the DeGelders on the plane coming to Canada.

Rev. Agema, our counsellor, spoke a few words of welcome. Br. Bartels presented him with a token of appreciation and thanked him for all the work he had done during the vacancy.

Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder were asked to come forward. Br. Bartels, on behalf

of the congregation, presented them with a useful gift. Rev. DeGelder then spoke some words of appreciation for the entertainment and the gifts. He also thanked us for the warm welcome he and his family had experienced. Even though there are so many things that are new and different, including the language, we still have much in common, namely, unity in the true faith.

After the evening was closed, many had the opportunity to chat with the DeGelders during the social hour in the church annex.

Installation

On Sunday, April 26, after a vacancy of almost four years, the congregation of Smithville could joyfully witness the installation of their new pastor and teacher, Rev. J. DeGelder. Rev. Agema our counsellor had as text John 20:19-23. The theme of the sermon was "The Living Christ gives to His Church the Life-giving Administration." We heard 1) the grounds, 2) the contents, and 3) the results of this administration.

1) On the evening of the resurrection day, Christ seeks His church in that locked room. Christ, the Prince of Peace, declares "Peace be with you." He can say this because He has broken down the hostility between God and the disciples (His church). He is the *First-born* of the dead – more will follow. This peace has to be proclaimed and faithful ministers are given by Christ to proclaim this peace.

2) Christ repeats "Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, even so I send you." Christ sends His disciples out with a mandate to speak the word of Christ with authority. By breathing on them, they receive the Holy Spirit. They cannot do this on their own; Christ's Spirit goes with them. Today the apostolic authority continues on through ministers of the Word. The one who is sent must remain faithful to the Sender.

3) The result of all this is that the disciples will go out into all the world (Lord's Day 31) to preach and teach. When the church speaks the Word of God, God will confirm it. Christ in His care for you gives you a minister so



Rev. and Mrs. DeGelder receive a barbeque, presented by the chairman of the consistory, br. J. Bartels

provision should have been made long ago.

Hopefully the forthcoming General Synod will complete this "adaptation" for the sake of the Genevan tunes.

The Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, in his *With Common Consent*, 1990 rightly remarks, p. 256, that "the churches included the Genevan tunes," because "they were faced with the sad reality that no complete Psalmbook using the Genevan tunes existed."

Even the present (according to P. Janson incomplete) Art. 55 C.O. speaks about "metrical Psalms adopted by General Synod," and there are for us

no other "metrical Psalms" than those versified on the meters of the Genevan melodies, according to the mandate of general synods. Mr. Janson suggests the following addition to Art. 5:


"Both Psalms and Hymns will be sung on the melodies approved by General Synod, as they are notated in the most recent edition of the *Book of Praise*," note 26 to the same article.

He then concludes with these warning words:

"The Church Order will have to be amended, so that music is recognized as a liturgical matter. The Canadian Reformed Churches are at a crossroads.

Unless they choose the right road now, their rich musical heritage of the Genevan Psalter is about to be lost – and with it, in due time, psalm singing itself.

Quo Vadis?

P.S. In this article we did not enter into the technical matter of so-called "accidentals." We refer to the *Reformed Music Journal* for that. In order to whet your appetite for it, we just mention the beautiful article by J.G. Vos, titled: Ashamed of the tents of Shem? (The Semitic Roots of Christian Worship) Vol. IV, No. 2, p. 35 ff. 

The Elder and the Pulpit

By Jerome M. Julien

The following article, written by Rev. Jerome Julien, minister of the Independent Christian Reformed Church at Sheffield, Ontario, is taken over with permission, from Christian Renewal of March 9, 1992. We are thankful for this permission. Although it addresses the situation in the Christian Reformed Church, it is instructive also for our churches, and for (present and future) elders in our churches.

The editor.

The day is past in most congregations bearing the name Reformed when the elders had a visible presence during the worship service. Early Reformed churches had elder pews to which this body of men came as a unit as the service was about to begin. On those pews were copies of the doctrinal standards, along with a Bible and a Psalter. Elders were to be well-versed in all these volumes since they were to see to it that the preaching was biblically/confessionally sound. In those years it was also custom for the elders, at the close of the service to express approval for the message, in full view of the congregation, by means of a handshake.

Whatever one thinks of these early practices is not important. What is important is that these practices made very visible the task of the elder in relation to the preaching of the Word. Their pres-

ence there as a body reminded the congregation of their office – their God-given and God-empowered task. They were to oversee the preaching of the Word.

Unfortunately, the current practice of the elders slipping into the worship service at the last minute, almost unnoticed, has created the impression that the minister is in charge – a very unreformed idea. Our children see the elders only at communion and at family visiting – if at that. The minister is in the forefront. Is it any wonder that people think of their membership as being at "so-and-so's church," naming the minister, as if it were his church?

Another sad result today is that the congregation begins to view the pulpit as something over which they have the last word. In more than one congregation a challenge is raised, often noisily and bitterly, over who the consistory allows in the pulpit.

One principle of Reformed church government is the authority of the elders and their resulting task of supervision. Reformed people had better get this clear in their minds if they are to be Reformed. Reformed church government is *not democratic*.

There was a day when at least one elder would be more well-versed theologically than the minister. (Ironically, this was when there was not as much emphasis on education as there is to-

day.) He would often read widely but also more in depth, than the minister whose work had to be much more broad in scope. His bookshelf was full of volumes by Bavinck, Calvin, Kuyper. I never will forget a well-worn set of Calvin's commentaries on the living-room shelf of one who had served as elder. And the owner knew them, too. The work of men such as this was much appreciated in the congregation of God's people. They were able to function in their office.

Today, with some notable exceptions – we all know them, and thank the Lord for them – their number has sadly diminished. If they do read, it is often the popular fluff which book publishers push to make money. They might read their trade-journals (maybe), but they would not take time to open the "trade-journals" of the church. Some have even been heard to say that they have never read the Reformed confessions. I trust they could not say the same about the Bible.

Yet, these are the men whose task it is to "Take heed...to all the flock...to feed the church of God...(because) grievous wolves enter in..." (Acts 20:28, 29). They are to see to it that the scriptural needs of the congregation are met in accord with what Scripture teaches. This takes a spiritual sensitivity because the wolves are always at

the door of the church – and even sometimes inside! They will not meet the spiritual needs of God’s people if all they do is make sure that counselling is available and that “togetherness” is fostered. They must be aware of the need of God’s people to be taught. God’s people must know what their God says; they must be built up, or edified. The elders have a calling to that end (Eph. 4:11-15).

In order that God’s people are strengthened in the faith, of course, we have our catechism classes and study groups. The material studied *must* be supervised by the elders. But the elders are also to supervise the pulpit. Reformed church orders have always emphasized the fact that the pulpit is to be under the supervision of the elders. The Christian Reformed Church Order stands in this tradition (Arts. 24, 52-54). Almost 40 years ago Dr. P.Y. De Jong wrote, “Of all the duties of the eldership none begins to compare in importance with their task of supervising the pulpit.” Of course, this is just the echo of the Reformers being heard today: the first duty of the elders is “to maintain the purity of the Word.” Many forms for ordination of consistory members emphasize this, too. If the supervision of the pulpit is not being done, why do anything else? Why guard the sacraments? Why exercise discipline? Why bother to ward off the wolves?

What does this supervision involve?

First, it involves who may be in the pulpit, or what sermon is to be read, if need be. Many object to this kind of supervision. Some churches are presently embroiled over who can be a guest minister. Certain consistories have said that men with certain views are barred from their pulpits. That is not only their right, that is their duty as consistory. Members in the congregation who hold different views from the consistory take this opportunity to flog the consistory, or even worse. These members forget that they are to obey them and submit to them “for they watch for your souls” (Heb. 13:17). Ministers – they ought to know better – also are up in arms, threatening disciplinary action. Could it be that their egos are hurt because they wish to justify their own deviations from a proper position?

Although the elders are also to supervise the sermons that are read, in many cases this is no longer done. After all, they say, is not a sermon a sermon?

Not really! A sermon worthy of its name must be an exposition of Scrip-

ture and true to the confessions which we believe express the truths revealed in Scripture. Whether it is a read sermon – read by some designated elder, or a sermon preached by the minister of the Word in the congregation, it must be true to God’s revelation, for it is to be an explanation and application of that revelation.

This means that the elders’ task is, first of all, to scrutinize it for content. Is it scriptural? Is it in harmony with what God says in the Bible? Is it an application of what God says? Do God’s people say, “Did not our heart burn within us...while he opened to us the Scriptures” (Luke 24:32)? Does the sermon present a rich Christ for poor sinners?

Is the sermon confessional? Of course, the continental Reformed tradition always has emphasized the necessity of catechism preaching. This is to be done regularly so that no important biblical truth is overlooked. In all of this there can be no soft approach to the Truth. It is easy to see heresy in the open, but we cannot give room for it in our midst by being soft on the Truth.

Unless our people are fed and instructed in the Word there will be more and more danger from the cults and sects of the day. Could it be that a cause of materialism’s strong tug is the carelessness of elders who were to oversee the preaching of the Word, but have not sought to be faithful in that part of their task?

In addition to overseeing the content of the sermon, the elders must oversee the form of the sermon. To do this an elder does not have to take a course in preaching. He can tell if the congregation is hearing a sermon of some sort of a religious essay, address or talk. Is it a declaration of God’s Will and Truth for the life of His people? Does it comfort the afflicted and afflict the comfortable, to quote an old Puritan? On the other hand, his first concern ought not to be polish, as desirable as this might be. Rather, is God speaking?

Sad to say, some elders have given up on this. They allow anything to take the place of the sermon: movies, musical programs, missionary talks – even plays. Yet, these hardly fall into the definition of a sermon. And sermons are essential in worship!

For years we looked about us in the church world and shook our heads in pious unbelief as we saw what was happening. It can’t happen to us, we said. After all, we have the Truth. But it

is happening, and consistories are responsible for letting it happen.

How can an elder fulfill so great a task?

First, he must know the Truth (Titus 1:9). He must be a man of the Book and the Confessions. Without this knowledge he cannot supervise the preaching of the Word. Indeed, he could tell others how he *feels* about the sermon: whether or not he *liked* it. He might even be able to discern whether or not the members of the congregation liked it. But *that* is not his task. The people did not like the words of the prophets. They were too harsh, or, perhaps, in their minds, impractical. Yet, their words *were* the message from the Lord. The elder must discern whether the words spoken in worship are the Truth, error, or Truth mixed with error. Only the first is acceptable.

Therefore, the elder must study. If he is to discern the Truth, he must know it. Open the Bible: open the books: open the periodicals. Attend church education classes to learn.


Second, the elder must learn how to be a critic. The biblical qualifications for elder imply that he must be of a firm but gentle spirit.

There is no room for pride. This easily develops when someone is placed in a position of authority. Pride fosters a domineering spirit and does not foster a good relationship.

The elder cannot be overly critical, always seeking his own peculiar interpretation. This sometimes happened in times past, and is still happening today. Underlying this is the personal desire of the elder, who, in effect, is saying “I want this.”

The question the elder must answer is: Is the sermon faithful to Scripture and the Confessions? If so, it will be preaching which is for the glory of God and the good of the church.

A good critic will not be misled. It will not matter if the people do not like the sermons. Certainly they need to be shaped by the Word! Maybe the Truth is coming too close to their own personal desires. Maybe the complaining heard on family visiting about a truly faithful minister’s sermons is evidence that God is afflicting the comfortable in that congregation.

Elders, stick to your mandate. Oversee that pulpit. It is the very place where God’s voice is heard authoritatively in the congregation. And support that faithful minister whom God has given you. 

that as congregation you may receive and drink in His Word.

In the afternoon Rev. DeGelder delivered his inaugural sermon on 1 John 1:3-4. What do we need from our new minister? The main point of his mandate is preaching and teaching. In this day and age, do we need new techniques to keep the preaching and teaching interesting? God's Word never changes. The church lives by the Apostolic Proclamation. We heard 1) The Power of that Proclamation and 2) The Fruit of that Proclamation.

John is writing to warn about those who would deny Christ. The Word of Life was made manifest. The proclamation of the death of Jesus Christ is the proclamation of eternal life. John and those with him gave witness to Christ's death on the cross – Christ as man and

Christ as Saviour. Let us stick to that Word. It is proclaimed to us to show us how to live and be a witness to Him.

Through the proclamation we may see the power of the preaching. John says, "Realize that fellowship with us is also fellowship with God. Through faith we may share in God's love and grace. The power that holds everything together in the church is the proclamation of His Word. That power is the same today as it was then. The congregation needs to hear and the minister must proclaim.

The proclamation may continue, the church of Jesus Christ may continue, and this gives joy. Joy is having Christ as our Saviour, God as our Father and the Spirit to guide us. We have to stand fast in the faithfulness of the proclamation. The minister must preach

the Word and we have to live by it. God's Word is our only guide.

After the service, br. J. Bartels, chairman of the consistory, invited delegates to speak. Rev. Snip spoke words of congratulation and encouragement on behalf of Classis Ontario South and Lincoln. Br. A. VanPykeren spoke on behalf of Rockway and read Psalm 40. Letters were read from the churches at Attercliffe, Chatham, Hamilton, and London. Letters from Australia (Rev. Bosch) and the Netherlands were also read. Rev. DeGelder thanked everyone for their kind words. The Lord is the same all over the world. That's what makes it possible to preach all over. We may trust in the Lord to grant love and strength to go His way by His Word.

H. Poort 

News from the League of Canadian Reformed School Societies

The final meeting for the 1991-92 school year was held on Friday, June 5, 1992. The following are some of the highlights which we feel would be of interest to our community.

Curriculum Assistance for Reformed Education (C.A.R.E.)

C.A.R.E. has had a very stimulating and productive year. It was able to implement most of its goals. During the year C.A.R.E. formally introduced itself and the "Federation of Canadian Reformed Schools in Ontario" to the main textbook published in the province and introduced the concept of establishing a centrally located resource centre to serve our schools. Most companies were eager to comply with the request for complimentary copies of student textbook materials. Since the Canadian Reformed Teachers' College already has a central place within the web of our school system, it seems most appropriate to set up the Resource Center at that location. C.A.R.E. committee members have committed themselves to organiz-

ing the center this summer and hope to publish a summary of available materials early next school year. A subsequent goal is to produce reviews of all the textbook series which will be made available to the schools upon request.

C.A.R.E. continues to work with its own curriculum documents. This year the grades 7 and 8 Geography curriculum and the grades 1-8 Physical Education curriculum were submitted to several teachers for review. The whole process of review, involving the authors, C.A.R.E. and the reviewers has had a positive spin-off for those involved. It has encouraged teachers to evaluate what they are using and to talk and write about their work.

This summer C.A.R.E. has organized a workshop called "Mathematics '92." Besides reviewing the teaching/learning strategies currently used in our schools, it aims to provide further insight into various theories and methodologies in teaching and learning mathematics.

For next year, C.A.R.E. is providing a correspondence course called "Cur-

riculum in Reformed Schools." Staffs may take it collectively to encourage discussion on curriculum.

Government Contact Committee Report (G.C.C.)

In its report to the LCRSS of September 27, 1991, the Government Contact Committee placed a series of questions before the Boards and the League. These questions resulted from discussions at the Forum of Independent School Associations (FISA) meetings held during 1991. The Government Contact Committee deemed it important that the league develop policies in four specific areas in response to the various questions raised. Four sub-committees were established to prepare reports on funding, Bible credits, teacher training and certification and school inspection. These were submitted to the June 5 meeting for consideration by the boards of the League. It is anticipated that these and subsequent reports will result in LCRSS policy statements to be used by the GCC in

its participation in FISA and in consultation with the Government.

The league was also informed of the current court cases in which the Ontario Alliance of Christian Schools and the Canadian Jewish Congress are challenging the Government in its non-funding policy. A second court action by the Alliance of Christian Schools is to stop the Ministry of Education's discriminatory policy with respect to religious instruction credits. While the Separate Catholic High Schools have been able to issue credits for similar courses since 1979, private schools have been specifically denied to issue credits for Bible courses.

These court actions need financial support and the league recommends to the Boards to consider doing so since we stand to benefit from the results of the court cases.

Teacher Training

For some time the league has been aware that the Teachers' College would like some feedback from the school societies on its "teachers' training." A school society has made the proposal that a "Forum on Teachers' Training" be established through the league to discuss the topic of teachers' training in our schools. The aim is to determine the qualification and certification levels

that the school boards wish their new and existing staff to have. All school boards would send one or two delegates to the meeting which would result in the publishing of a position paper on the topic. This is on the agenda to take place during the 1992-93 school year.

Pension Committee Report

The league continues to involve itself with this important aspect of the teacher's financial concern. This committee, made up of two league members and two teachers, reports to the league yearly and monitors all aspects of the Pension Plan.

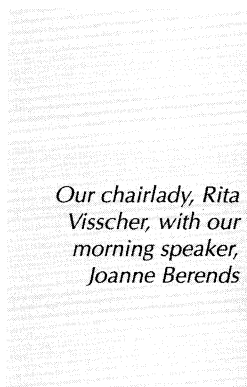
M. Spithoff **C**

Annual Fraser Valley League Day

It was a warm, sunny morning of Wednesday, June 17, when almost 200 women gathered outside the Cloverdale Canadian Reformed Church to enjoy a fresh cup of coffee before the Annual Fraser Valley League Day began.

Shortly after 10:00 a.m., the morning session was opened with the singing of Psalm 19:1, 2. The president of Cloverdale Society "Sola Fide," Mrs. Rita Visscher, led in prayer. After a warm welcome was extended to all those present, Mrs. Sarah Vandergugten read some Scripture passages related to the morning's topic: Job 38, 40:1-14, 42:1-6, and Romans 1:18-25. Mrs. Visscher then introduced the morning speaker, Mrs. Joanne Berends.

The introduction was entitled: "The Earth is the Lord's," and was based on Psalm 104. The main theme was that God is the Author and Pinnacle of Creation, and the author of this Psalm rejoices in the dwelling place God has made. All creation obeys His commands, and is under His dominion. God is delighted and glorified by His handiwork. The psalmist also shows how God has interconnected and woven His various creatures together, yet all are dependent on Him for their sustenance, which He has provided for in abundance. With regard to the mod-



Our chairlady, Rita Visscher, with our morning speaker, Joanne Berends

ern, popular idea of "saving the earth," we must acknowledge that man's efforts are futile and worthless. We must show care and concern for the environment which God has placed us in charge of, but God alone is able to save it.

After the speech, we sang Psalm 104:1, 8 and the floor was opened for discussion. Some of the questions raised during the discussion were: if Creation is in God's hand, is He partly responsible for the ruin of Creation? Is it part of His purpose and plan? Do we have to expect Creation to continue to decline, or should Creation renew itself? Man is responsible for the pollu-

tion that exists. However, God does not always interfere to prevent this destruction, which may be part of His eternal plan. We find in Scripture that the earth was cursed as well when man fell into sin. Therefore, we can expect the earth to continue to groan in bondage (Romans 8:18-25).

We have to acknowledge the fact that we are the polluters, and not to blame the rest of the world. We, who know the cultural mandate our Creator has given us, should be in the forefront of the efforts to improve our environment. We are not able to do anything good of ourselves, but we are called to

work to the honour and glory of our Creator. We are not called to be successful, we are called to be faithful.

Mrs. Hoeksema, a member of the Chilliwack society, "The Lord is Our Refuge," read a poem along the same theme. The morning session was closed with singing the League Song.

Everyone had worked up a good appetite from the lively discussion, and we were treated to salads and buns, and tempting pastries for dessert.

The afternoon session was opened with the singing of Hymn 19: 1, 2. The Langley Society, "Guided by Thy Word," gave a light-hearted tribute to all the Omas, Grootmoeders, and Overgrootmoeders.

Mrs. Rosa Witteveen, from the Abbotsford Society "Fath and Knowledge," read Philippians 2:1-18. Mrs. Evelyn Driegen was given the floor for her introduction entitled: "The Christian's Social Calling and Christ's Second Coming."

The main theme of the speech was that we are sojourners in a strange land,



Our "green" lunch room just before 12 noon. Artwork provided by the students of the William of Orange School

and must therefore seek the Kingdom of God. The church is not a social institution, as many churches today have become. Our role is to fulfill God's purpose and to glorify Him. We must recall that: 1) Man is sinful by nature. 2) God

has saved a small remnant for Himself. 3) The solutions to our social problems can only be found on the cross. Social investigation only unearths problems, it does not find solutions. Our task is to explain and maintain the truth in our walk of life, and to reflect God's love in true faith and thankfulness. Our work is our testimony.

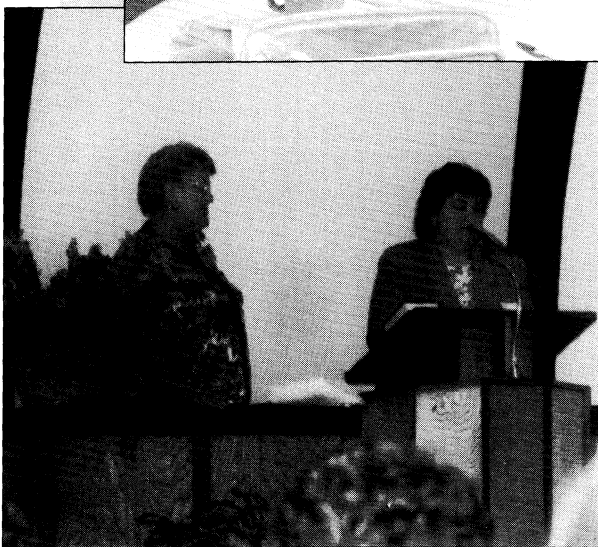
Discussion was opened. Some questions from the floor were: can we provide bodily, physical help without spiritual help, or spiritual help by itself? We certainly cannot separate the two, but they must go hand in hand. What kind of social organizations may we join? Any organization which goes contrary to God's Word is not part of our Christian calling. We must examine their philosophy – they are either for or against God. There are many organizations which we can support. We must not neglect those within our church, however, because our first duty is to each other.

Discussion was closed and we sang Hymn 55: 1, 5. The floor was opened for General Business. The next League Day will be held in Abbotsford. The general consensus was to hold it in June again. There was no objection to bringing one's own mug for the day. Mrs. Witteveen closed in prayer. We sang Hymn 19:4, 6 and the day was officially ended. There was still an opportunity to enjoy fellowship and refreshments before the drive home. It was an enjoyable, informative day which enlightened us all the more on our responsibility as citizens of this world, but *first* of God's kingdom.

Heather Aikema **C**



▲ *Our friendly efficient registration staff, Mrs. Theresa Selles*



◀ *The chairlady for the afternoon, Rosa Witteveen, with the speaker, Evelyn Driegen*

PRESS RELEASES

Classis Ontario North, June 12, 1992

1. On behalf of the convening church at Toronto, Pastor Gleason called the meeting to order. He read Exodus 15:1-21, led in prayer, and requested the singing of Hymn 4:1, 2.

2. The delegates from the church at Ottawa examined the credentials. All the churches were duly represented.

3. Classis was constituted and the following officers took their respective places: chairman, Rev. J. Huijgen; clerk, Rev. R.N. Gleason; vice-chairman, Rev. P.G. Feenstra.

In his opening remarks the chairman remembered, among other matters, the vacant churches and wished them the blessing of the Lord as they continue to pursue ways and means to fill the vacancies.

4. The agenda was adopted after several items were added.

5. a) Reports of church visitations to the churches at Brampton, Burlington South and Ottawa were read and received with gratitude.

b) A financial statement for the churches in the region of Classis Ontario North was presented by br. J.J. Poort and was received for information.

c) A report of the archivist, br. T. Vandenbrink, indicated that all missing Acts of Classis are now in the archives with the exception of one set (Acts, Toronto September 9, 1960).

6. Question period according to Article 44 of the Church Order was held during which the chairman asked each of the churches whether the ministry of the officebearers is continued, the decisions of the major assemblies are honoured, and whether there is any matter in which the consistories need the judgment and help of classis for the proper government of the church.

7. a) Classis adopted the proposal of the church at Burlington West to overture Synod Lincoln, 1992, to appoint a committee with the mandate to promote ecclesiastical union with Reformed Churches and/or Assemblies in North America which recently have withdrawn or are withdrawing themselves from the Christian Reformed Church and which in all things want to bind themselves to the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity and

which in governing the church maintain good order in accordance with a reformed church order.

b) Due to the departure of Rev. G. van Popta to the church at Taber, the church at Lower Sackville and the church at Ottawa requested classis to appoint a counsellor for their respective congregations (according to Art. 45



**CALLED to Ancaster, ON, and
Burlington South, ON**

Cand. J.E. Ludwig

of Hamilton, ON

CORRECTION:

Cand. J.E. Ludwig

did not receive a call to Grand Rapids, MI, U.S.A.

CALLED to Bethel Canadian Reformed Church of Toronto for mission work in Irian Jaya

Rev. R.A. Schouten

of Calgary, AB

CALLED and ACCEPTED to Chatsworth, ON

Rev. P.G. Feenstra

of Guelph, ON

ACCEPTED to Chatham, ON

Rev. C. Wieske

of Neerlandia, AB

NEW PHONE NUMBERS:

Rev. G.Ph. van Popta

(403) 223-1078 (home)

(403) 223-1081 (study)

C.O.). Classis appointed Rev. Nederveen as counsellor for the Church at Lower Sackville. Pastor Gleason was appointed as counsellor of the church at Ottawa.

c) A presentation was made by Rev. den Hollander on behalf of the church at Orangeville with a request for the institution of a church in the Chatsworth area. Opportunity was given for questions. Classis gratefully acknowledged this development and according to Art. 40 of the C.O., advised the church at Orangeville to proceed with the institution. Rev. J. Huijgen was asked to represent the churches in classis at the institution of this new sister church which will take place, the Lord willing, on July 5, 1992. According to Art. 45 of the C.O., Rev. den Hollander was appointed as counsellor for Chatsworth.

8. A letter of appeal from a brother was declared inadmissible based on Art. 6A of the classical regulations which states,

Proposals and letters of appeal which have not been received (with a sufficient number of copies for the delegates to the classis) by the convening church three weeks before classis is held, shall as a rule not be dealt with, unless classis is satisfied with the reason given for not abiding by this rule.

9. The next classis will be convened by the church at Brampton on September 18 at 9:00 a.m. in the church at Burlington West. The suggested officers: chairman, G. Nederveen; clerk, J. Huijgen; vice-chairman, R.N. Gleason.

10. During personal question period one of the members of classis expressed concern about the shortage of reading sermons. Rev. van Popta expressed his appreciation for the years he could work among the churches of Classis Ontario North and bade the brothers at classis a fond farewell. The chairman responded with some appropriate words.

11. Censure according to Art. 44 of the C.O. was not exercised.

12. The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved.

13. After singing Hymn 39:1, 2, 3 the chairman closed the meeting with prayer.

On behalf of Classis June 12, 1992,
P.G. Feenstra - vice-chairman

**Classis (Contracta) Alberta/
Manitoba, June 23, 1992,
Neerlandia, AB**

Rev. G. Wieske, chairman of the convening church at Neerlandia, called the meeting to order and requested the singing of Psalm 135:2, 10, read Colossians 1:1-20 and led in prayer. The delegates from the convening church checked the credentials and found them to be in good order. Besides the church at Neerlandia, the neighbouring church at Barrhead was also represented. Rev. G. Wieske was appointed chairman and Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar was appointed clerk.

Classis Contracta was convened to deal with the release of the Rev. E. Kam-

pen and the approbation of the call to the Rev. G. Ph. van Popta.

All the documents for the release of the Rev. E. Kampen from the Immanuel Church at Edmonton (so that he could take up the call to the church at Port Kells, BC) were read and found to be in good order. Classis approved the release. A certificate of release was read and signed by the officers. The request to have Rev. R. Aasman as counselor to Immanuel was approved. The church at Providence was appointed to send a delegate to represent classis at the farewell service of Rev. Kampen.

All the documents for the approbation of the call to the Rev. G.Ph. van Popta by the church at Taber, AB were

read and found to be in good order. Classis approbated the call. A letter of approbation will be sent. The church at Coaldale was appointed to send a delegate to represent Classis at the installation service of Rev. van Popta.

The church at Neerlandia continues to be the convening church for the next classis meeting. Place: Immanuel church. Date: Oct. 13, 1992 at 8 p.m.

Question Period was held. Censure ad Art. 44 C.O. was not needed.

The Acts were read and approved. Elder J. Vanderdeen closed in prayer. The chairman closed the meeting.

E.J. Tiggelaar
clerk, e.t.



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

Summer's a great time for sports and games, right? Here's what one Busy Beaver wrote on

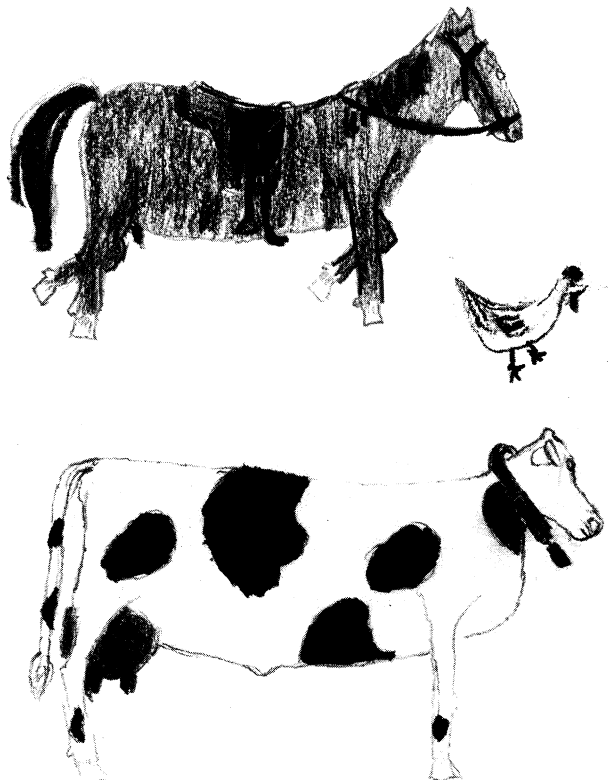
HOW TO BE A GOOD SPORT.

"You can be a good sport by, if losing, heartily congratulating the winner. You shouldn't really show that you are mad or sorry not to win, even if you are. Remember you are supposed to be playing for fun and exercise, and not to win.

But the winner can be a good sport, too. Actually he should congratulate the loser for "winning," too. Most of the time the loser has done better in this race or game than in the one before. So actually, you never really lose a game, but are always winning the race with yourself!"



Busy Beaver *Jason VandeBurgt* does some pretty nifty art work! Here is a little sample for your enjoyment.



FOR YOU TO DO

I wonder how your holidays are going, Busy Beavers. Are you enjoying your summer at home?

Have you been away camping?

Did your family have a super picnic?

Or did you have a thrilling boat ride?

Will you share your story with the other Busy Beavers?

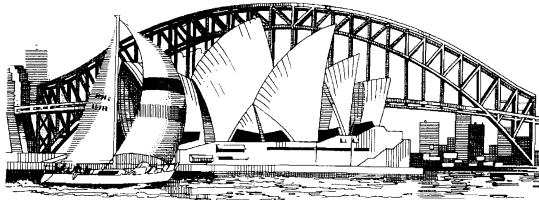
It's fun to read about another Busy Beaver's fun, right?

And you even earn a reward!

Send your story to

Picnic/Boat Ride

c/o The Busy Beaver Club
Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R2J 3X5



Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Duchess,
Duchess who?
Duchess the official
language of Holland.

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Queen.
Queen who?
Queen up that mess or
you're in big trouble!

Q. What kind of tea is served to a queen?
A. Royal tea!

Q. What did the king have done at the dentist's?
A. He had his teeth crowned.

Q. Who was the king who couldn't stop jumping?
A. King Geroo

Q. What does a knight say at bedtime?
A. Knighty knight!



Royal Jokes and Riddles

from Busy Beaver Rachel Wierenga



Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Jester.
Jester who?
Jester minute and
I'll tell you!

Knock, knock!
Who's there?
Lady.
Lady who?
Lady groceries on dee table
before you drop dem.



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Laura Rook*. We are happy to have you join us. Thank you for your story(book). I enjoyed it. Keep up the good work, Laura. I'm looking forward to your next letter already!

How did you enjoy your field trip to Lower Fort Garry, *Marcia Rook*? We would love to hear your story about the trip. I see you are a good puzzler, Marcia. Have you sent in your answers for the Summer Quiz Contest?

Hello, *Jennifer Hoogerdyk*. It was nice to hear from you again. And I see you are keeping busy, too. Have you tried the Quiz Contest already, Jennifer? Bye for now. Write again soon!

Don't forget to send in your answers for our Summer Quiz Contest, Busy Beavers.

I'm looking forward to your letters!
Bye till next time, then.

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

