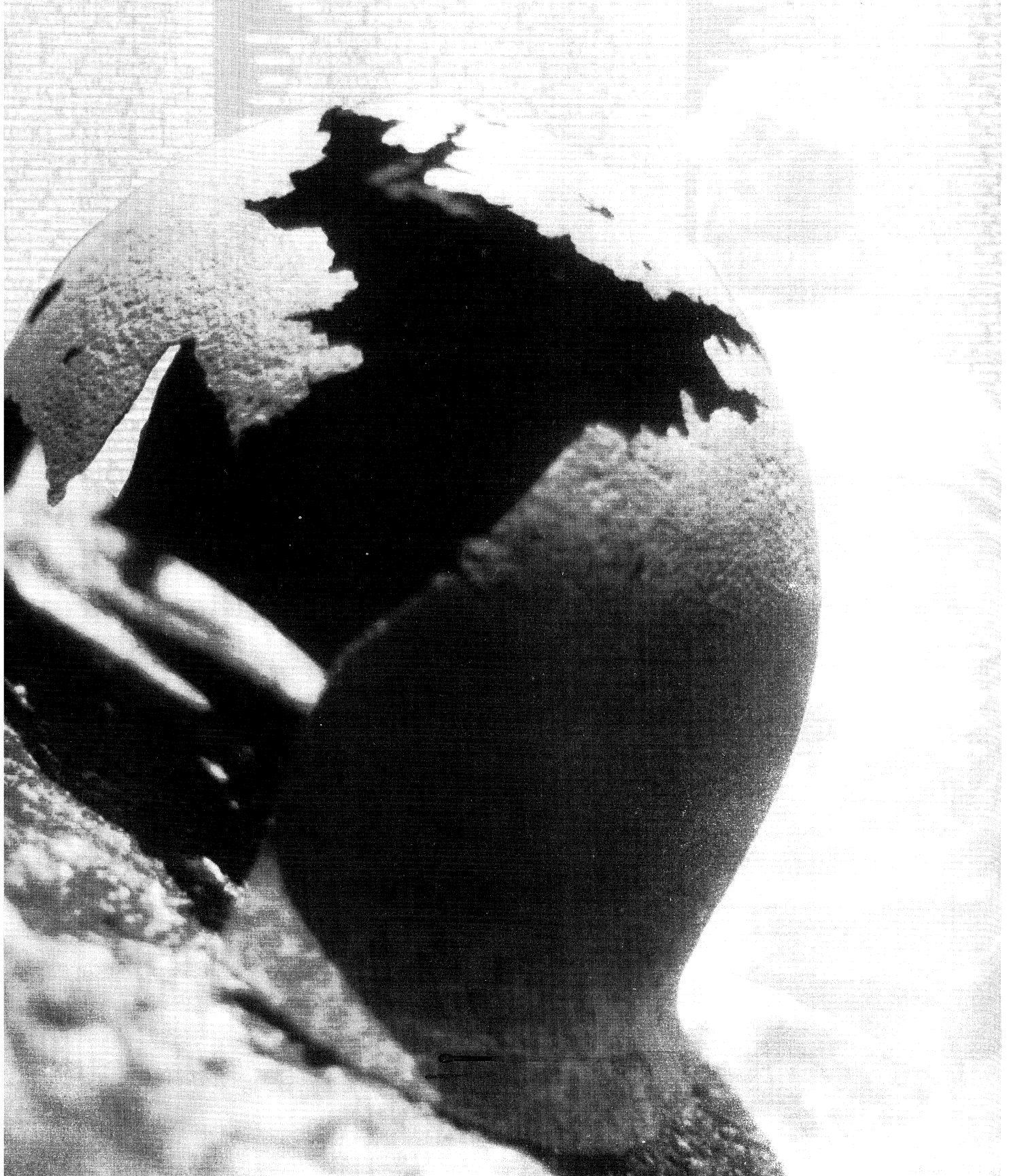


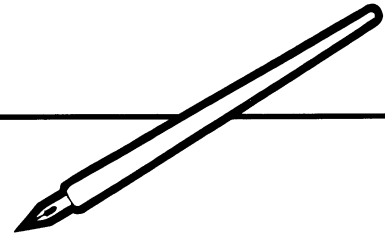


# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## The confession as basis

In the previous issue we talked about the practical meaning of the confession that Christ Jesus is revealed and given to us in God's Word as the legal king, the Lord and Saviour over God's whole creation, over all of life. We saw that Dr. A. Kuyper expressed this confession in the words, "There is not even the breadth of a thumb (or: not even a square inch) of the entire domain of our human life of which Christ does not say: 'This is Mine.'" And he applied this confession in the field of education also by working for and establishing the Free University. Antithetically overagainst the secular, modernist academic education, he placed the academic instruction, principally in all fields of study, that was submissive to the kingship of Christ and, therefore, to the Word of God as we have that in the Scriptures. Kuyper, and many of those who supported him in this endeavour, adopted as basis for their university, besides the Word of God, the Reformed principles.

However, it was on this point of "the Reformed principles" as basis that Kuyper was criticized. This criticism came especially from the side of members of the Secession churches. In their opinion, "Reformed principles" was too vague. Kuyper explained them as calvinistic principles but this did not make it any more concrete. These men of the Secession were certainly in favour of Kuyper's goal to have a truly Christian and Reformed institution of academic higher learning. But they wanted to have a much more concrete basis for the (Reformed) Free University. They wanted, besides the Word of God, the confession of the church, the Three Forms of Unity. One of these men was Rev. L. Lindeboom, later professor in Kampen. Another one was Rev. H. Beukers who accepted a call to a Christian Reformed Church in the United States of America and became professor at Calvin Seminary.

While Kuyper, in fact, restricted and narrowed the extend of the confession to the realm of the church, these men of the Secession saw the significance of the Reformed Creeds broader, namely, for all of life. In this controversy about the basis for the Free University, and, in fact for all education, we see the very same struggle against Kuyperian ideas as in the opposition of these men to Kuyper's proposals regarding the basis for the ecclesiastical union in 1892 (see elsewhere in this issue). The difference in view continued to exist after the union. When Lindeboom passed away in 1933, some writers spoke about him as a man who could be narrow-minded and even sectarian. They had in mind his opposition against the union with the "Doleantie" churches in particular because of the "Doleantie" (i.e. Kuyper's) doctrine on the church. Lindeboom stressed what the confession said about the true and the false church (again, see elsewhere in this issue).

Dr. K. Schilder, however, spoke about Lindeboom in a different way. The reader can find this in the *Yearbook for the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands 1934*.<sup>1</sup> Schilder had been a student of Lindeboom. Schilder wrote that Lindeboom's students who knew him so much better remembered how he said in one of his lectures: "The 'Doleantie' needed us, but we did need it. The 'Doleantie' also has saved us." The students of Lindeboom

know that his polemics-apologetics was just for this reason so sharp, but so honest too, because he did not have the disease of our present time, namely that people disconnect political and social matters from the deeper, basic, confessional questions, which are under discussion in the *church* and in *theology*, and which the church as pillar of the truth has to preserve. He saw that the garment of the truth has been woven together of one piece. And herein he was completely healthy.

Lindeboom, just as Schilder himself, wanted to maintain the unity of life under Christ, and for that reason under the authority of Scripture, and therefore also bound to and in agreement with the confession of the church. Accepting the confession, after and with the Scriptures, as basis for all of life, and thus also in education as well as in social and political organizations, was a strong point of the people of the Secession.

Lindeboom was not the only one. In the same *Yearbook* Schilder wrote also an article in memory of Dr. H. Bouwman, another retired professor of Kampen who died in the same year 1933. Schilder mentions (p. 410) that Dr. Bouwman, when he was still minister, spoke at a Theological School Day in 1902 about "The significance of the Reformed confession for all fields of (academic, scientific, learning." Schilder writes that in this speech Dr. Bouwman defended with strong emphasis

the following theses: a) that accepting the Reformed principles ("beginselen") *by themselves only* ("zonder meer") as basis of all fields of learning is unclear, incomplete, and unscholarly; b) that every scholar has to reckon first of all with the confession of the church to which he belongs because he is already bound to it since it is the conviction of his faith; c) that an anew formulating of the Reformed principles [in this case specifically for the field of (higher) education, J.G.] must not be recommended.

It is on this point of maintaining the confession in the basis for the Reformed school education and for academic instruction, for Reformed theology and Reformed philosophy, that Dr. K. Schilder, Professor B. Holwerda, Rev. J. Wiskerke, Dr. J. Douma, and so many others after the Liberation, have fought. This necessity of having the Reformed confession in

the basis was also maintained for the Reformed Political League (“Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond”) and for the Reformed Social League (“Gereformeerd Politiek Verbond”) among the members of the (Liberated) Reformed Churches. The Reformed confession, dealing with the triune God, the three Persons in their threefold work, deals in principle with life in all its aspects. It is this life as it belongs to the work of creation of the Father, shares in Christ’s work of redemption, and is sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

In order to maintain and retain this Reformed thinking, this accepting, together with the Word of God, also the Reformed confession as basis for all of life in all its aspects, forces us to study and know our confession thoroughly. Only in this way will we be able to stay on the Reformed track. Abolishing the Reformed confession as basis for a part of life will easily result in making compromises. For the result will be a broad evangelicalism in which Roman Catholic and Arminian Baptist and Reformed must be able to work to-

gether. This is only possible when the Reformed participant eventually restricts the extend of his confession to the narrow area of his church life.

To maintain the better our confession that Christ is king over all of life and that there is not a square inch in the entire domain of this life of which Christ does not say, “It is Mine,” we need the Scriptures *and the confession* as basis for that whole domain of life.

Let us therefore continue to study and know our Reformed heritage and keep the Reformed confession (this means, with the Bible) in the centre of all of our life. Thus we shall continue our way in the tracks of God’s Word. Let the older generation hand this heritage over to the younger generation. And let the younger generation show the willingness to receive this heritage from the older one. This heritage which God gave to us is worth keeping, that is, when this is done for Him and His glory, in obedience to His Word, and for the coming of His kingdom. **C**

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# Remembrance Day in the light of biblical prophecy

By G.Ph. van Popta

November 11th is Remembrance Day. We remember those who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars, and other wars, so that we could live in freedom.

We do well to consider this in the light of biblical prophecy. For the Bible does have something to say about wars. Biblical prophecy tells us about the great lines in history. It gives us a panoramic view of the history of the world. That panorama includes times of war and times of peace.

This is something that the newspapers will not give you. The newspapers give you little snapshots of world history. What was important yesterday, you no longer read about today. What is important today will be forgotten tomorrow.

Biblical prophecy, on the other hand, shows us the great movement in history. It shows us how things have been, are, and will be, until the end of history.

When biblical prophecy tells us about this great movement of history, we should not think that it is describing some type of cosmic evolution which has its own momentum. *God* is behind

the movement. God moves the nations around according to His specific plan. Neither should we think that the real point in history is the struggle we see between the nations of the earth. The focal point of history is the church of the Lord Jesus Christ. God is bringing about His plan of history for the good of His beloved church.

A prophecy such as the one we find in Zechariah 1:18-21 makes this clear. There we read:

And I lifted my eyes and saw, and behold, four horns! And I said to the angel who talked with me, “What are these?” And he answered me, “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem.” Then the LORD showed me four smiths. And I said, “What are these coming to do?” He answered, “These are the horns which scattered Judah, so that no man raised his head; and these have come to terrify them, to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it.”

God sent the prophet Zechariah to His people, the Jews, at a very low point in

their history. They had spent the past 70 years in exile in Babylon. God had sent them into exile because of their disobedience to His commandments and because of their idolatry. When the 70 years were over, God allowed them to go back to the land of Palestine. But the people felt beaten, discouraged and depressed. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, had scattered them throughout his empire. He had destroyed Jerusalem. So, the LORD sent Zechariah to encourage His people, to cheer them up.

God showed Zechariah a vision. In this vision Zechariah saw four horns. In the Bible, a horn is a symbol of strength, of power. The number *four* is symbolic of the earth. Just like the number three is symbolic of the triune God, so the number four is symbolic of the earth. We talk about the four corners of the earth, the four winds, and the four points of the compass.

Thus four horns refer to earthly power – to the power of the nations of the world. When Zechariah saw these four horns, he asked what they were. An angel told him: “These are the horns which have scattered Judah, Israel, and



Jerusalem." The four horns were the earthly powers, Nebuchadnezzar and his Babylonian armies, which had scattered the Jews far and wide.

God had used the Babylonians to punish and to discipline His people. Nebuchadnezzar had been a tool in the hands of God. However, Nebuchadnezzar clearly acted from wrong motives. He did it for imperialistic purposes. He didn't care about being a tool in the hand of God. He was only interested in setting up a world empire. He demanded that all the nations and peoples of the earth should bow down to him.

In the process, he went too far. That's what God said to Zechariah in 1:15. God said: "And I am very angry with the nations that are at ease; for while I was angry but a little they furthered the disaster." Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians over did things. They were too cruel, too vicious against God's people. So the LORD was very angry with them.

Because the Babylonians had been too cruel to the people of God, God raised up four smiths to destroy the four horns. That's what Zechariah saw next in his vision. He saw four smiths who came "...to cast down the horns of the nations who lifted up their horns against the land of Judah to scatter it."

Zechariah saw four strong young men, four blacksmiths with bulging bi-

ceps, hammers in hand, walking towards the four horns with a very definite purpose. Each smith took hold of one horn, put it on an anvil, and smashed it to bits. The smiths destroyed the horns.

Who are these four smiths? The smiths, characterized by the number four, the number which speaks of the earth, are earthly powers whom God raised up to deliver His people from cruel oppression. The four smiths were Cyrus the Persian and his armies. Cyrus brought down the Babylonian empire and established the Persian empire. Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to their own land and to Jerusalem. God used one earthly power, four smiths, to destroy the four horns, another earthly power.

It wasn't that King Cyrus and the Persians had any special love for the people of God. Cyrus didn't say to his generals: "Let's go smash Babylon in order to save the Jewish people, the people of the LORD." No, he did it for imperialistic purposes. He wanted to establish a world empire.

The LORD used Persia to save His people, but this nation too was characterized by the number four. Persia had the same nature and was motivated by the same pride and lust for glory as was Babylon. It had the same ambitions, the same goal, namely, a world empire.

Things were better for the church under Persia than under Babylon. It was a relief for the people of God when Babylon was cast down. It was wonderful that they could return to their beloved land. But the four smiths were, at bottom, also four horns. Cyrus, as Darius after him, demanded absolute submission to him. There was no room for any other king. They refused any competition.

So what about Israel's future? What about God's promise of a king who would come from the midst of Israel and establish a peaceful kingdom upon the earth? Would that ever come about with emperors like Cyrus and Darius who allowed no competition?

Because Persia was also, at bottom, four horns, God raised up another nation to serve Him as four smiths to destroy Persia. Alexander the Great of Macedonia, filled with imperialistic dreams, began to extend his borders until they collided with Persia. The Macedonian and Greek smiths destroyed the Persian horns. Then, 200 years later, Roman smiths smashed the Greek horns. The Caesars established the Roman empire.

It was God working behind the scenes of world history, bringing about His plan for the salvation of His people. For Jesus Christ had to die on a Roman cross. And the civil engineers of

Rome had to build roads throughout the world so that the missionaries could spread the gospel of Jesus Christ.

God directs and controls history to bring about His plan for the salvation of the church. And He uses the imperialistic ambitions of the nations of the earth to bring it about.

This applies for our time as well. This prophecy of Zechariah sheds light on the events of our time. It is still the same God who raises up and who smashes down nation after nation. He reigns supreme. He governs the nations. He steers the course of history.

In the past world war, Germany fought for its own glory. It wanted more "Lebensraum," more room to live in. And so it began to occupy the countries around it – Belgium and the Netherlands, Poland and France. Hitler wanted to establish an empire, the Third Reich. His plan was to dominate first Europe and then the whole world. And he and his hoodlums were filled with hatred for God, the Lord Christ, and the church. Many believers suffered and died in concentration camps. If Nazi Germany had won the war, it would have tried to stamp out the church of Christ.

Japan wanted to establish an empire in the East. It was motivated by a false religion. The Japanese believed that their emperor was divine, a descendent of the gods. They believed that their race was a divine race destined to rule the world. The church of Christ in Korea suffered under the hatred the Shintoists had for Christians.

But God put a halt to both of these imperialistic movements. He smashed the horns of both Germany and Japan. He raised up smiths. He raised up England, Canada, the United States, Russia and Australia to throw down these anti-Christian powers. It was awful. Cities were devastated. Countries were laid waste. Millions were killed. But God's people were saved. Germany and Japan touched the apple of God's eye, and they paid the price.

This doesn't mean that the intentions of the Allies were always honourable. The Allied powers didn't ally themselves with one another in order to save the church. Rather, God raised them up to bring about His ongoing plan in history for the church.

To do so, God knew how to use a communist Russia in order to defeat a fascist Germany and liberate His church. Four horns, four smiths, driven by the same ambitious ideals, but God

knew how to use them for His plan. A soviet Russia, a communist China, a democratic, capitalistic North America which, at bottom wasn't any better than Russia or China – God knew how to use each of these nations. He knew how to play them off against each other. How to make them clash, how to make them act as checks and balances for one another, all in the fulfilment of His plan for His church.

Revelation 12 also sheds light on this for us. In Revelation 12 we read that the dragon, Satan, is chasing after the woman, which is the church. The dragon poured water out of his mouth in order to sweep the woman away. But the earth opened its mouth and swallowed the water. The earth came to the aid of the woman. The smiths of the earth protected the church from the horns of the world.

This will go on until the last day. Satan tries to destroy the church. That's all he wants to do. Very near the end, says Rev. 20, Satan will deceive the nations which are at the four corners of the earth, that is Gog and Magog. Satan will make these four horns, Gog and Magog, march across the earth and surround the camp of the saints and the beloved city.

One last time the horns of the earth will try to destroy the church. But they

will not succeed. And this last time there will be no need for smiths. God will not raise up earthly powers to destroy Gog and Magog. He himself will consume them with fire from heaven, says Rev. 20:9. And the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire and sulphur, there to be tormented for ever.

In November we wear our poppies. We reflect upon the sacrifice of those who gave their bodies to bullets and grenades so that we could continue to live in freedom. We remember with great respect those lying in Flander's Fields.

But we also look beyond to God who controls history. For it is God who allows nations to rise and who brings them crashing down. It is God who brings down the Berlin Wall. It is God who makes the Soviet Empire crumble and collapse.

No, we don't understand everything. We cannot explain every event. But this we know – God, by His Son who is seated at His right hand, governs this world through all the ups and downs on the international scene. In the midst of the hub-bub of the nations, the Head of the church is bringing about the complete restoration of the new Jerusalem. C

# Clarion

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# The Union of 1892 Today<sup>1</sup>

By J. Geertsema

On the first three Thursdays in October, the Burlington Reformed Study Centre organized a series of public meetings in connection with the commemoration of the Union of 1892 in the Netherlands between the Christian Reformed Churches coming from the Secession of 1834 and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands coming from the "Doleantie." The theme for the three evenings was "Reformed Identity and Ecumenicity." The aim of these meetings was to bring people of different Reformed Churches in the area (Orthodox and Independent Christian Reformed, Free Reformed, and Canadian Reformed) closer together by meeting with and listening to each other. In his opening word, Dr. C. Van Dam described this aim with the following words:

The goal of these three meetings on Reformed identity and ecumenicity, of which we have the first tonight, is modest. We want to see what *identity* the different Reformed bodies have. Like the tribes of Israel, the different Reformed Churches all have their own specific histories and features.

Secondly, with respect to *ecumenicity*, we want to find out if there are any biblical obstacles to heeding in a concrete way the prayer of Christ for church unity. In other words, should there be a more fervent seeking of each other for the sake of the unity of the church of Christ or not?

Each evening the audience first heard two speakers, after which two others joined them to form a panel and to give some comment.

The topic of the first evening was, "Is there a lesson in the Union of 1892 for Today." It was an exchange of Canadian Reformed and Free Reformed views. The main speakers were Dr. J. DeJong, professor in Ecclesiology and Diaconiology at the Theological Col-

lege of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Hamilton and Rev. C. Pronk, Th.M., minister of the Free Reformed Church at St. Thomas, Ontario. Both speakers dealt with the objections of members of the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken" in the Netherlands against the Union of 1892. I shall give a summary of both.

## Dr. J. DeJong on the Union

Dr. DeJong began with mentioning some of the historical events that led from "Doleantie" to Union. The Union did not come about without a struggle. However, in August 1891 the Synod of Leeuwarden of the Secession Churches formulated their conditions for union. In September of the same year the Synod of Den Haag of the "Doleantie" churches met and accepted these conditions. This was the basis for the union in the following year, June 17.

The conditions were: 1) that the united churches must be acknowledged as true churches according to the Confession and the Church Order; 2) it must be mutually agreed that the breaking of ecclesiastical fellowship not only with the Boards of the Dutch Reformed (State) Church, but also with the members in a corporate and local sense is demanded by God's Word and the Reformed confession and is therefore necessary; 3) the Regulation of 1869 of the Secession Churches would be replaced by the Church Order of Dort; 4) the church must retain the principle that it has the calling to have its own institution for the training of its ministers.

However, not all members and congregations of the Secession agreed with the Union. They had basically five objections. Dr. DeJong continued with mentioning these objections, which were not so much "against union *per se*, but against union at *this time* and with *these terms*." The Synod of Secession Churches of Amsterdam 1892 dealt with them and rejected them as

not valid. The first objection was that the local churches had not been involved. The Synod argued that the local churches would not be effected as such; and Professor L. Lindeboom said that the churches had had time enough, and that, if there had been a lack of involvement, this was caused by the consistories who had been lacking in informing the congregation.

The second objection was that Secession and "Doleantie" had followed two opposing views on the doctrine of the church. The Synod judged that the one method did not exclude the other, and that, on this point especially, the "Doleantie" Churches had accepted the second condition about the breaking of the ecclesiastical fellowship with the Dutch Reformed (State) Church. Dr. DeJong's evaluation was that the result of both movements was the same on the basis of an acknowledgement of God's command for union of those who are one in faith. Rev. Pronk would expand on this point.

The third objection of these members of the Secession Churches was that not all the local "Doleantie Churches could be called true church because of their maintaining close ties with the local Dutch Reformed congregation." The Synod responded that this was the consequence of the "Doleantie" method, which could not be undone, and that, with the agreement reached between the two church groups, one should now wait and see what such churches would do within the union.

Those opposed to the union at that time had as fourth objection that there was not enough love for each other yet to enter into a "marriage." The synod stated that, in general, there was mutual love, and that the use of the marriage metaphor was not correct. Dr. DeJong commented that not the presence of love but God's command to mutual love was the real issue.

The fifth objection had to do with Kuyper's teachings on regeneration and baptism, even though his name was not mentioned. The Synod's reply was that the union took place on the basis of Scripture and Confession and the Church Order of Dort; and that, if there were objections against someone's teachings, these could be dealt with in the ecclesiastical way within the federation of the united churches. In Dr. DeJong's opinion, the synod answered the objections correctly.

Coming to an assessment of the Union for today, Dr. DeJong stated that this merger was clearly the work of the Lord through His Word and Spirit. He agreed with Prof. J. Kamphuis that for a union between the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken" (Free Reformed Churches) and the Reformed Churches (Canadian Reformed Churches) total agreement on the Union and its being right or wrong is not a necessity, but that the issue is how we can find unity today on the same basis of Scripture, confession, and Church Order of Dort.

The Union had positive result for both church groups. For "it was through the union that many pietistic, inward-directed tendencies among the Seceders were overcome" and that "a this-worldly optimism did not predominate among the 'Dolerende' " people. Prof. Lindeboom stated later that both parties needed each other and that the union was positive for both.

Dr. DeJong also referred to what Dr. M. te Velde of Kampen wrote in connection with the churches which did not join the Union, pointing out that they "initially took the stand that the united churches were not true, but false churches" and that they, the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken, "after 1892 were the lawful continuation of the true church." The speaker stated that this point of the church "weighed more heavily" for these churches "than the point of Kuyper's theology." But, "after 1947 a change of strategy was visible among these ["Christelijke Gereformeerde"] Churches. "They leaned to Kuyper's view of the pluriformity of the church much more than the Liberated churches did;" and they proceeded to accuse the latter "of having a narrow church concept."

The conclusions of Dr. DeJong were: Different ways of Reformation are possible, as well as consecutive secessions from the same corrupted church. There is always the need of historical consciousness, a reformation being a

return to the faith of the fathers. Reformation has to happen on the basis of the confession, while there should be willingness to compromise within the truth. And union can only then occur when there is the desire for true ecumenicity, and true obedience to the norms of Scripture and the call of Christ for the oneness of those who believe in Him in the unity of the true faith.

With all the differences in situation that exist, "today Reformed believers should be working for unity armed with the insights gained from the Union of 1892."

### Rev. C. Pronk on the Union

Rev. Pronk focused the attention of his listeners specifically on the second (the historical) and the fifth (the doctrinal) objection of those who did not join the union. The opponents saw the difference between the two movements of Secession and "Doleantie" "as so fundamental that a union between the two churches could only lead to much conflict and confusion." To give the audience a clear insight in the difference, Rev. Pronk reviewed how Secession and "Doleantie" came about and what their theological and philosophical principles were. As for the "Doleantie," he referred to Kuyper's *Treatise on the Reformation of the Churches (Tractaat van de Reformatie der Kerken)* of 1884.

"According to Kuyper, the Dutch Reformed (State) Church was not a fake church, as the Secession Churches claimed, but a true church as far as its essence was concerned. Important here is Kuyper's distinction between the church as *organism* and the church as *organization* or *institute*. As organism a church can be true while at the same time it can be false as an organization. As long as a church has true believers in it, even *potentially*, it is still a true church. Such was the case with the Dutch Reformed (State) Church, Kuyper believed. The only thing that was false about it was its *organization* due to certain *regulations* imposed on it by the State since 1816.... Reformation, therefore, meant liberating the church from these illegally imposed regulations [the organization of a hierarchical system of governing boards] and this, according to Kuyper and his followers, was what took place at the 'Doleantie.' They did not see the action of 1886 as a secession from the State Church, similar to 1834, but as an attempt to *reorganize* or *reform* that church by bringing it back under the authority of Christ."

The people of the Secession, however, saw the Dutch Reformed (State) Church "as a false church." According to them "the Church is essentially what the Confession states in Art. 27 of the Belgic Confession: 'an holy congregation of true Christian believers,' organized as an historically existing and visible community of members united in a common confession of faith." Aware that in Kuyper's view the Secession was premature and therefore a schismatic action, the Synod of Assen 1888 of the Secession churches were willing to discuss union if two conditions were met: the "Doleantie" churches had to acknowledge 1) that they had separated from the Dutch Reformed (State) Church in a corporate sense and not just from its governing bodies; and 2) that the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken" were truly Reformed and true churches both in their origin in 1834 and in their present existence.

At a Convention of "Doleantie" churches, meeting at the same time, "these conditions were flatly rejected" as in fact condemning the "Doleantie." When the Synod of Assen was informed of this rejection, the delegates were disappointed but, said Rev. Pronk, "instead of standing firm they began to waver." For the majority wanted to continue the discussion, so that the synod appointed deputies for further contact.

After Kuyper again proposed a form of agreement which clearly showed his view, the Secession Synod of Leeuwarden of 1891 had to consider two proposals. The one was from Prof. Lindeboom, asking synod to insist that the "Doleantie" churches had to declare that they separated from the Dutch (State) Church as a false church in both its governing bodies and its corporate membership. Lindeboom insisted that the Secession view should be acknowledged as the only legitimate position. The other was from Prof. Bavinck. He asked the synod to propose the following: both church groups acknowledge the Secession a work of God; the method of the "Doleantie" be left to their own responsibility; both church groups recognize each other as true churches; the "Doleantie" churches acknowledge that breaking with the Dutch State Church means breaking with both the governing organization and with the members in a corporate sense; the union is on the basis of the Three Forms of Unity and the Church Order of Dort. Bavinck's view was that

both views should have equal right in the united church.

In his paper, Rev. Pronk characterized the difference between Lindeboom's and Bavinck's position in this way: "Lindeboom favoured a real, essential union, while Bavinck was satisfied with a *formal* union." And about the answer of the Synod of Amsterdam to the dissenters, stating that their objections were without good grounds, because the union was on the basis of the confession, Rev. Pronk says, that the synod "may have been formally correct," but that "the nagging question" for the dissenters was whether such a "formal agreement with the confession (was) a sufficient basis for union."

As for the fifth or doctrinal objection, the opponents objected because of unbiblical teachings in the circle of the Doleantie. They were Kuyper's ideas of "justification from eternity, immediate regeneration, presumptive regeneration as ground for baptism and as a result the idea that the entire congregation, including the seed of the covenant, is to be regarded and dealt with as regenerate from birth." The synod responded that the union was taking place on the basis of the confession and that objections could be dealt with later in the united church. Rev. Pronk stated, "I find this an extremely weak rebuttal. Synod side-steps what amounts to the most important objection raised by the dissenters. Notice, synod does not deny the charge.... The answer of synod comes down to this: we know there are differences but we feel it is better to unite first and then talk about our differences – an altogether wrong approach to church unification, in my view." There "really was no *confessional* unity, despite the formal declarations of agreement." And in fact, also the matter of the method of Secession and "Doleantie," depending so much on the different views on the church, was fully a doctrinal matter.

Kuyper's concept of the church (as organism) had its origin in the German philosophy of idealism, and this philosophical concept was connected by Kuyper with "the biblical and Reformed doctrine of election." This "emphasis on the invisible church as organism and the corresponding depreciation of the visible church as institute...forms the background to all Kuyper's thinking, including his theory of reforming the Dutch Reformed (State) Church." The result is that the "Articles 27 through 29 of our confession are rendered com-

pletely inoperative." The men of the Secession disagreed with Kuyper because they took their stand in the confession. They applied Art. 29, about the marks of the true and of the false church, to the Dutch State Church and concluded it to be a false church. It was this doctrinal difference, this speaking of Kuyper not in agreement with the confession, that caused the opposition against the union.

Kuyper's concept of the church as organism must be linked with his supra-lapsarian approach (which builds everything upon God's eternal decree) and with his idea of *potentia* (the essence of the true church is still present when in a local church institute there are infants (unborn or already born) who are elected and regenerated). Connected with this are Kuyper's ideas of a covenant of grace made with Christ as representative of the elect, of justification of the elect from eternity, of presumptive and immediate regeneration: The whole congregation must be presumed to exist of people, including the children, who have been regenerated by the Spirit not through the preaching of God's Word, but immediately (=without means), around the time of their birth. Such elect, in their regeneration at birth had the root of faith planted in their heart, and through the preaching they become conscious of their faith and salvation. Those who opposed the union saw all these Kuyperian doctrines not only as in conflict with both Scripture and confession, but also as having grave implications for the preaching and the use of the sacraments.

The thinking in the Secession churches was infra-lapsarian, taking its starting point in the history of creation, fall in sin, redemption in Christ in which one shares through regeneration and faith. "The Secession saw the church as a 'salvation' institute, the work-place of the Holy Spirit where dead sinners are brought to new life in Christ." But the main objection was, at the time of the Union, Kuyper's ideas about the church.

According to Rev. Pronk, the history that followed proved that the dissenters were right. From 1905 through 1944 there was a constant controversy in the united churches around Kuyper's ideas. Therefore, the speaker wanted to plead for "a recognition that the dissenters also acted in good faith." Their five objections presented to the Synod of Leeuwarden were "five cries of the heart." "What concerned them most

was the spiritual understanding of God's Word; the personal relationship with the Lord, the experience of the wonder of God's grace." In the preaching of the "Doleantie," and especially in much of Kuyper's "theological-speculative views" they missed "the deep spirituality of the Secession, the realities of sin and grace, the right experience of the covenant of God and the personal relationship to the God of that covenant.... The dissenters of 1892 felt intuitively that the scripturally mystical bond with the triune God was being replaced by a well-thought out, logical and intellectualistic covenant *system* which so easily could lead to a false sense of security." They wanted not only a formal but also an essential agreement.

In his concluding remarks, Rev. Pronk said that this was still the basic issue: "How do we read and interpret the confessions? What does formal agreement on doctrinal issues mean in practice? And which doctrines are deemed most important? For our Canadian Reformed brethren the important question seems to be: what is the true church? For us Free Reformed, the matter goes beyond that and we ask: how do I know whether I am a true member of this true church?" A closely related question "deals with the work of the Holy Spirit in applying salvation to the hearts and lives of sinners. For us, therefore, church unity involves more than formal agreement on the basis of Scripture and the Confessions. We also insist that justice be done to the practical, *experiential* (bevindelijk) aspect. This, I believe, is part of the legacy we have inherited from the Secession and which we cannot and may not surrender."

### The panel response

Rev. J. Mulder, retired minister of the Canadian Reformed Church of Burlington-West and one of the panelists, remarked, among others, in response to what Dr. DeJong has said, that, according to him, the Synod of Leeuwarden of 1891 dealt somewhat superficially with the objections and should have paid more attention to them. He further expressed as his opinion that the Canadian Reformed and Free Reformed do not have to agree on the right or wrong of the Union in 1892.

In reaction to Rev. Pronk, Rev. Mulder said that also in our preaching the need for personal faith and conversion receives attention. He would like to see a more positive response from Free Re-




formed consistories to requests for contact from Canadian Reformed consistories. He also thought that the distinction made by Rev. Pronk between Prof. Bavinck's proposal for union at the Synod of Leeuwarden 1891 as formal and the proposal of Prof. Lindeboom as essential was a wrong contrast. The "Doleantie" churches accepted the second point of the proposed basis for union as this was formulated by the Synod of Leeuwarden of 1891 of the Secession churches. With doing so, they agreed "that the breaking of ecclesiastical fellowship not only with the Boards of the Dutch Reformed (State) Church, but also with the members in a corporate and local sense is demanded by God's Word and the Reformed confession and is therefore necessary." This was really what Lindeboom wanted. Here is a speaking in the way of the Secession. This is not just a formal but a material agreement with the confession.

The other panelist, Rev. C. Schouls, of the Free Reformed Church at

Vineland, responded that Dr. DeJong should be careful with stating that the hand of God was in the Union of 1892. Of course, God's providence led also those events. But this does not automatically mean that everything that was done, was done in obedience. He further remarked that the Canadian Reformed preaching may stress the need for personal faith and commitment, but that in what is written this aspect does not receive much attention. In Free Reformed preaching much time is spent on those who do not yet believe. Being in the covenant does not mean that one is automatically saved. We depend on the Holy Spirit. We must personally know sin and grace. While in the Canadian Reformed Churches the emphasis is placed on the salvation which is given to the whole congregation, we, in the Free Reformed Churches, stress the individual. The issue is about the appropriation of God's grace. Does God's grace automatically become the property of every member of the covenant

through his belonging to the covenant, or does the Holy Spirit make it one's property in the way of that person's personal acknowledging of sin and of God's grace?

Confronted in the end with the question what should be done for promoting unity between the two church groups, it was said that the present meeting was a good start. More meetings should be held in which we get to know each other better. Local discussions often run aground on the church concept of the Canadian Reformed Churches and on the matter of the appropriation of salvation. Rev. Mulder gave the advice that we should pray more for unity. The meeting was closed with Rev. Schouls leading in thanksgiving and prayer.

About a thousand members of the different Reformed Churches attended this first meeting. It was good to see such an interest in this question how we can become one. 

## REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

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By R.A. Schouten

# How to read the Book<sub>2</sub>

In the first article, we paid attention to a preliminary phase of serious Bible study. It was stated that it is very important to begin Bible Study by paying attention to the whole book you are studying. There are no shortcuts in this regard. People who want to honor the Author of Scripture will simply have to take the time to carefully read the whole book at least once and preferably twice. After you have done this, you will be able to really profit by reading articles in Bible Dictionaries, Study Bibles and Bible Handbooks.

Thus, the point of the first article was to encourage people to come to grips with the overall message of each book they study. I spoke about this as the wide-angle perspective. Now it is time, however, to take some close-up shots.

### The smaller context

Once you have developed a "feel" for the book you are studying, it is time

to move on to more focused study of individual units. In order to do this, you will need to decide on the *divisions* of the book. Hopefully, you will have noticed the basic structure of the book when you read it from beginning to end. For example, if you read Genesis a couple of times, you will notice the repeated phrase "these are the generations of...." You can use this phrase to make an outline of Genesis. Does the job of making your own outline sound too difficult? In that case, use one provided by the various Study Bibles or Study Guides. If you read such an outline without having first read that book carefully, it will seem rather uninteresting. If, however, you have first read the whole book through and through, the outline will really come alive and will be of great help in your Bible Study.

So now you have your outline. At this stage, you can begin serious study of individual passages of Scripture.

Read the first section indicated by your outline (usually this will be a chapter or two, though sometimes longer). Get out your Bible Study Notebook. Write down in a few sentences what seems to be the main point of the first section of the outline.

After this, it will be very helpful to divide the first section of the outline into even smaller units, namely, into paragraphs. Again, write down the key thought of each paragraph. Don't be afraid to write in your Bible. For example, you can number the paragraphs in each section of your outline. Or, you can number the central points in each section of the outline, which show the flow of thought.

So far, you have divided the first section of your outline into paragraphs. To take your study further, you now analyze each paragraph into sentences. Who or what is the subject of each sentence? What is the main verb? Often

this will be obvious, but still, taking the time to think about it may clear up some confusion.

The last stage of analysis brings us to the level of individual words and phrases of the text. If there is a word you don't understand, you simply must look it up in a Bible dictionary (or, in some cases, in a regular dictionary). Now ask yourself some questions about the individual words. Are there certain words which are repeated in the course of the book? Are there key words which take you to the heart of the book? Perhaps you could make a list of key words for each book you study. These would be unique words which center around the theme of the book.

A further step of study involves concordances. There are many of these on the market. The key is to find one that corresponds to the Bible translation you use. If you use the RSV, it won't be terribly useful to have a New International Version concordance. The point of concordance study is to discover the range of meaning a particular word might have. For example, if a verse in your passage uses the word "preach" you can look up other occurrences of this word. Usually, you won't have time to look up every instance, so you can confine yourself to a certain part of Scripture. For example, if you find the word "preach" in one of Paul's letters, you can look up all other instances in only Paul's letters, leaving out for the moment, the letters of Peter, John, James, Jude and the Gospels. However much time you devote to concordance study, it will definitely help you to get the flavor of different words.

Most good study Bibles have a reference column. You can use this tool to find other passages which use the same words, phrases or express the same thoughts as found in the verse you are studying. It can be very helpful to write out a number of these cross references in your Bible Study Notebook.

### The Bible as literature

In the various steps of Bible Study, we need to be concerned about two questions: first, what is the author saying? (content) and second, how is he saying it? (method, style). Of course, these two can never be separated. Often we don't know what an author is saying until we pay attention to his style. For this reason, I would urge you to become more sensitive to matters of style. We need to learn to read the Bible as literature.

Here we find a strong incentive to take English class seriously! In English, we learn to analyze and understand different types of literature. We learn about drama, poetry, short stories, novels etc. We learn about symbols, allegories, imagery, metaphors, repetition, parallelisms, hyperbole, theme, climax, and much, much more. Understanding literature is important for many reasons, but also for this reason: the Bible is literature! When you sit in English class, you may think that poetry is irrelevant. But then I would remind you that it has pleased the Lord to speak to us also by way of poetry. If you want to understand the Lord's revelation (and who dares say he doesn't), you will simply have to grasp the basics of poetic style and form. When you do, the poetic parts of Scripture really open up and become exciting for you! You start to appreciate how lovely the Scriptures are!

### Study-Guides and commentaries

We come now to the final stage of your study. This will involve reading the various commentaries and/or study guides you have available. Notice that this is the *last* step of serious Bible Study. I have no objection if you from time to time quickly consult a commentary to get a clearer view of a passage read, for example, around the dinner table. But in your serious Bible Study, such as the kind you should do for Young People's Society, consulting study guides of any sort will be the last step! Otherwise you will get lazy and

will never develop your own ability to hear the Word of God.

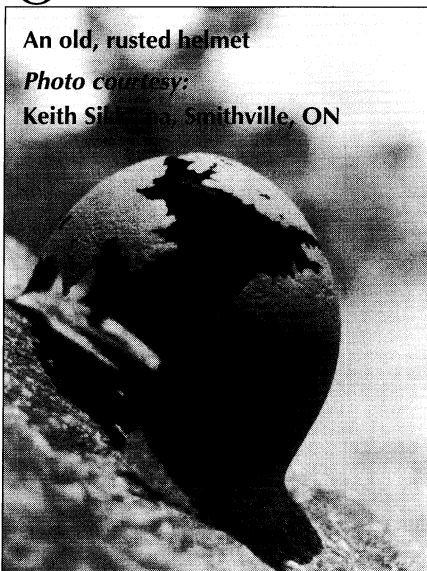
The big question is: what commentary of Study Guide should I use? For a general one-volume commentary, the *New Bible Commentary* is still hard to beat (published by Eerdmans, editor D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, cost around \$30.00). Besides interesting introductory articles on topics like "The Authority of Scripture," "Revelation and Inspiration," "The History of Israel," and even, yes, "The Poetry of the Old Testament," this Commentary contains short comments on every passage of the Bible which are often helpful to clear away difficulties.

If you have the New International Version Study Bible, the study notes alone make this publication worth its price (around \$50.00). In many cases, the study notes in this Bible are better than most existing non-academic English commentaries.

As far as individual study-guides or commentaries on specific Bible books are concerned, I would encourage you to keep an open eye for the many volumes published by the *Inter-League-Publication Board*. Recent publications include a substantial study guide on *Romans* by the Rev. J. Francke, a revised two-volume study guide on *Revelation* by Prof. J. Selles, and a volume on the *Minor Prophets* by Rev. P. Lok. When you see these advertised, buy them! In this way, by the time you are thirty, you will have a very useful reference library. Most of the so-called study guides available in evangelical book stores are quite useless and do not reflect a Reformed view of Scripture. For example, the majority of them are infected with dispensational nonsense.

One "commentary" series which deserves attention is entitled *The Bible Speaks Today* (O.T. portion edited by J.A. Motyer, N.T. by John R.W. Stott). I have looked through the volumes on *Revelation* (Michael Wilcock) and *1 Peter* (Edmund Clowney) and have found them to be characterized by accuracy and restraint. They take the text of the Bible seriously and yet refrain from sermonizing. They are easy to understand for average church members. This series is published by Inter-Varsity Press. Another series with many excellent volumes is the *Westminster Daily Study Bible*. For example, the two volumes by Peter Craigie on the *Twelve Prophets* are well worth your money.

## OUR COVER



An old, rusted helmet

Photo courtesy:

Keith Sibbald, Smithville, ON

Other reference material includes the classic *Promise and Deliverance*, by S.G. DeGraaf and translated by Dr. H. Evan and Elisabeth Wichers Runner. Unhappily, this four volume set, published by Paideia, is now out of print. If you can find a copy, it is very helpful reading for Old and New Testament historical passages. C. vanderWaal's ten volume set *Search the Scriptures*, translated by Dr. Theodore Plantinga, is still available and is a very helpful general guide to the structure and theme of each Bible book. In addition, these ten volumes constantly stimulate you to compare Scripture with Scripture so that you build up a sense of the unity of the Bible as the one covenant book

of God (Published by Paideia Press, St. Catharines, ON.).

Another very good way to build up a systematic knowledge of Scripture is to make some notes for yourself when your minister has a series of sermons on a certain part of Scripture. Later, if you undertake careful study of that Bible book, your notes will be very helpful!

Undoubtedly, I have missed some good material. I could yet mention Dr. William Hendriksen's series on the New Testament, published by Baker Book House (since Hendriksen's death, this series is being completed by Dr. S. Kistemaker). Generally, these are helpful, but frequently verbose and often going to great lengths to explain fairly triv-

ial points. I could also mention the nine volumes of the *Korte Verklaring* which have been translated and now published by Paideia/Zondervan (Genesis – Ruth, Isaiah, Matthew) under the title *Bible Student's Commentary*. If you can still obtain these, by all means do so, but it seems that no further volumes will be brought to the press.

If you are still unable to find a proper commentary or Study Guide for the book you have chosen, you may wish to consult your own minister for some advice. Speak to your local Christian Book Store concerning availability of any of the titles I've mentioned.

(to be continued)

## NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene



At times there are things that gladden the heart, especially when it appears that people finally are listening to what one is saying.

Our readers know that for the longest time I have been doing my best to have the correct terminology used when we speak about our broader assemblies. It was, therefore, extremely encouraging when I read in a report on a consistory meeting held in Chilliwack: "From the Church at Abbotsford informing us that Classis will be convened on Oct. 6 in Langley." And, to add to this, the Langley consistory reported: "The Church at Abbotsford has called a Classis Pacific for Oct.6." Although personally I have nothing to do with all this, let me throw in, for good measure, what Surrey wrote: "Classis Pacific is scheduled to be held..."

Each of these three expressions is correct. No "meeting of classis," or "classis will meet." Just the correct terminology.

Life is full of disappointments as well. Immediately after the correct terminology found in Langley's consistory report I read: "A letter will be sent to General Synod proposing that Synod meet during the month of June instead of November."

Our synods do not "meet" in November, for they do not exist, but they are usually *held* in November.

As for the contents of this proposal, I think that there is nothing against it and that, on the contrary, all things favour it.

As far as I recall, the custom to have our general synods in fall came into use because that is the time of year when it is easier for farmers to be away from their farms and work for some weeks. Especially during those first years many among the officebearers were farmers, and also for people working in other trades it was considered easier to get away in fall.

This argument no longer weighs all that heavily. Even many of our farmers do take holidays in summer, as relief

milkers (in case they have a dairy farm) can be found to take over. Besides, there are often grown-up sons and daughters who are very well acquainted with the work and can help out.

Having a general synod in fall causes interruption of much work in the congregation. Catechism classes have to be cancelled or others have to take over for some weeks, neither of which two possibilities is conducive to the instruction as such. For the hosts in the place where synod is being held it is also easier to provide shelter for the members of synod during the summer months than it is in fall, much depending on the place where synod is held. And for the brothers who have to write letters and to prepare the *Acts* for publication it means that they can do this before the work in the congregation fully resumes in September. All in all, nothing against and everything in favour of Langley's proposal.

And, to mention one more wrong expression I found in two bulletins: it is wrong to speak of "the administration of the Word." We do "administer" the sacraments, but we "proclaim" (and not "administer" the Word).

One paragraph in Chilliwack's consistory report was unclear to me (which is not to say that everything else in all bulletins is clear indeed!): "Manner in which the ministers read the forms (e.g. baptism, Public Profession of Faith), Will be left to the discretion of the ministers." It cannot mean that the ministers are permitted to change things, for they have to abide by what the churches have adopted. Does it mean, then, that the ministers may read either slowly or fast, either sitting down or standing up? I don't know, but time may tell. In that case I'll let you know.

There is more from Cloverdale.

"It was suggested in this letter to address Synod '92 about assessments. Rather than assess churches once a year, it is suggested to make the annual tally of communicant mem-

bers twice a year so that costs may be more evenly distributed among the churches, some of which have considerable increase or decrease of communicant membership during the year."

I do not know how one can make an "annual tally" twice a year, but mathematics was never one of my strong points. There is something else, however, that I find strange here. To my knowledge none of our general synods has ever made a rule that the membership as it stands at January 1st of each year is the fixed number each church has to go by when contributing the amount asked per communicant member. I would not know why a church that experienced a considerable decrease in the number of communicant members should still contribute on the basis of the previous, higher number. On the other hand, may it not be expected that a church whose communicant membership has increased greatly in the course of the year, contributes accordingly? Do we need general-synodical decisions about this? Watch out, brothers, that we don't get all sorts of rules and regulations, imposed with the best of intentions, but growing into a hard yoke!

Since we are dealing with proposals to the forthcoming general synod anyway, we might as well mention that Port Kells decided to send a letter in which "it will stress the desire to maintain the RSV as we have it at present, but not at all costs." As I mentioned in a previous contribution, it is almost certain that the RSV in its present form will remain available to us. I do not know much about the technicalities; more competent persons will undoubtedly inform the proper assemblies or committees. We may have to lay out some capital for this, but it will be much more economical than having all the church members and all the schools buy another translation! I hesitate to even try calculating the cost of this!

Speaking of cost, I had to think of this also when reading what Carman decided. "A proposal will be sent to General Synod for the Standing Committee for the *Book of Praise*. Request that the words with quarter notes in the hymn section be placed in italics as in the psalm section in future editions."

The request as such has much in favour of it. I mentioned it before, but almost every time I request a congregation to sing Hymn 24 the congregation begins every line with a quarter note even though lines 2, 4, and 7 have a half note at their beginning, two counts instead of one. The odd time I even mentioned it from the pulpit before asking the congregation to sing from that hymn, but even then they race through it. Having the quarter notes printed in italics *might* (!) help. It is, I hope, realized that this would mean a complete re-setting of the type, with all the extra costs involved. It is easy to make a proposal and it is easy to accept such a proposal, but every aspect should be considered.

To conclude the point "letters to synod" I mention Burlington West's decision "not to request of Synod guidelines for proclaiming days of prayer." Most grateful for such a decision as we may be, the very thought that a general synod might be asked to give "guidelines" is scary. Would a church itself not be able to make a wise decision? And if such a decision might be criticized, would that necessitate asking a general synod to provide "guidelines"? What for? To safeguard a church against criticism? Is there so much more wisdom with a gathering of sixteen men than with a consistory of perhaps more than twenty or than with the two consistories that have been appointed, whose total number

may well exceed forty? Anyway, we are happy with the decision not to make such a request.

We are not through yet with British Columbia. "As you have all noticed (we hope)," writes Vernon, "the nice Johannus Organ has returned to its home base. The Consistory, after hearing the congregation, decided not to proceed with the purchase, even though we had free financing for three years. Yes, we are disappointed, but not to the point of no return. We realize we should build up the fund considerably before another proposal is made."

Speaking of organs, but then real ones, the organ builder gave a nice piece of information about his own family in the Coaldale bulletin. Even the secular press paid attention to the new church building that nears completion. "Estimated completion date," *The Lethbridge Herald* wrote, "is the end of October." We further learn that "the estimated cost of the new building – including land, servicing and organ – is about \$900,000.00 and the church intends to pay it off in about twenty years... The exterior finish is a two-toned, light peach stucco and some say it resembles a Roman basilica... There is a large aluminum cross on top of the building and the spacious interior has fully-upholstered oak pews." However comfortable those pews may be, what a pity to have all that oak covered!

The organ builder invited the congregation to view the work completed thus far on October 4 and 11. All the other days of the week the auditorium is forbidden terrain for the membership in order to have the work progress without interruption or sidewalk-superintendents.

Something worthwhile happened in nearby Taber. In spite of objections by some, I do mention that congratulations were offered to "brother Glenn Tams for the honour he received by being declared the 1992 Small Business Owner of the Year by the Taber and District Chamber of Commerce." Let others see your good works, that they may glorify your Father who is in heaven.

More northerly we visit the Providence church in Edmonton. The consistory received a "letter from the Committee of Administration re: fee schedule for use of the church building. Decided is (It is decided, VO) to do away with the fee schedule and not to charge the membership or societies for the use of the building. However the caretaker should be remunerated if he has to do any extra work." Another decision that makes me happy.

A big jump is bringing us back all the way to Burlington West. What I like specifically about the new cover for the bulletin is that now it has the date on the front page. This saves me having to open the bulletins every time to see whether they are in sequence before I go through them for our medleys. Some who send bulletins write the number of each issue on the outside, and this achieves the same. Looks very nice!

Rev. Visscher reported in there on his progress with making acquaintance visits. "The congregation is rapidly approaching the 670 mark. With about 50 addresses taken care of thus far, there's only about 130 to go!" When reading this, I thought: "That's murder!" What minister can properly take care of about one hundred and eighty families and single members? I consider half that number the maximum for a congregation and for a minister.

The Smithville church remembered that it was instituted forty years ago. "To commemorate this event, plans are being made to publish a book on the history of Smithville's institution and church history... What we need from you is your

family story, pictures, and any other mementos of the past." I found this item in the Lincoln bulletin, for I haven't seen the *Family Post* for ages....

Do you mind when we go to Australia now? No? Good, here it is.

Armadale talked about "Singing of the Apostles' Creed: following the suggestion at the congregational meeting to sing this more frequent(ly), the consistory prefers to gauge the opinion from within the congregation before making a decision on this. " It was decided to have the elders raise this point at the family visits in order to learn what the members think about it.

Byford reported that the number of the Rockingham church at its institution stood at 140. A nice beginning, and very gratifying, seeing that the services were started there only nineteen months ago.

Byford also had a "Periodic Review of the Bunbury services. The meeting favours continuation of the Bunbury services." As it looks now, there will be the next Western Aus-

tralian church, unless Albany comes to the conclusion that they will have to split. We would love to hear from them, too!

Again I received a bulletin from the church at Port Moresby, PNG. Rev. and Mrs Brüning again spent some time there, and this was highly appreciated. There is also a group of six families in Sogeri. Don't ask me where to find that place. I mention it only to show that there, too, progress may be noted.

The brothers and sisters in Port Moresby were also planning on starting "pre-school education" with the beginning of October. They see the need and, in spite of their status as refugees with all the drawbacks of that, they are willing to sacrifice for it.

Let us prove ourselves grateful for what we have and let's do so by using it well and faithfully.

That's all for today. See you next time, I hope.

Faithfully Yours

VO



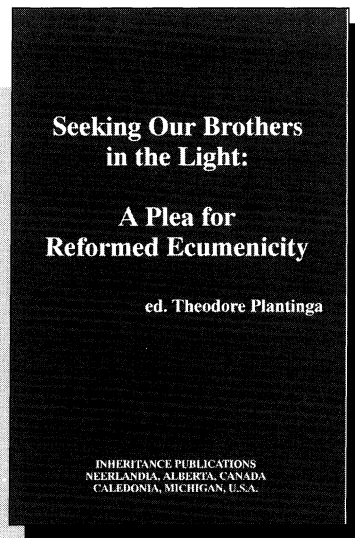
## A plea for Reformed Ecumenicity

By N.H. Gootjes

Prof. T. Plantinga published, in cooperation with Rev. R. Wynia, a book with the title: *Seeking Our Brothers in the Light: A Plea for Reformed Ecumenicity* (Neerlandia: Inheritance Publications, 1992). This is a book that deserves our attention. It begins with a quotation from the first Epistle of John, and it ends with a list of all the Canadian and American Reformed Churches.

It begins by quoting 1 John 1:5-10 and 2:9-11. The apostle speaks in these verses about fellowship with one another. This is, however, not a vague and general fellowship, a friendly feeling without much in common. The unity that is emphasized is a unity "in the light," a unity in Christ and in His Word. The book seeks church unity on the basis of subjection to the truth of Scripture.

It ends with the addresses of the Canadian and American Reformed Churches. The local churches of the Christian Reformed Church and the churches who have seceded from the Christian Reformed Church are urged to take up contact with these churches. The plea is very personal: The members of the Christian Reformed Church are addressed several times as "you" who



have to take action. The call for contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches is sounded everywhere in the book.

Rev. Wynia begins by stating that there exist an "unfinished business." That is the fact that the Christian Reformed Church has never dealt proper-

ly with the church split which took place in the Netherlands in 1944. Prof. Plantinga gives the necessary background information in the following chapters. He presents the events from 1944 that led to the Liberation by looking at them from four different angles. The next chapter surveys the reaction of the Christian Reformed Church to these events. The following two chapters deal with the Canadian Reformed side of it. Here are reprinted the two appeals (1963, 1977) to the Christian Reformed Church; Prof. Plantinga has added a number of explanatory footnotes. Then follows a brief interlude, containing some remarks of Prof. C. Veenhof concerning the church polity of the Reformed Churches. At this point Rev. Wynia takes over again, with an urgent appeal to all church members and consistories. He spells out the route they have to follow in order to make the Christian Reformed Church take up contact with the Canadian Reformed Churches.

This plea for renewal of the contact shows a true ecumenical spirit. The mistakes of the past are not glossed over, but brought to light. Recognizing

the legitimate concerns of the Canadian Reformed side is seen as the way to re-open the contact. The writers may be too optimistic in assessing the willingness to listen to their suggestions, but their attempt is honest and brave.

### The Liberation of 1944

A book like this requires our cooperation. Even though we are not directly addressed, if the book is listened to, the Canadian Reformed Churches will be approached. How shall we reach to such approaches? Before I make a few remarks about our attitude, however, I would first deal with the assessment of the central event in the book, the Liberation.

The second chapter analyses the events of 1944. Four possible theories to explain the event are discussed. First, there is the view that the Liberation had its origin in the boredom of the Second World War. The people were oppressed, and their energy and frustration found an outlet in the ecclesiastical struggle. That is the reason why the issue grew out of all proportion. The second view sees the Liberation as the result of the attempt to teach a lesson to K. Schilder. During the war the situation became uncontrollable, and ended, unforeseen by the original instigators, with the deposition of Schilder. The third view gives a doctrinal explanation. Schilder was deposed because he rejected the doctrinal position of the church in his time. The fourth view sees the struggle as mainly concerning church polity. Schilder went against the church polity as it had been established in 1926. Plantinga sees merit in every view, but the fourth explains best the whole event.

I myself have often wondered about the events of 1942 to 1944, ending in the deposition of Schilder, the suspension of S. Greijdanus and the deposition and/or suspension of over fifty ministers and hundreds of elders and deacons. And I do not feel satisfied with the explanation of Dr. Plantinga, that the church political explanation is the most comprehensive.

If that were true, why did the Liberation not take place in 1926, when the change in church policy took place? To be sure, K. Schilder was not involved in the church political side of the decisions of the Synod of Assen, 1926, he always emphasized the validity of the doctrinal decision. Influential people like Dr. Greijdanus and Dr. Van

Lonkhuijzen, however, noticed the change, saw the danger, and opposed the church political changes publicly. But nothing happened. They did not leave the churches, and they were not deposed in the churches. The disaster took place when the wrong doctrinal decisions were supported by this new church polity. The doctrinal struggle was central, as far as I can see.

This applies not only to the "liberated" side, also to the "synodical" side. To begin with the latter, many ministers and church members were honestly convinced that opinions like those of Schilder (and Vollenhoven, A. Janse, S.G. De Graaf, among others) threatened the sound doctrine of the church. They were afraid that Schilder's view of the covenant would lead to denial of the doctrine of election. And that the new view on the sacraments would lead to a false sense of security. History has proven their fears unfounded, not the "liberated" but the "synodical" churches have given up the binding to the doctrine of election. And a false sense of security in these churches is fostered with an up beat preaching. That came to light later, however, and could not be foreseen in 1944. Many chose the "synodical" side out of genuine doctrinal concern.

The same doctrinal concern was present on the "liberated" side. They argued that the doctrine of the covenant was violated in the synodical decision. And that the sacraments were emptied of their meaning. That was the real reason why they were so stubborn: they did not want to teach the wrong doctrine.

Because the doctrine was involved, things came to an explosion in 1944. This is not to say that the Church Order was unimportant. Church polity became so central in the whole struggle, for the very reason that it was coupled with doctrinal issues. One of the major goals of the Church Order is the protection of the doctrine in the church. The Church Order was used in 1944 to bind to the wrong doctrine. That was the reason why the change in church polity which already took place in 1926, became a focal issue in 1944.

The view that, in my opinion, explains the essential events of 1944 best, is one that combines the doctrinal and church political issues. The real issue was the doctrine (from both sides), but things came to a head when the Church Order was changed to bind to what was seen as the wrong doctrine.


### Our interest

As already stated, the book was written for members and former members of the Christian Reformed Church. We, as Canadian Reformed people, however, cannot be satisfied in being only interested onlookers. We are directly involved, since the members of the Christian Reformed Church are called upon to contact us. What is our reaction to this book?

In the first place, it shows again that the Christian Reformed Church should not be equated with the (Synodical) Reformed Churches in the Netherlands. To be sure, the Christian Reformed Church sided unconditionally with the "synodicals," when the contact was restored after the war. At the same time, they never adopted the decisions taken in the Netherlands in 1942-1944. There appears to be more orthodoxy in the Christian Reformed Church (see in the book pp. 61ff.). That may well account for the fact that recent decisions in the Christian Reformed Church led to several churches breaking away, something which never happened in the Netherlands. There only individual members joined. We are therefore faced with a situation that differs from the Netherlands.

In the second place, these writers (and those who listen to them, many, we hope) reach out to us. We should approach them in a positive spirit. They stand for maintaining the true doctrine. We should recognize that in the struggle that is going on in the Christian Reformed Church they are doing the right thing. They should be met, not with complaints (why so late?, or, I told you this 20 years ago) but with support. In their situation they fight the good fight of faith.

In the third place, we should make ourselves available for discussion. These discussions can take place at a local level, between two churches that are in the same area, and also at a national level, between a committee appointed by our Synod and an official committee from their side. It will become apparent in such discussions that we have had a different history, for about 150 years. The main emphasis should not be on history, however, but on our obedience today. That makes doctrine and Church Order the main issues for a fruitful discussion.

May the Lord grant that soon discussions can be opened with churches that listen to the plea of Dr. Plantinga and Rev. Wynia. 

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# Once more – the *Book of Praise!*

By G. VanDooren

There is a need for this “once more.”

After the first meeting organized by the Burlington Reformed Study Centre, a meeting between Free Reformed and Canadian Reformed believers, someone said in my hearing, “If ever these two churches will unite, we can of course not demand from the Free Reformed that they accept our *Book of Praise* and learn all those difficult tunes. They rather keep their Psalter-Hymnal”... And thus the conclusion is: we will have to drop our Psalmbook, or there will not be Reformed unity.

This brother is not the only one who is of this opinion.

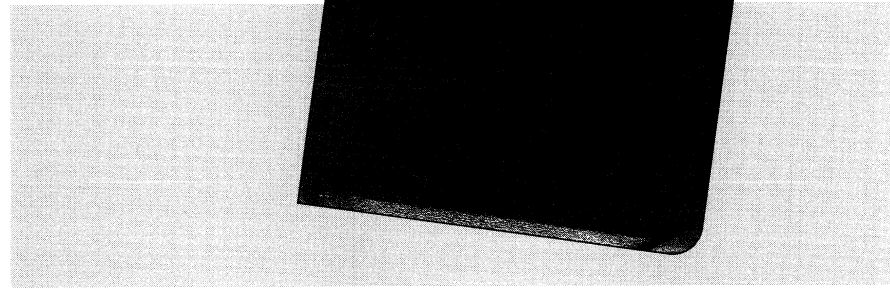
A brief reminder may help to get such a suggestion out of our system.

Let us start with the Christian Reformed Church, because after the second meeting there may be many more who think that we should, for the sake of union with the Orthodox and/or Independent Christian Reformed churches, adopt their Psalter Hymnal, and say “bye bye” to the *Book of Praise*....

But this is all wrong!

Where do the Christian Reformed come from, originally? From Genevan tunes singing churches in the old country! Not only that, but those churches in the Netherlands, notwithstanding changes that have happened, *are still singing the Psalms on the Genevan Tunes!* So, when they visit their relatives they will sing the Psalms on those “old” Genevan tunes at the top of their voices. They still know them!

Why don’t they, then, not sing them here? They did, at first. Then they gradually shifted over to the English language. They tried to keep the Psalms on those tunes. They kept the well-known “34” because these were the “best-known,” the “most-beloved” ones. We, Canadian Reformed, used those 34 in the first years, remember?



Why did the Christian Reformed Church not adopt the complete Dutch-English Psalter, as the first Reformed Church had done in the 18th century in and around “New-Amsterdam” (New York)? Men like *Dewey Westra* would have loved to help, as he helped our churches. But the Christian Reformed Church in those years either had not the desire or the energy to “trans-late” their Psalmbook across the ocean. So they started borrowing from left and right, from existing hymnals of Presbyterian and other denominations, and thus produced a medley with all kinds of tunes of completely-different character and quality, – at the same time introducing a host of “hymns” which were not always solidly “covenantal” as the Psalms are.

Conclusion: While their sister churches still sing the Genevan Psalter, the Christian Reformed Churches more and more adapted to the “evangelical” hymnody which you hear from all sides. The story of the Psalter is not the best aspect of the story of the Christian Reformed Church.

Should we follow that example? Or should we, with the last words of the Old Testament “turn the hearts of the children to their fathers?” Malachi 4:6. If they want to be really “re-formed” a return to their Psalmbook-heritage should be a part of it, not because we did it with hard work during a quarter of a century, but because they themselves

have, in this respect, disowned their own past.

About the same must be said about the Free Reformed Churches. They all also come from psalm-singing relatives, who still, in the Netherlands, sing their Psalms on the Genevan tunes; and of course!

But the Free Reformed Churches followed the example of the Christian Reformed Church. It may, then, be true that they use an “older” edition of the Psalter-Hymnal of the Christian Reformed Church, because they say the older one is better. But they, too, left behind and dropped their own past and heritage. Their brotherhood in the Netherlands still sing the Genevan tunes!

It should also be added that the Free Reformed Churches have received the offer of using our complete Genevan Psalter, but for reasons that I can still not fathom, they declined the offer. This was the wrong thing to do. They could, for years already, have joined their brotherhood in the Netherlands, and us, in singing as their sister churches in the Netherlands and we do, as well as Reformed believers in Hungary, France, Africa, and so on.

Who talks about “difficult?” The Reformed believers as we, have done it all their lives in the Dutch language. Why should we not also do it in the English?

We should not “drop” our Psalmbook; they should drop their Hymnals! *That* would be an act of reformation and return!



# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Dear Editor,

We are writing in response to Prof. Van Dam's 2-part article, "Educating our Children within the Communion of Saints – Whose Task Is It?" *Clarion*, Vol. 41, Nos. 13 and 14. Enclosed is a detailed response we have written to Prof. Van Dam, which we thought you might be interested in also, but for *Clarion* readers, this shorter response will give enough "food for thought," and hopefully, some answers from Prof. Van Dam.

1. Is this to be taken as the "official" Reformed view on home schooling? That, it is "allowable" as long as

- a) no one does it because lack of funds prohibits them from sending their children to the local school;
- b) if they still choose to home school, they make sure the school societies do not suffer from lack of funds.

2. In discussing "Education," why was no mention made of the advantages and disadvantages of each system (classroom/home)? Might Prof. Van Dam be in the undesirable position of unwillingly promoting home schooling? The whole section, "Home Schooling" was negative, while great lengths were taken in trying to prove the existence of "other schools" in the Old Testament times even while admitting that, "Not that much is explicitly stated in the Old Testament," and "...teachers are rarely called as such in the Bible."

3. May we then take this opportunity to list some of the advantages of home schooling, since it is unfamiliar to most: the significance of parents; individual instruction; security of the home; healthy socialization; flexibility: in time, and utilization of suitable teaching methods for each child; competition against oneself stressed over competition with other age-mates; more free time: for children to play and pursue hobbies, and for teacher (mother) to teach "life skills" (i.e. housekeeping, child care, etc.); and the relaxed atmosphere at home.

4. Training up our children in the way they should go (Prov. 22:6) is commanded in Scripture, while academic instruction is not. Moreover, is there any biblical basis in the way schools

follow the one-age-one-grade example of the public schools system? Think of the problems Rehoboam ran into when he followed the advice of the age-mates with whom he grew up, instead of listening to his elders.

5. Prof. Van Dam writes that, "The Lord our God has brought us together as a covenant community," and, "we (correctly) understand education as a communal responsibility, a sacred covenantal obligation before God." We don't have a problem with the first statement, but with the second one. Would it be possible to get more information and proof texts on it? We do know that when our own children were baptized, we had to promise to instruct our children in the doctrine of the church; and we have to pray for, admonish, and encourage one another to remain faithful; but we would like to know more about our communal responsibilities for education. Does it mean we are obligated to use the services of the school for academic instruction? What if there was none?

6. Prof. Van Dam's views are different from ours. That's O.K. But let us continue to "encourage one another, and build each other up!"

Thank you very much.

Respectfully,

Henry and Elaine Togeretz

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## Brief response

Since the response of br. and sr. Togeretz came about two months after the articles appeared, our readers may no longer remember some of the points raised. However, lack of space prevents me from repeating what I have written earlier and so I will have to refer to the original articles for those interested in more information (the page numbers I use can be found in *Clarion*, vol. 41, no. 13-14). The matter is certainly important enough to deal with it again.

The following numbers match the questions and comments of the letter to the editor.

1. I have tried to be balanced in my articles. As I indicated (p. 300) we should not make life miserable for people who are convinced that they should

home school. We should give each other that freedom. At the same time, do we as members of the same local body of Christ not have obligations towards each other, including education of our children? The church is not a loose collection of individuals, but the family of God (cf. 1 Pet. 4:17). See further point 5 below.

2. Your formulation indicates that I have implicitly mentioned the pluses of home schooling because I stressed the first responsibility of the parents in the education process. That emphasis is as it should be. If that is considered promoting home schooling that is fine with me. I never said that home schooling as such was wrong. What I did say is that it is dubious at best to use the type of arguments found in home schooling literature that suggest that schools are a deviation from the biblical norm (p. 299).

3. Thank you for listing your advantages of home schooling and I can accept them as such (although "healthy socialization" is not clear to me). I would however have great difficulty with saying that these are advantages for everyone who attempts to homeschool. Certain special gifts are required to make all these pluses a reality (p. 300).

4. We should be careful not to create a false dilemma by contrasting academic education and teaching children the fear of the Lord, as if the latter can be separated from the former in Christian education in the home or elsewhere (see p. 299). Life is one. I am not sure I grasp the significance of your second question and the Rehoboam example completely. Surely you cannot be suggesting that because Rehoboam followed the bad advice of his age-mates that therefore one cannot have same age classes? Furthermore, the Bible does not say that these young advisors were the same age (1 Kings 12:8/2 Chronicles 10:8).

5. With respect to our obligations towards each other as members of one body, one can think of 1 Cor. 12 which stresses that we all have a place in the congregation and the Lord expects us to use our gifts for the advantage of the others and for the well-being of the whole body. Another passage that comes to mind is Phil. 2:4, "Let each of you look not only to his own interest,



but also to the interests of others." Then follows the example of our Saviour and the admonition that we are to have His mind with respect to serving and helping each other. In view of the great significance of education, is also this area not included? As we confess in Lord's Day 21, on the basis of our communion with Christ and sharing in His gifts, "everyone is duty-bound to use his gifts [including financial] readily and cheerfully for the benefit and well-being of the other members" Q. & A. 55. The fact that the baptismal vows are taken before God and His congregation is also significant here. Having witnessed such a baptism, the congregation can-

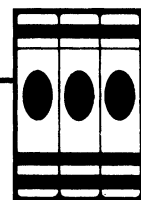
not be a passive bystander when, for example, money is needed to establish or operate a school to educate such a baptized child. Although the parents have the first responsibility, there is also a communal obligation. For that reason, home schooling parents should not think individualistically and distance themselves from the common responsibility because their child is taken care of in their home school. Furthermore, on a more practical note, experience teaches that home schooling parents will sooner or later need the services of Christian education outside the home and they do well to support such endeavours.

With respect to your last question, it could very well be that the Lord in His sovereign wisdom decides at a future date to take Christian schools away from us. A Christian school is not necessary for salvation and such schools, as we know them, are a relatively recent phenomenon. However, by God's grace we may have them and the Lord expects us to use the means He has made available in His mercy. If one would like to educate the children at home, fine; but do not let such a preference endanger this gift of God which we are still allowed to have and which is a great blessing for God's children.

C. Van Dam 

## BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam

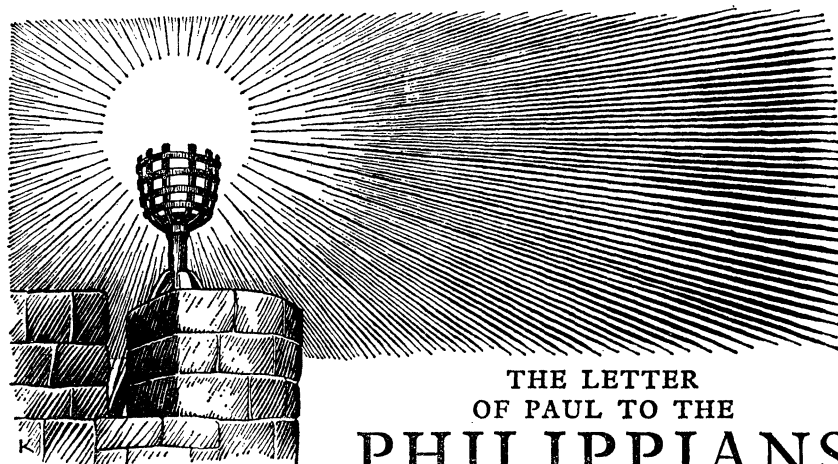


# Outlines on Philippians

K. Deddens, *Enduring Joy: Five Outlines on Philippians*. Interleague Publication Board, 1992 (45 pages, no price given).

These outlines on "the letter of joy" (as Philippians is often called) is a most welcome addition to the outlines that the InterLeague Publication Board (ILPB) is producing. Dr. K. Deddens, who has taught for six years at our Theological College, writes in a clear and understandable style.


The booklet starts with an introduction to the letter as a whole, in which the background and reasons for writing are spelled out. Next follow the five outlines (2 on the first chapter and one on each of chapters 2-4). The outlines are designed for use in society meetings. Thus each outline is followed by a series of questions which relates the passage under discussion to one's personal life, to current questions, or to the confessions. A recommended reading list concludes the book. Since the outlines are understandably brief and to the point, the list of recommended books is important. Reference is made, among others, to J. Calvin, W. Hendriksen, and C. VanderWaal.



Phil 2, 15

The editor is not mentioned, but he/she took the task seriously and apparently supplied sources for quotations which apparently were not in the submitted manuscript. This is as it should be and the editor is to be commended for that. It is however strange that each footnote is qualified as an editorial insertion and sometimes page numbers are not given. Would it not be better in the future if a similar situation arises to send the edited manuscript to the author and let him approve and take over

the changes (and supply page numbers) without the reader now getting the "kitchen work" and seeing exactly where the editor was involved?

These outlines are heartily recommended for home and society study of this instructive and encouraging part of God's Word. Support the work of the ILPB and buy this outline, either from your local society or direct (P.O. Box 783, London, Ontario N6A 4Y8). The more they sell, the sooner other outlines can be published. 

## Classis Pacific, October 6, 1992

*Opening.* On behalf of the convening church, the church at Abbotsford, Elder J. Flokstra calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Ps. 122:3, reads Phil. 2:1-11 and leads in prayer.

He welcomes the delegates, specifically Rev. E. Kampen, who is present for the first time as minister of the church at Port Kells.

He commemorates the following:

Rev. C. Van Spronsen has accepted his call to the church at Surrey;

Rev. W.B. Slomp received a call to the church at Vernon;

Rev. W. den Hollander has declined his call to the church at Abbotsford;

Rev. M.K. Marren has withdrawn himself from the church and has laid down his office as home-missionary for the church at Smithers;

The church of Surrey has extended a call to Rev. E. Venema of Loppersum, the Netherlands, for the work of Mission in Brazil; Rev. R. Boersema's eyesight is on the mend. He hopes to return to Brazil in the near future. Rev. P. Meijer is still visiting the churches in the West.

*Credentials.* The credentials are examined and found to be in good order. The church of Vernon requests a Counselor, as well as pulpit supply; The church at Abbotsford requests pulpit supply, and the church at Houston seeks advice in a matter of discipline.

*Constitution of classis.* Classis is constituted. Officers at this classis are: Rev. J. Moesker, chairman; Rev. B. Berends, vice-chairman; and Rev. B. Wielenga, clerk.

The chairman, Rev. Moesker informs the delegates that Rev. Slomp has declined his call to the church at Vernon.

*Agenda.* An appeal is added to the provisional agenda.

*Correspondence.* Three appeals by a brother: Classis enters Closed Session to deal with these appeals. After a lunch, prepared for by sisters from the church at Abbotsford, the meeting is re-opened with the singing of Ps. 67:1. Classis continues in Closed Session to complete its dealings with the appeals.

*Proposals or Instructions from the Churches.* Approbation of Rev. Van

Spronsen's call and acceptance to the church at Surrey. The relevant documents are found to be in good order.

Rev. Moesker is appointed to represent the churches at the installation of Rev. Van Spronsen in the Maranatha Church at Surrey.

The chairman extends words of congratulations to the Surrey delegates and expresses the wish that the church at Vernon may receive a new minister in the near future.

The church at Vernon requests the appointment of Rev. M. VanderWel as its Counselor. This request is granted in view of Rev. VanderWel's expressed willingness to accept this position. The church at Vernon requests and is promised pulpit supply for every three weeks. Some extra turns are provided for due to Vernon's geographical location. The church at Abbotsford requests pulpit supply for every three weeks. Pulpit supply will be arranged for one Sunday a month. A preaching schedule is distributed to the ministers to accommodate the above requests.

*Reports.* Committee for aid to needy students for the ministry. The auditor's report shows that the books are found to be in good order.

Committee for aid to needy churches. The amount of \$4.00 per communicant member will be collected to meet the need of one needy church.

Church for auditing the books of the classical treasurer reports that the books are found to be in good order.

Church for the inspection of the archives reports that all documents of the Classes 1991-1992 are accounted for, with the exception of the July 16, 1992 Classis Contracta. It was stressed that the adopted agenda should be taken up in the Acts of Classis.

*Question period ad. Article 44 C.O.* The relevant questions put by the chairman to the delegates are answered in the affirmative. One church asks for and receives advice on a matter of discipline.

*Appointments.* The convening church for the next classis is the church of Chilliwack. The date is set for December 8, 1992. If there is nothing for the agenda, the next classical meeting will be held, D.V., on March 2, 1993.

The suggested officers for the next meeting are: Rev. B. Berends, chairman;

Rev. B. Wielenga, vice-chairman; Rev. E. Kampen, clerk. Rev. Kampen is appointed as examiner in Church Polity.

*Question Period.* The following questions are raised and discussed: what is the procedure to change the time and place of the scheduled classical meetings; how may/can consistories contribute to the discussions at classis about appeals brought against them – only orally or also via written submissions; what is the present situation regarding the Home-mission work in Smithers?

*Census ad Art. 44 C.O.* is not necessary.

*Adoption of Acts and Approval of Press Release.*

*Closing.* After singing Ps. 125:1,2, the chairman leads in prayer and thanksgiving and closes the meeting.

For classis October 6, 1992

Rev. B.J. Berends

## Classis Alberta/Manitoba, Oct. 13/14 1992 at Edmonton, AB

1. *Opening.* At 8:00 p.m., on behalf of the convening church at Neerlandia, brother P. Werkman, calls the meeting to order. He requests those present to sing: Ps. 93:1,4 after which he reads Eph. 1:1-14 followed by prayer.

The delegates are welcomed by him, especially the Rev. G.Ph. van Poppe who is present at his first classis in this region. Brother Werkman commemorates that the churches at Edmonton (Immanuel) and Neerlandia are vacant due to the departures of their minister. The congregation of Edmonton remains vacant, as the call extended to Rev. R. Schouten was declined. He expresses the wish that their desire for a new shepherd will soon be fulfilled. He expresses the same wish for the church at Neerlandia, which called the Rev. D.G.J. Agema. He also mentions that Rev. R. Schouten declined the call of Toronto for Mission work in Irian Jaya.

2. *Credentials.* The delegates of the convening church check the credentials. They are reported to be in good order. All churches are properly represented. There are three instructions.

3. *Classis is constituted.* The following officers are appointed: Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar, chairman; Rev. K. Jonker, vice-chairman; Rev. J.D. Wielenga, clerk. Classis is declared constituted. The officers take their place. The chairman adds to the memorabilia that it is Rev. R. Aasman's birthday and congratulates him on this happy occasion.

4. *The agenda is adopted.* The chairman thanks the convening church of Neerlandia for the preparations made for this classis. The agenda is proposed and adopted.

5. *Subscription* by the Rev. G. Ph. van Popta. Since this is the first Classis AB/MB to which Rev. van Popta is delegated, he signs the Form for Subscription, pledging thereby his allegiance to the Reformed Confessions and to the Church Order. The chairman wishes him the blessing of the Lord on His work within the churches of this region.

#### 6. Reports.

a. *Committee Aid Needy Students.* As mandated the Committee presents a proposal for a revised point 6 of their mandate. It recommends that this point of the mandate should be revised to read: "The Committee is authorized to extend or deny aid to students on the directives spelled out in the mandate to the Committee. Upon deciding to grant aid to an applicant the Committee is authorized to request the churches to prove it with the necessary funds." It is decided:

I. to provisionally adopt this recommendation without changing the application forms as yet;

II. to appoint two ministerial members to the Committee to meet with them, and to serve a future classis meeting with recommendations as to the application of Art. 20 C.O., namely, is the matter of needy students a responsibility of the local churches or of the churches in common.

The Committee reports further on work done. The assessment per communicant member is \$2.00. The Committee is thanked for their work.

b. *Committee Aid to Needy Churches.* The Committee reports on work done. The church at Calgary requests financial aid for 1993. Granted.

The church at Barrhead requests financial aid for 1993. Granted. The assessment per communicant member is \$25.00. The committee is thanked for their work.

7. *Adjournment.* The chairman suggests the meeting be adjourned to 9.00 a.m. the next morning. He requests

those assembled to sing Ps. 84:1 after which he leads in prayer and then adjourns the meeting.

8. *Reopening.* At 9.00 a.m., October 14, the chairman calls the meeting to order. He requests the singing of Ps. 103:1,6 after which he reads: Eph. 1:15-23 and leads in prayer. Roll call shows that from Calgary only one member is present, and the delegate from Immanuel is replaced by his alternate.

#### 9. Reports (Continuing).

c. *Church Visits.* In closed session, the church visitors report on visit made to the church at Winnipeg; date: June 2, 1992.

10. *Question Period* according to Art. 44 C.O. is held.

The churches of Calgary and Edmonton-Immanuel request advise in matters of discipline. This is given in closed session.

11. *Instructions.* The churches of Edmonton-Immanuel and Neerlandia request pulpit supply. The requests are granted.

#### 12. Appointments.

a. *Next classis:* Convening church: Taber. date: December 8, 1992; alternate date: March 9, 1992 in Edmonton Providence church building. The suggested officers are: chairman: Rev. G. Ph. van Popta; vice-chairman: Rev. E.J. Tiggelaar; clerk: Rev. K. Jonker.

b. *Observer OPC:* Rev. R. Aasman; alternate: Rev. K. Jonker.

c. Appointments are made with respect to various committees, church visitors, and examiners.

#### 13. Personal Question Period.

Coaldale invites the churches to send delegates for the opening of their new church building on October 30, 1992. Barrhead thanks for the financial support given.

#### 14. Brotherly Censure (Art. 44 C.O.).

The chairman concludes that censure is not necessary.

#### 15. Adoption of Acts and Press Release.

The Acts are read and adopted. The Press Release is read and approved.

16. *Closing.* The chairman speaks some words of thanks and wishes the delegates a safe trip back home. Ps. 133:1,2 is sung, and Rev. K. Jonker leads in prayer. Classis is closed.

For classis, October 14, 1992

K. Jonker, vice-chairman

### Inter-League Publication Board, October 2, 1992

Present at this meeting were two delegates from the League of Men's Societies of Ontario, two from the League of Women's Societies of Ontario and five members of the Administration Committee. The League of Young Peoples' Societies in Ontario were not represented. Mrs. J. Oosterhoff was present as guest to familiarize herself with the I.L.P.B., since she will replace Mrs. M. De Gelder as delegate for the Women's League. Due attention was paid to this fact at the meeting.

### Books in progress

At this meeting the Board reviewed the progress of several projects. *Enduring Joy*, outlines on Philippians, by Dr. K. Deddens became ready for sale during the past summer. The revised outlines on the book of *Hebrews* by Rev. L. Selles is now ready to be typeset and printed. Another book which will soon be ready for the printing process is *Colossians*, by W.G. De Vries, presently being proofread. Several other books are being translated or edited.

*Christ in the Family*, by W. Meijer, a very popular book, is being re-edited and will eventually be reprinted. A decision regarding the booklet, *The Church in the Last Judgment*, by W. Holwerda was deferred until we can study its companion booklet dealing



CALLED to Vernon, BC  
**Rev. W.B. Slomp**  
of Houston, BC

\*\*\*

CALLED to Neerlandia, AB  
**Rev. D.G.J. Agema**  
of Attercliffe, ON

\*\*\*

DECLINED to Bethel Canadian  
Reformed Church of Toronto for  
mission work in Irian Jaya  
**Rev. R.A. Schouten**  
of Calgary, AB

with the harlot in the book of Revelation. Both of these booklets deal with some of the later chapters of the book of Revelation which have been the cause of many discussions.

Several Board members have been reading some current outlines in the Dutch language for possible translation. These will receive further scrutiny and discussion at a later date. It was decided that the Board will meet more often to facilitate the work of the I.L.P.B. Generally the Board met with the Administration Committee twice a year. From now on the Board will have at least two extra meetings per year. The Administration Committee already meets monthly and does a great deal of

work in between meetings, you may be sure!

### Sales report

The sales report was very encouraging. During the past six months considerably more books were sold than during the same period last year. Especially the months of August and September showed a dramatic increase in sales. We are happy to know the books are being used, the reason for publishing them in the first place, and increased sales make more money available for upcoming projects. The marketing committee has suggested a reduced price for several of our books as an end-of-the-year special. Included

will be the titles, *Call Upon Me, Response to Your Baptism, Summary of Faith and Revelation.*

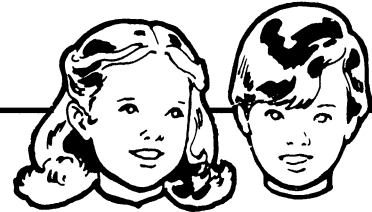
### Financial report

Increased sales have made our financial picture look brighter. The I.L.P.B. is also very grateful for several donations it has received. Although we decided not to ask the Leagues for regular donations, we will gladly accept monetary gifts from any League, society or individual who wishes to support the work of producing biblical study material.

For the I.L.P.B.,  
M. De Gelder 

# OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



### Dear Busy Beavers,

Let me tell you who are the winners in our Summer Quiz Contest.

Congratulations to our senior winner, Busy Beaver Margaret Nyenhuis, and our junior winner, Busy Beaver Cheryl van Andel.

Busy Beaver Tim Hordyk gets an honourable mention for his fine picture!

Congratulations to you all!

And a "Thank You" to all the Busy Beavers who entered the contest.

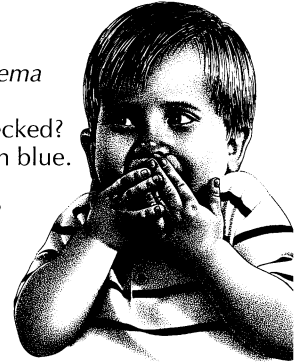
Keep up the good work!

### CHUCKLES

By Busy Beaver Vickie Aikema

Doctor: Have your eyes ever been checked?  
Patient: No. They've always been plain blue.

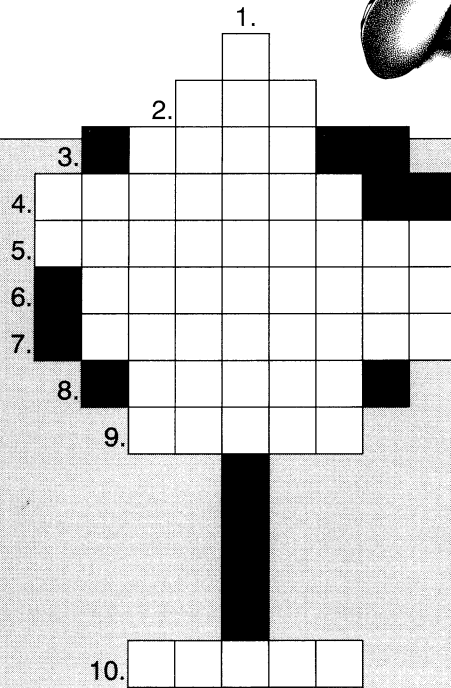
Jill: How do you spell Mississippi?  
Bill: The river or the state?



## Quiz Time!

### A PUZZLING TREE!

1. DOWN \_\_\_\_\_ wanted to see Jesus.
2. He \_\_\_\_\_ down the street.
3. He was a \_\_\_\_\_ man.
4. It was a street in \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Jesus said, " \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ come down from the tree."
6. It was a \_\_\_\_\_ tree.
7. Jesus ordered Zaccheus to \_\_\_\_\_.
8. "I must stay at your \_\_\_\_\_."
9. The Saviour \_\_\_\_\_.
10. When to obey the Saviour \_\_\_\_\_.



## DOUBLE CODE

By Busy Beaver *Trina Jelsma*

Key

A -1	F - 6	K -11	O -15	S -19	W -23
B -2	G - 7	L -12	P -16	T -20	X -24
C -3	H - 8	M -13	Q -17	U -21	Y -25
D -4	I - 9	N -14	R -18	V -22	Z -26
E -5	J -10				

$$\begin{array}{r} \overline{6+3} \\ \overline{1-0} \end{array} \begin{array}{r} \overline{5+8} \\ \overline{1+0} \end{array} \begin{array}{r} \overline{1+1} \\ \overline{10+11} \end{array} \begin{array}{r} \overline{10+9} \\ \overline{10+15} \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} \overline{1+1} \\ \overline{3+2} \end{array} \begin{array}{r} \overline{1+0} \\ \overline{20+2} \end{array} \begin{array}{r} \overline{3+2} \\ \overline{10+8} \end{array}$$

## QUESTIONS IN CODE!

1.  $\overline{8\ 5}$   $\overline{23\ 1\ 19}$   $\overline{20\ 8\ 5}$   $\overline{6\ 1}$   $\overline{22\ 15\ 21\ 18\ 5\ 4}$

$$\overline{19\ 15\ 14} \quad \overline{15\ 6} \quad \overline{10\ 1\ 3\ 15\ 2} \quad \overline{23\ 8\ 15}$$

$$\overline{23\ 1\ 19} \quad \overline{8\ 5} \quad ?$$

2.  $\overline{20\ 8\ 5}$   $\overline{13\ 1\ 14}$   $\overline{23\ 8\ 15}$   $\overline{12\ 5\ 4}$

$$\overline{9\ 19\ 18\ 1\ 5\ 12} \quad \overline{20\ 15} \quad \overline{3\ 1\ 14\ 1\ 1\ 14}$$

3.  $\overline{19\ 15\ 14}$   $\overline{15\ 6}$   $\overline{10\ 5\ 19\ 19\ E}$

4.  $\overline{20\ 8\ 5}$   $\overline{19\ 20\ 18\ 15\ 14\ 7}$   $\overline{13\ 1\ 14}$   $\overline{23\ 8\ 15}$

$$\overline{3\ 15\ 21\ 12\ 4\ 14\ 20} \quad \overline{7\ 5\ 20} \quad \overline{8\ 9\ 19}$$

$$\overline{8\ 1\ 9\ 18} \quad \overline{3\ 21\ 20}$$



## BIRTHDAY WISHES FOR NOVEMBER

We all join in wishing you a very happy day, all you Busy Beavers who celebrate a November birthday!

Have a super day celebrating with your family and friends!

Above all, may our heavenly Father keep you all in His love and care in the year ahead.

Carin Meliefste	1	Jeremy Linde	18
Randy Dijkstra	7	Dan Vander Veen	19
Peter Vanderzwaag	8	Doug Vander Veen	19
Teri Oosterhoff	10	Jaelyn Hulst	20
Josh Rosa	10	Gredina Jaspers	20
Theresa Bredenhof	11	Terry Van Anandel	21
Melissa Bremer	12	Karen Vandergaag	21
Cheryl Jelsma	14	Rachel Pruijm	24
Heidi De Haan	15	James Aasman	28
Ashlea Jagt	15	Joni Schulenberg	30
Margaret de Witt	17		

## KIDS CAN COOK!

What's your favourite snack?  
How do you get it ready?

Do you have a favourite recipe?  
Will you share it with the Busy Beavers?

Yes, I have a reward for the Busy Beavers who send a letter to:

### Kids Can Cook!

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



## From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Jessica Bos*. We are happy to have you join us. Thank you for the picture, *Jessica*. Write again soon.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Monica Bartels*. You are lucky to have two best friends! Bye for now, *Monica*.

Hello, *Jaelyn Bartels*. It was nice to hear from you again. What will you do with the stickers, *Jaelyn*?

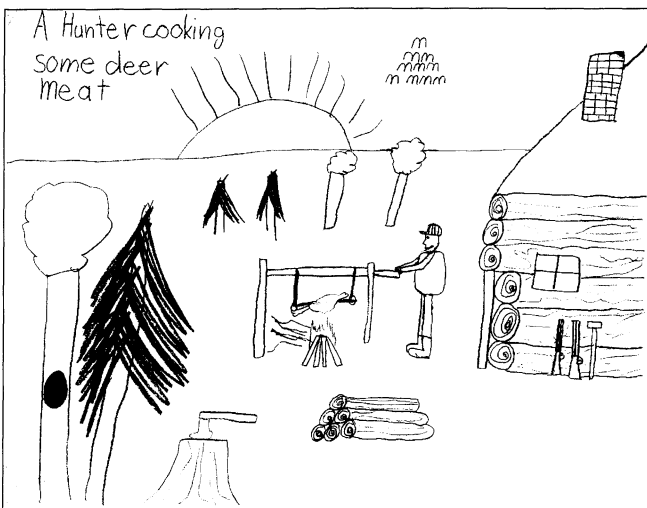
Thank you for the puzzle, *Nelena Bergsma*. I see you mean to keep the Busy Beavers busy! I'm sorry to hear you didn't have real summer weather. Maybe you're having a really nice fall?

How did you do on the puzzles, Busy Beavers?

I'm really looking forward to lots of letters!

Bye for now!

Love to you all,  
Aunt Betty



By Busy Beaver *Brad Van Oene*