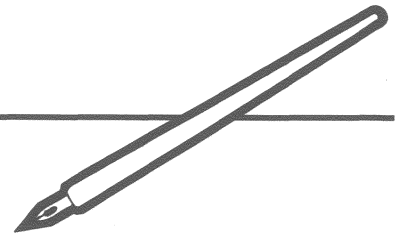




Clarion
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The Issue: Is God There?

We begin this first issue of 1993 with the question whether God is there. This is the big question also for this new year. The cause of this editorial is the cover article in *Maclean's*, "Canada's weekly Magazine" of December 21, 1992. This article shows that modern man, in his or her scholarly endeavors, has to work as if God is not there. The title of the article is "Who was Jesus?" The subtitle reads: "New theories offer starkly different visions of a great religion's central figure." This article begins with the theory (this is indeed what it is: a theory) that our Lord Jesus Christ was born in the Qumran community, near the Dead Sea; that His ideas were very much influenced by this Qumran community; that He "survived a bungled execution" and "spent the rest of His life in hiding" while "helping His associates to write documents that would spread His ideas." The theory says further that He died at the age of 70, "possibly in France." The article informs us: "That biographical outline of Jesus is depicted by an Australian scholar, Barbara Thiering, in a controversial book" that is to be published in Canada later this year.

In 1947 and following years the so-called Dead Sea Scrolls were found in caves at the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. These are documents of the Qumran sect, often identified with a special, very strict, sectarian group of Jews in those days, the Essenes. A number of scholars have linked both the preaching and the baptism of John the Baptist and the teaching of our Lord Jesus Christ with practices and ideas of this Qumran community, and said that John and Christ Jesus received their ideas from these Essenes. Other scholars have pointed at the great differences between the teaching of John and Christ and the ideas of Qumran, and they denied such influence.

There are similarities between the teaching of Christ and the apostles in the New Testament, when compared to the ideas of different Jewish groups in those days, not only of the Essenes. The natural explanation of these similarities is not that the earlier "group" must have influenced the later one. The natural explanation is that both have the same root or background in the Old Testament Scriptures.

However, this is not the main point I want to make here. It is also not my intention to argue against the *theory* of this Australian scholar as such. Faith in the truth of the Scriptures as the infallible Word of God stands here over against unbelief. My main point, although related to the matter of faith in what the Scriptures teach us, is connected with one specific statement (on p. 23): "Scholars say that numerous attempts have been made in the past to reconstruct the life of Jesus in a way that *eliminates the supernatural*" (emphasis added). This is now exactly what is done also in

the article that I refer to here. It speaks about theories scholars come up with, which other scholars "shoot holes in." However, in this whole presentation about the question "Who was Jesus," the *supranatural* is *eliminated* from view. Or, to say it in a simpler way: there is here, just as in the scholarly debate about the "historical Jesus," no place for the living and acting God. God is not there. Science, including the scholarly study of the New Testament, can only work with what can be scientifically proven by rational man with his research and reasoning. In the scholarly world, that is, in historical-critical study, nothing, also not the Christian religion, can be treated as revealed by the living God and as result of His divine saving activity. It can only be studied as a human phenomenon, as the result of earthly, human cause and human effect. In this purely human system of rational human thinking, also the Bible scholar is bound to what is humanly possible and verifiable. Whatever goes beyond the natural, and belongs to the realm of the supra-natural, the realm of God and what God does, cannot be reckoned with by scholars in their scholarly work.

On the basis of this humanistic philosophy, everyone can come with his theory. It is all a matter of scholars and their investigations and conclusions. Here, indeed, the living God does not exist.

Things become totally different, however, if one does reckon with the reality of God. If God is there, and if He does act, then He is also able to reveal and explain His actions to us by means of revelation. If one believes that God is truly God and reveals Himself and His actions, it is not difficult to believe that God revealed His actions in written form, through human instruments. If one believes in a living and acting God, it is self-evident that this God, as He tells us in His Word, sent His Son in our human flesh, to become our Brother and pay for our sins with His death at the cross, and after this ascended to the heavenly throne and ruling all things from there and coming back as judge of the living and the dead. Believing in God but not believing the Scriptures is, in fact, very, very strange.

I would like to quote a few lines from a book of Eta Linemann, *Historical Criticism of the Bible – Methodology or ideology*. She calls this book "Reflections of a Bultmannian turned evangelical." (The book is published by Baker Book House in Grand Rapids.) The author was a student of the famous, liberal New Testament scholar in Germany, Rudolph Bultmann. She became herself a well-known liberal New Testament scholar and teacher. In the introduction of her book she writes (p. 17)

Intellectually comfortable with historical-critical theology, I was deeply convinced that I was rendering a service

to God with my theological work and contributing to the proclamation of the gospel. Then, however, . . . I was forced to concede two things I did not wish: (1) no “truth” could emerge from this “scientific work on the biblical text,” and (2) such labor does not serve the proclamation of the gospel.


In fact, much of the modern historical-critical study of the New Testament is not focused on the meaning of the text but on the supposed history of the text. On the next page she writes:

Today I realize that historical-critical theology’s monopolistic character and world-wide influence is a sign of God’s judgment (Rom. 1:18-32). God predicted this in his Word: “For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear” (2 Tim. 4:3). He also promised to send “a powerful delusion so that they will believe the lie” (2 Thess. 2:11).

These are strong words. But they come from a once liberal New Testament scholar who knows this modern scholarship inside out, just as the apostle Paul knew the Pharisaistic thinking inside out and, therefore, could write so strongly against it, and just as Luther and Calvin could write against the Ro-

man Catholic teaching and Hendrick de Cock and Abraham Kuyper could write against the nineteenth century liberalism. First she, too, believed in God, but in her study of the Bible she did not reckon with Him as the living and acting God. After some years this did not appear to be right. The living and acting God gave her this insight. Now she does reckon with Him and with Christ as the living and active Son of God and Saviour. At the same time, she reads and studies the Scriptures in a totally different way: as the reliable, promising Word of God that He still speaks to us today, and fulfills. To what I quoted a few lines earlier she adds in italics, thus with her emphasis (p. 18):

God is not dead, nor has he resigned. He reigns, and he is already executing judgment on those who declare him dead or assert that he is a false god who does nothing, either good or evil.

In this light we have to place the book of Barbara Thiering about the Lord Jesus Christ. In fact, in this light we should also read the article in *Maclean’s*, “Canada’s weekly Magazine.” Poor Canadian readers. May God show Himself the active and living God, and show mercy in His wrath by breaking the unbelief of this proud and ungodly humanism, as He did in the heart and life of Eta Linnemann. 

Suffering and Care of the Soul₂

By S. Foster

The reality of suffering

For those who have not suffered at the hands of another in such a way that it effects their whole view of life, it is hard to see how such intense suffering is possible. “Can it be that bad?” It is difficult for us who have not been born with any physical or mental disorders to really realize the trauma that can be involved in dealing with the tasks of daily life. “Sure, everyone knows it will be tough, but surely one can adapt.” It is true also that patience for those people who suffer through substance abuse, such as alcohol and drugs, can soon run very thin. “These people should shape up. Alcohol and drugs are no way to solve anyone’s problems.” This is absolutely true. Who needs to be told that alcohol and drugs are merely a mask covering some deeper cause to a problem? This cause can be emotional and spiritual pain, due to a complex hidden problem. The depths of despair which can exist within the privacy of some-

one’s soul can be the most difficult to overcome. It is sad that too often people do not take the “invisible wounds” of emotional, psychological and spiritual suffering as serious as the “visible wounds” of the body.

Suffering through personal problems over a period of time distorts a person’s whole outlook on life. For example, people who have suffered forms of abuse at the hands of others will view the most basic and important feelings very different from those who have escaped these experiences. *All* life is seen differently. The way these victims perceive the world is very different from common perception. The way they *feel* in the world is very different. Feelings of trust and love, respect and compassion, and many others, are altered by traumatic experiences. Anger, although not necessarily visible at the surface, might be quite predominant. Forgiveness, the most basic of Christian virtues, can easily become a foreign concept.

“How does one even begin to *forgive* after what has happened to me,” it is exclaimed. These feelings can be directed, in very subtle ways perhaps, toward other human beings. And even more so, these feelings can be directed toward God. *Anger* toward God. *Distrust* of God. *Cursing* God. It happens.¹ Spiritual desolation caused by misplaced anger and suffering runs very deep and is very serious.

This is quite a bleak picture. But it is not unrealistic. It certainly is not true in every case, but it certainly is true in more cases than we like to admit. It is very true that the church does not shelter us from suffering. The fact is that Satan invades the church and comes into our presence to attack us where we assume to be most secure. We must be aware of the depth of this problem. The authority and love of Christ is stronger than the power of evil and suffering (Luke 4:33-37). But this dependence on God through Christ is very difficult when

we have a strained relationship with Him. Those who have suffered through traumatic events can have an altered perspective of who God really is. Their image of God is altered through anger that is not properly dealt with. The “masks of anger” are many.²

Confusion and a lack of trust can leave someone psychologically and spiritually disoriented. Doubts and fears over whether God loves the person might exist. The question of *how* God loves the person and why they can't feel His love in their life can confuse them. The question of a person's worthiness as a child of God can exist alongside the sense of abandonment perceived to be the fault of God. In this situation a person may not have enough faith of his or her own to face their problem. That God has a plan for this person might not be clear. That God never abandons His children may seem contrary to experience. That God can rekindle such little faith will seem doubtful. How horrible this is!

A person such as this will need to rely on the faith and the prayers of others. God uses others to help carry the burden of suffering. During these times the communion of saints will have to be most evident. The “supportive environment” of the church should pray for all who suffer, even though they may never know specifically who are suffering. Healing from pain is a slow process, it can be discouraging for those who suffer and for those who are offering care. We must care, encourage and pray, and we must expect healing from God.³

Being hopeful

But if I go to the east, He is not there; if I go to the west, I do not find Him. When He is at work in the north, I do not see Him; when He turns to the south, I catch no glimpse of Him. But He knows the way that I take; when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold.

Job 23:8-10

Where is God in my suffering? Why is God silent in my pain? In our present age disbelief in God often will arise out of suffering and anguish. If God is silent in my suffering, if He is nowhere to be found in my seeking, perhaps He really isn't there at all.⁴ The Scriptures have no understanding of this idea of the non-existence of God. Biblically, it is a fact that God exists, and therefore, people who suffered had to confront the living God with their pain and anguish. God

was there to hear their complaints, although He might not seem to answer them. There is no avoiding the reality of God's presence; there is no denying His existence. This is at once a comfort and a confusion. Why is God silent in my pain? *“Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord; O Lord hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.”* Where is God in my suffering? *“I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I put my hope. My soul waits for the Lord”* (Ps. 130:1-2; 5-6). *“Why is my pain unceasing, my wound incurable, refusing to be healed?”* (Jer. 15:18).

The answer to these questions will not take the pain away. It will not make the pain less real. The answer is mysterious and requires faith, and consequently those whose faith has been quelled through suffering might turn away from it. This is why encouragement and care is needed, as well as competent counselling and guidance.

The answer is found within the suffering of Jesus Christ. This is basic Bible knowledge. But has everyone really considered the meaning of the suffering of Christ for their suffering? The reality of Christ's suffering and the reality of our suffering in the world, no matter what the *specific* suffering happens to be, no matter how often we suffer, they become united, and they cannot be separated. Again, has everyone really considered the presence of the Holy Spirit which connects us to Christ for their present suffering? To put it in basic language, the suffering through sexual abuse, through physical assault, through mental and physical handicaps, and all the rest, no matter what the source of the suffering, does not threaten the real and intimate unity of Christ and believer. However, suffering can make us blind to the reality of this unity. We will now consider these notions of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and the suffering of Christ, to see how they relate to the care of the soul.

The indwelling spirit

We know from Scripture that the Holy Spirit dwells within us (1 Cor. 3:16), and that our bodies are members of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15a). Here the believer and Christ are directly united. This is further demonstrated in the fact that when Saul was persecuting the Christians after the resurrection of Christ, the Lord appeared to Saul and said *“Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me? . . . I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting”* (Acts 9:4, 5). This is all to be

understood in the context that whatever is done to a believer, so too it is done to Christ (Matt. 25:40, 45). When Saul was persecuting the Christians, he was directly persecuting Christ! The suffering of believer and Christ is inseparable, we cannot and are not separated from Christ (see Rom. 8:37-39).

It is in our daily life, including the privacy of our own suffering, that the Spirit present in us knows our heart, and because the Spirit of God is capable of really knowing our heart He knows our suffering. For this reason, He is our sure help (Rom. 8:27). In this indwelling of the Spirit we are one with Christ and our suffering is known according to the will of God according to His purpose. It is in this teaching that believers recognize the possibility of forgiveness, of reconciliation and for comfort, through the Grace of God. As Calvin has said it, *“The whole comes to this, that the Holy Spirit is the bond by which Christ effectually binds us to Himself.”*⁵

The Holy Spirit has the suitable name of the “Counsellor,” He is Christ within us, making us children of adoption. The “world” does not know Christ, or the Holy Spirit, but *“you know Him, for He dwells with you, and will be in you”* (John 14:16-17). Does God know our suffering? Yes! Through the intimate union between believers and Christ. But we can speak of God as knowing our suffering in another way. It is in the *vicarious* nature of the suffering of Christ that we can say God knows our suffering. These two notions are not unconnected. We cannot understand the vicarious nature of Christ's suffering, if we do not have the spirit of faith to make us believe this truth.

The vicarious suffering of Christ (I)

When we say that Christ's suffering is vicarious we mean that *He suffered in our place*. He is a vicar and a vicar is a substitute. A vicar takes the place for another. Christ's suffering is a suffering endured in our place. He was *“wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities”* (Is. 53:5; cf. 2 Cor. 5:21). Christ, Himself sinless, suffers in the midst of the hatred of the “world” in our place.⁶ He is our vicar (see L.D. 15 and 16). When vicarious atonement takes place, it is the *offended* party (i.e. God) which provides the atonement, not the party which commits the offense (i.e. humankind). This is true grace. Christ *“our only high priest”* gains for us forgiveness for sins, and also, acceptance and adoption as children of God.

How does this comfort me in my suffering?

Because of the indwelling of the spirit, Christ as the faithful high priest is present in us through grace, and because of the vicarious nature of suffering, He has experienced personal suffering in our place. Therefore "we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." My personal suffering in all its details is known to Christ. Through His own experience of suffering, Christ knows what it means to suffer through the sins of others. Because Christ knows our plight, we can *with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need*" (Heb. 4:15-16). It is only through the spirit of God within us that we can overcome our problems. And when we draw near to the throne of grace with our suffering to pray for mercy and grace, but are too weak, it is the spirit which will intercede for us in our weakness (Rom. 8:26).

The spirit is the third Person in our triune God, and dwells within us. Christ knows specifically what you suffer, and He helps through the spirit who is within His people. This carries great consequences. Remember what the apostle Paul wrote: "Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells within you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are" (1 Cor. 3:16-17). Those who abuse themselves and cause suffering through personal sin, or those who abuse others and cause them to suffer, defile that which God has set aside as holy. God's personal involvement in our suffering must be seen in the context of the indwelling of the spirit and the vicarious suffering of Christ.

The vicarious suffering of Christ (II)

"In the days of His flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to Him who was able to save Him from death, and He was heard for His godly fear. Although He was a Son, He learned obedience through what He suffered; and being made perfect He became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey Him . . ."

Hebrews 5:7-9


Jesus offered up prayers in His suffering, and He was heard, and yet He suffered. How often have those who suffered experienced the same thing? The prayers are heard, but the suffering doesn't disappear. The prayers were offered in deep anguish, "with loud cries and tears."

Let us focus on the meaning of Jesus praying "with loud cries and tears." Those who suffer can relate to such a situation. Cry (*kraugé* in the Greek of this text) designates a crying wrenched out from a person because of anguish and stress, expressing deep agony of the human spirit. Deep suffering is not alien to the content of the Scriptures. The Psalms testify to how a soul can suffer. Psalm 55 says: "Give ear to my prayer, O God; . . . I am overcome by my trouble. I am distraught by the noise of the enemy . . . My heart is in anguish within me . . . fear and trembling come upon me . . ." Still with these deep words of lamentation, we are assured of the Psalmist trusting in the Lord: "But I call upon God; and the Lord will save me. Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and He will hear my voice. He will deliver my

soul in safety from the battle that I wage . . ."

Again and again we will read in the Scriptures about those crying out in suffering, expressing distress and confusion from these feelings. You get the sense of utter desolation and hopelessness. And then, the crying turns to praising, trusting, accepting God's will. The tears might not be gone, but hope is present to the heart.

This text from Hebrews tells us Jesus "learned obedience from what He suffered and, once made perfect, He became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey Him." Even Christ suffered. Even Christ, enduring trials had to learn obedience through suffering. Even Christ who was sinless and without blemish! Notice it says "once made perfect . . ." Is not a person without blemish already perfect? This concept of perfection (*teleiotes*) is similarly found in Matthew 5:48, "be perfect (*teleioi*), therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect." If there is one thing people who are suffering do not feel it is being perfect. Disgust, humiliation, worthlessness, but not perfection. And yet in its true meaning this idea of perfection is where the answer to our questions about suffering are found. Perfect here



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does not primarily mean “without blemish or error,” it means to find its *goal* and its *end*, to fully realize its *purpose*, as Christ realized His *purpose* saying “*it is finished*” (Jn. 19:30). The expression in Hebrews underscores a complete obedience, a total following of God’s will into justification and sanctification. Similarly, we are to seek completion in God’s goal for us. This is how we are justified and sanctified. In the first place, we are made perfect with the perfection of Christ. In Heb. 10:14 we are told that “*by a single offering He (Christ) has made perfect for all time those who are sanctified.*” We are all part of a sinful, guilty mankind. As the Form for Baptism states, we all are “conceived and born in sin, and therefore subject to all sorts of misery, even to condemnation.” When we suffer, even through the sins of others, we remain sinful and condemn ourselves through our having part in original sin. However, the love of God for us is so great in Christ Jesus, that He sent His Son to bear our sin and quilt and to give to God – in our place – total obedience, with the result that God clothes us with the perfection, the perfect obedience of Christ. Christ gives us His perfectness as a free gift. This given perfectness is our worthiness before God! This shows our great value in the eyes of God.

Then in the second place, we are made perfect – we are brought to our goal in sanctification. Here we also see the reality of personal responsibility in our own suffering. As part of the “ministry of reconciliation” we are personally to be obedient to God in our suffering, like Christ was obedient to God in His suffering (1 Pt. 2:21-25). It is this very issue of personal responsibility in suffering which can be so difficult. It is when faced with this responsibility that the questions arise as to why we suffer. To suffer because of the actions of another can make this all the more difficult. To declare that the person wronged by another has a personal responsibility in that suffering can be the source of great distress. And yet it is true that when we find our comfort through the indwelling spirit, there too we must confront our suffering to find reconciliation to God (cf. Rom. 8:15-17). And this is why the care of the soul must involve continual exhortations from ourselves through personal devotions and from the community of saints.

Christ and believers meet their *telos* on the path of suffering. Suffering tri-

als is not a *distortion* of God’s will, it is part of the way to it. We move along this way according to God’s knowledge of our suffering, and we seek our perfection on this path. God is perfectly acquainted with our life. God’s knowledge is not merely perfect intellectual apprehension, but includes *the purpose, the plan, and the task* for all His people, in their suffering and in their joys.

Their is no answer to the question “*Why do I suffer?*” (Job 42:3). Knowing why we suffer will not change the suffering. If I know that horrendous experiences happen to me because Satan is just the type of being who gains pleasure from this, my suffering has not changed, it is not now comprehensible; it hurts just as much. It seems just as senseless and wrong. If I ask *why* God lets the suffering happen, the only way to answer this is by indicating to *what end* suffering is bringing us. To answer this question we must listen to the purpose of suffering through Christ and see it moving toward a goal of perfection in the Lord. Even here, what we are left with is hope, not lack of suffering. We see the Promise, but we hurt. We have Comfort in the Hope and our suffering is not senseless. But there is a further obstacle.

In the previous article we mentioned that longsuffering might be the cause of endured suffering. In all we have said about God’s knowledge of our suffering, about suffering leading to a purpose, about the intimate connec-

tion of our suffering with Christ through the Holy Spirit, there is still the fact that those who suffer *continue to suffer now*. The Scriptures are not silent about this aspect either. The epistle to the Hebrews tells us that Christ will appear a second time “*to those who eagerly await Him*” (9:28). The Scriptures call us to keep strong during this period of the longsuffering of the Lord (Phil. 4:5) reminding us that with God’s presence we are not really alone. Like Job, we are required to be patient for the coming of the Lord (Jm. 5:10-11). The Lord’s longsuffering is not slackness toward His people, we must bear suffering in faith, hope and patience (Rom. 8:24-25; 2 Pt. 3:9).

All that has been said above about the purpose of suffering, about God’s knowledge of our suffering, about seeing the beauty of the Promise coming out of the ugliness of pain, is not going to heal on its own. Unfortunately, just as knowing why I suffer will not take the pain away, it is also sometimes true that the effect of suffering can stifle the confidence in the belief that our suffering has a meaning.

Healers are needed to open the suffering to the love of God found in His Word and spirit. Healers are needed to allow those who suffer as the Psalmists suffered to also find their comfort and praise in God as the Psalmists found their comfort and praise. This will be discussed in a final article.

¹Philip Yancey in two books, *Where is God When it Hurts* and *Disappointment With God*, discusses this point. Both are published by Harper Books.

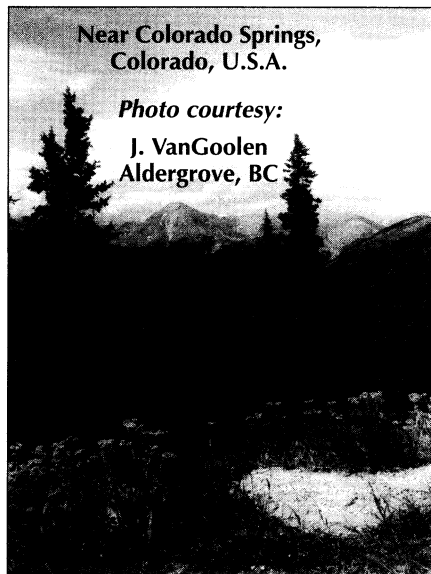
²David G. Benner, *Healing Emotional Wounds*, (Welch Publishing Company, 1990). pp. 44-49.

³David G. Benner’s book, *Healing Emotional Wounds*, has as a central thesis the possibility of healing even though there has been deep suffering. The book offers realistic insight into the necessary steps required for this process.

⁴The “problem of pain,” sometimes called the “problem of evil,” historically has been one of the most effective arguments used against God by philosophers. The claim is that an all loving God and evil are incompatible. The error is to limit God’s being to this one attribute of “all loving.” Scripture testifies that God is much more incomprehensible than to fit into such a limited category.

⁵*Institutes*, III.1.1.

⁶This is clearly taught by Scripture: Mark 10:45; John 1:29, 8:45-47, 10:11; Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 5:7 (Ex. 12); 2 Cor. 5:21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Tim. 2:6; 1 Pt. 2:22-24; Heb. 4:15, are examples.



NEWS MEDLEY

By W.W.J. VanOene



Every Sunday, when we are sitting in church, the consistory enters. Sometimes the congregation rises as soon as the minister is on the pulpit behind the lectern, sometimes everyone remains seated until requested to rise. That is, if the congregation is requested to rise. Sometimes all we hear from the pulpit is: "Lift up your hearts to the Lord." I always find this a misnomer, and I always request the congregation: "Will you please rise?" for that is the intention, isn't it? If the expression "Lift up your hearts to the Lord" is used, in my opinion, it should follow the request to rise.

In any case, even the expression "Lift up your hearts to the Lord" has met with some criticism. This was particularly the case in Burlington East. Rev. Nederveen wrote about this in the Ebenezer bulletin. Some brothers approached him and claimed that this was a Dutchism. As a result of some investigation, the minister was going to say "Incline your hearts to the Lord," but later on he changed this back to the original, if I understand it well, as it was pointed out to him that this expression is used in Lamentations 3:41. We also find it in Hymn 35, and I don't think that Charles Wesley, who is mentioned as the author in the list of authors in our *Book of Praise*, will have been guilty of using Dutchisms.

In my opinion, it would not be correct to say "Incline your hearts to the Lord," as our God is in heaven. "To lift up" I consider to be the proper term here. And as for the idea that it is a Dutchism, I don't know how anyone could get that idea. If one would say that it is a *Hebraism*, I would be inclined to agree.

In connection with Editorial in the December 4 issue of *Clarion* I also think it is good to pay attention to what Rev. Nederveen wrote in the Nov.15 issue of the bulletin. It applies not only in Burlington East, I would say.

"Mid November is the time when many of our senior members seek the sunny south. In a way it is nice to be able to do so for a few weeks. Unfortunately, for most the stay becomes gradually longer so that several of our members now live down south for half a year. Some go for health reasons, others just go for the warmer climate. It seems to me that half a year away from home does not make for much of a home at the homefront. It takes one away from family and friends for a prolonged time. It brings divided loyalties. Loyalties here for the summer, loyalties down south for the winter, but no permanent loyalty anywhere. It also interferes with the *living* membership as part of the communion of saints. Those who head south are mainly the ones that can get around. They head out during the most productive part of the year as far as society life and socializing is concerned. The older members who perhaps have so much *to give and share* in the communion of

saints are gone most of the time. We wish them a safe journey, but I also hope that they will reconsider this practice."

And then a last item from Burlington East: The consistory with the deacons, "after much discussion and careful weighing of all the facts ... decided to terminate the Dutch services on the last Sunday in August 1993." Although this decision will not be received with gratitude by everyone, it had to be made at one time or another.

Nearby Burlington West comes next. Let me first mention that a "General News Sheet" has made its appearance. Rev. J. Mulder is the editor, and he sees to it that we no longer have to read three times about various activities concerning the three Burlingtons, but that once suffices from now on. This is what I call progress.

Another time I already mentioned the size of the Burlington West congregation. We read about the need for expansion of meeting facilities. "Considerable time was spent on the 'Expansion Plans' for our church building to make it more functional. Three proposals were presented: two involving additions to the building, and a third for improving accessibility and renovating the basement." The proposals were sent back to the committee for further consideration and the committee was asked to come with new proposals. Specifically the facilities for the teaching of catechism classes were mentioned.

Rev. G.H. Visscher added a comforting note: "Be assured that we have no intention to add to the 'worship hall' upstairs, concern is being expressed, however, about the fact that a membership that stands at the moment at 676 does put considerable pressure on our meeting facilities, and that also with a view to their age it may be necessary to renovate or add to them."

Another solution is sought in the following direction. "A motion was made to initiate discussions with Burlington South and East regarding this matter (possible border realignment, other ideas?) and to put off consideration of any further major improvements to the building until such discussions have taken place." You would know my suggestion: give the people the choice where to go, and then abolish all borderlines. Once they have made a choice, that is the church to which they belong. After that they can change only when they move, while those coming in from other places have a free choice. This makes things much easier and saves the consistories a lot of valuable time. People are no pawns on a chess-board whom you can move at will by changing borderlines. Consistories have not received authority and supervision over a certain well-defined geographical area but only over the members of the congregation, irrespective of where they are living.

An interesting item from the Burlington West bulletin should be passed on, also to honour all who serve in the police forces.

"Recently the church building was in darkness for a few days because some individual stole both the high-powered lights that brighten up the front of the building. While they have since been replaced by new ones, and we hardly thought about the possibility that the old ones might return, we were put to shame when the police informed us that they had recovered them from an individual who was attempting to sell them on the streets of Hamilton for the purpose of growing marijuana! Our congratulations also to the Hamilton-Wentworth police force. It reminds me: do we pray enough for all those who are involved in the fight against crime – the police, judges, courts, etc.?"

When conducting a service, I do occasionally remember in the public prayers those serving in police forces, in the armed forces, and in the judiciary, but it is good to be reminded anew of the need for intercession by the people of the Lord, both when they are together for public worship and when they have their family devotions as well as their personal prayers.

Thus far we have paid attention only to the Burlingtons. It is time to move on, and we go to Hamilton. "Personal contact by the minister and some of the elders with those who have been 'put out' of the local Christian Reformed Church is reported on. The meeting decides that, if a request is made for us for use of the Cornerstone building, the moderation is given permission to accommodate such a request on short notice." It is to be applauded that such authorization is given, and that help is extended to those whose desire it is to remain in the old, Reformed path, the scriptural highway. I discover in the above decision not just a friendly gesture, but a desire to pave the way to full communion.

Of a different nature is what I should like to pass on from Lincoln. It is necessary once in a while to let our sisters notice that we are aware of the work they do in all quietness and without much ado, and that their efforts are greatly appreciated. What would we do without the constant activities of our sisters? Who says that they do not have an important task in the midst of the congregation? But: to Lincoln.

The Ladies' Auxiliary had a pie-sale. "We totalled about 450 pies with a net profit of \$1,227.55." They also have a regular schedule in Lincoln for cutting out UPC-symbols. Whereas in more than one congregation this activity has been given up, they are still going strong in Lincoln. "Cash for Trash": "Our anticipated goal stands at \$4,595.63."! Let me add that they had a pie-sale in Grand Valley as well (I like the change of drawing on the cover of the bulletin): they made \$269.26, and received a \$50.00 donation.

And what all did the Ladies' Aid in Coaldale do! They did the following: Dishes and cutlery for the new church building have been bought and will be delivered next week, approximate price \$2,300.00. We are also in the process of ordering glasses. Ladies' Aid supplied the two stoves and one fridge in the kitchen, a donation of \$1,500.00 towards the window coverings in various rooms was also made."

We are not through yet. "Orange Aid" of Surrey reported about the Guildford Shopping Centre stand: "Our profit was \$1,725.46, plus a \$100 second prize in the 'Most Attractive Stand' contest. Our congratulations to Credo Aid for winning the \$200 first prize." And a little later: "We just have received word that we won first prize – \$100 – for our display in Willowbrook Mall."

Back to Ontario, for we are not through there yet.

We go to Chatham. "The consistory has decided to rescind the decision of singing Hymn 1A on specific Sundays, and to allow the minister to follow an approved order of worship in the *Book of Praise*. If I understand this decision well, the singing of Hymn 1A was restricted before, but now the minister has the right to request the congregation more often to sing it. This is an improvement. I do not think that any consistory has the right to forbid a minister to include any particular song in the liturgy. Our consistories have accepted the whole *Book of Praise*, and when it comes to the point it is illegal to tell a minister to exclude any particular song.

There is one misconception in the above decision. Our churches do *NOT* have an "approved order of worship." I think I mentioned it before, but it won't hurt to repeat it: The orders of worship we find in the *Book of Praise* are not *prescriptive*, but merely *descriptive*. They describe how it is usually done, not how it should be done. Any consistory has the right to make a change, although I would not advocate too many changes, as it may put a guest minister in an awkward position if he doesn't know how things are done in a particular congregation.

Chatham's consistory also "has decided to change the celebration of the Lord's Supper to six times a year." Progress here, too.

"Another letter was tabled from a brother regarding the administration of our sacraments. The consistory hereby stresses that baptism of infants is not a social event, therefore should be administered (administered, VO) as soon as possible after birth. We should not let God wait to seal to our children His precious promises."

We can wholeheartedly agree with this exhortation and reminder by Chatham's consistory. It would be completely wrong if baptism were postponed because the baptismal dress isn't ready, for grandma had the flu and could not finish it in time; or if it were postponed because the baby came earlier than expected and now baptism has to wait because grandpa and grandma cannot change the flight they booked for a later date, and they have to be present, of course, otherwise all that money is wasted. It won't happen too often that there is an unnecessary delay of baptism, but it is good that we are pointed again to the necessity of having baptism administered "as soon as the administration is feasible." Uncles and aunts, grandparents or other relatives do not determine when this "feasibility" is there; only the physical condition of the baby does.

The wording of the benediction used by elders who conduct a worship service is still an object of discussion and deliberation. Grand Rapids' "Consistory decided not to change the word 'you' to 'us' of Scripture used in the Salutation ... and the Benediction. The grounds for this decision is (=are) that the Congregation is blessed by the Lord and not by the Minister or Elder." In Carman, on the other hand, the conclusion was that "the elders will use 'us' when speaking the blessing" As it will be known what I think of it, I won't repeat that here.

Up north again, or northeast: to Toronto.

"We would like to start the choir again . . . as long as we have at least 3 tenors, 3 basses, 6 altos and 6 sopranos, we'll start." I have the impression that they did get the required number of members, and have started. Here we have another strange thing. I recall that in the fifties, with a congregation of approximately 450-500 members we had a

choir of some sixty members. Now congregations that size have trouble getting enough members to keep going. Sometimes practices have to be cancelled because there are not enough members present. In some cases the choir terminates activities altogether because of lack of members. Why? Is life really so much busier now than it was thirty-five or forty years ago? Or has the interest diminished to such an extent that only a few hardy souls keep it up? "Sing unto the LORD," we are frequently exhorted in Scripture. Most certainly, the Lord does not command us to do this within the structure of a choir, but it helps. And don't forget the social aspect of it.

"Trade, Goods and Services Newsletter: The Committee of Management has determined that there may be a need in the congregation for a newsletter or bulletin to be prepared on a periodic basis which would be dedicated to a listing of goods, services, and rentals (e.g. cars for sale, apartment for rent, etc.) that may be available on a current basis by members of the congregation, to and for the congregation." A good idea, I would say, with one exception: I fail to see how such a thing could be within the mandate and/or province of a committee of management or administration. If someone or some members in the congregation take such a task or project upon themselves, splendid, but let it remain a private initiative and undertaking.

I would love to quote extensively from Toronto's bulletin with information about work done to the organ, but have to restrict myself. A new console "is equipped with 38 stops and 7 couplers for 2 manuals and pedal. A memory system (solid state) has been installed for pre-registration purposes and quick registration changes during playing. The memory can be doubled by using memory A+B (total 20)... The console is equipped for 29 ranks, compared to the existing organ which had 13 ranks . . . Brother A. has been able to keep the cost of this console down to less than half of an organ builder's price."

It is a blessing when a congregation has such a member. I know brother A. (for modesty's sake I do not mention his name), he has a complete pipe organ in his basement, and once I was permitted to try it out.

More about organs. This time about the instrument that Coaldale acquired.

"The organ in our new church building is built using a pure mechanical system. It is unique because the organ builder ... is one of the few organ builders in the world who is able to build an historic organ using at the same time modern materials.

"The organ has more than two thousand pipes. The organ case is made of oak and dates back to 1888. It came from a monastery in the Netherlands (are they now going to sing Gregorian in Coaldale?VO) and has great historical value. The side panels are new and nicely integrated with the rest of this historic case. Our organ adviser, Mr. Dirk Jansz Zwart, was able to find for us a pipe organ in the Netherlands which was built in 1935; some of the old pipes are re-used in this organ, most are new. One of the ranks, namely, the beautiful Prestant 4', is a gift from Mr. Zwart."

Here we stop, for most of our readers will not be all that much interested in the disposition of the organ. It has 27 stops.

We already did mention something from Carman. A heartening item may follow: "Classis Alberta/Manitoba was held two weeks ago. There was (=were) only house-keeping items on the agenda." A big Hurray!! Perhaps we are

slowly outgrowing the disease of having appeal upon "appeal" at broader assemblies. I would still advocate charging the one whose appeal is denied with the additional cost involved. It takes quite some nerve to tie the brothers at the broader assemblies down for many hours or even days on end when it is obvious that not the interest of the churches is at stake but only personal views or hobby-horses. An ecclesiastical assembly may not say this, of course, for then it is rapped over the knuckles for being unbrotherly and overstepping the boundaries of its jurisdiction. All right then, but let me then state here what lives in the hearts of many who share my views in this respect.

There is a society in Carman that has as its aim to build some suites for elderly members. The board received authority to purchase a piece of property west of the church building, and has started the rough drawings of 5 to 7 suites on an L-shaped lot.

I was wondering whether I missed something very important when reading in the bulletin of the Providence Church in Edmonton: "Last week A. and B. were present at the inauguration of the new church building in Taber." I thought that Taber was still meeting in rented facilities. Later on I assumed that Coaldale was meant, for they did dedicate their new church building. Our congratulations with this, also from this place. Many wishes will have been expressed, so I do not have to add any.

We move on to the Fraser Valley. Only about the church at Port Kells we have to pass on something. "Two brothers of the Committee of Administration had a meeting with Boundary Health and A. who is the septic contractor, to determine how they view our plans for putting up a church building of approximately 300 seats. Their reaction has been positive." In due time, I presume, we shall read more about concrete proposals.

Not much news has to be mentioned from Australia either. Our readers are familiar with the name, although perhaps not the location, of Bunbury. There services are held every third week, and although the number is still small, the consistory of Byford tells us that it received a letter "from the newly formed school society of Bunbury. From discussions with the Bunbury group the desire to establish a church is acknowledged and also the need of a school to attract more people to the area."

Let me close with sharing with you some particulars from the bulletin of the Free Reformed Church in Pretoria, S.A. They concern the mission work that is being done on behalf of our South African sister churches. The following is an extract from what Rev. A.J. de Visser wrote.

"Youth Work in Soshanguve." He speaks of various young people that attend catechism classes. "Three are 'baptized' members of our congregation; twelve come from families who are regular church visitors and whose parents (hopefully) are on their way to becoming members; ten come from families in which the parents don't go to church on Sundays and/or are heathen.

"Every time this is a wonderful thing to me when that group of young people shows up. In many cases there is no one who sends them, in any case not as far as the ten are concerned who come from church-less or heathen families. They come every week and learn at home their catechism questions without there being parents who urge them to do this. Besides, they come to church on Sundays, while the rest of the family has other activities or is drinking beer."

Do our own young people realize sufficiently the privileges they have and the many blessings the Lord has bestowed upon them? It is a great blessing never to have lived in the darkness of heathenism, but let us see to it that others do not precede us in the kingdom of God.

The last thing I want to pass on is an essay written by an 18-year-old girl. In connection with admission to the Lord's Supper and who are allowed to partake, the catechism students wrote an essay on the question: "Who is a true Christian?"

"Here follows one of the essays. It was written by a girl of eighteen-years-old . . . She and her brother come together to catechism class and together they come to church on Sundays. Their parents are not interested at all.

"Who is a true Christian?"

"When someone is a child of God, you can say that that is a true Christian. A Christian is a person who is a member of Christ. He believes in Jesus and knows that Jesus is the Son of God, and that to Him has been given the power to rule over heaven and earth. Further, Jesus has died for us on the

cross and we can be washed with His blood from our sins. He is our Mediator in heaven. Further, a Christian is not afraid of the dangers there are: he knows that he has the Holy Spirit. He will protect him in dangers. A Christian is not afraid that someone will bewitch him, for the Holy Spirit will protect him. Further, a Christian is someone who prays to God the Lord. He knows that God is his Creator.

"A person who is *not* a Christian you'll know by his deeds. He prays to God, but at home he serves the spirits of the ancestors. He thinks that sorcerers can lay a spell on him. He listens to God's Word in church, but he also listens to what the 'dolosse' says.

"A person who is a genuine Christian believes that God is his Lord. He does not think that anyone will lay a spell on him. He listens to the Word of God and does not trust in the 'dolosse.' Neither does he serve the spirits of the ancestors."

Moving us to gratitude, right? May many more come to the same faith.

VO 

The Alliance of Reformed Churches met – November 17-19, 1992

On Tuesday, November 17th at 1:30 p.m. Mr. Peter Moen called the eighth meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC) to order. The meeting was held in the Lynwood Independent Christian Reformed Church. Lynwood is a little town near Chicago, Illinois.

Strictly speaking this was only the second meeting of the ARC; for what is now the ARC started about eight years ago as an association of Christian Reformed consistories. They were concerned about the unscriptural course the Christian Reformed Church (CRC) was taking and they wanted to support each other in the battle for remaining true to the Reformed faith and preserving this Reformed heritage in the CRC. Later this association was called the Christian Reformed Alliance (CRA). Last year this CRA broadened its scope and became the ARC, the Alliance of Reformed Churches.

And so it was that on November 17th fifty-one churches presented their credentials and were represented by one or more official delegates. Last year – the Alliance meets annually – thirty-nine churches were present. It might also interest you that of these fifty-one churches present, almost half were

"independent," having withdrawn themselves from the CRC. Ten churches sent official observers, mostly "concerned" CRC.

Several churches had been invited to send fraternal delegates. The Canadian Reformed Churches, the Federation of Reformed Churches, the Free Reformed Churches, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Protestant Reformed Churches, the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS) were all present via one or more delegates. They were heartily welcomed and well received. Their presence was not just a formality, for they could not only address the meeting but more than once they were officially asked for their input and advice.

It is long ago that representatives of almost all Orthodox, Reformed Churches in North America have been speaking with each other in this fashion.

In fact the ARC works as a major assembly does in our federation of churches. After Christian opening, the chairman read the Form of Subscription and all delegates solemnly rose to confirm their agreement with the Word of God and the Three Forms of Unity. Only thereafter the Alliance was constituted.

It is an old Reformed custom that delegates before they start their work as a general synod or a general assembly stand up and before God and men confirm their commitment to God's Word and the Creeds of the church. Sad to say but in 1954 our churches did away with this meaningful practice. (Acts, Gen. Synod 1954, Art. 5, p. 10, 69)

We are not planning to give you a "short report" or "press release" of all what transpired in the meetings. We like to pass on a few major decisions and share some impressions with you.

Fraternal delegates speak

Since our churches were alphabetically first on the list, we were also the first ones called upon to address the meeting. Elsewhere in this *Clarion* you may find the text from which we spoke on behalf of the churches.

This time we could indeed bring brotherly greetings from all the Canadian (American) Reformed Churches. In 1990 and 1991 we also attended the Alliance meetings but in an unofficial capacity. But now General Synod Lincoln, 1992 had appointed the undersigned as "temporary" Deputies for the Pro-

motion of Ecclesiastical Unity in order to attend this meeting of the ARC.

Dr. Cornel Venema addressed the meeting on behalf of Mid-America Reformed Seminary, which has close ties with the Alliance churches. He told about the growing work of the seminary and the upcoming move to the Chicago area (1994). The seminary employs four full-time professors with presently seventeen students, twelve CRC, two RCUS, two OPC, one Reformed Baptist. He explained that MARS is an independent College governed by a board with members from the CRC, Orthodox Christian Reformed Church (OCRC), RCUS, OPC, Independent Reformed Churches. He assured the brothers that the seminary is genuinely interested in the development within the churches represented here.

Rev. G.I. Williamson spoke on behalf of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church about the increasing interest for the ARC within his churches. He mentioned that the OPC still has an official fraternal relation with the CRC but that there is a growing concern and they are in the process of reassessing their relation with the CRC. He also informed the meeting that the upcoming General Assembly of the OPC will deal with a recommendation to adopt the Three Forms of Unity and to add them to the Westminster Standards as official creeds of the OPC.

Rev. C. Schouls was the fraternal delegate of the Free Reformed Churches. He suggested that the independent churches not wait too long anymore with organizing themselves into some ecclesiastical body. That might help them in their contact with other Reformed churches and also equip them to assist those churches which are still struggling. He warned the Reformed churches present for forcing one another into an organic union. He would be more in favour of some federative union in which each group of churches could keep his own distinctives. He foresaw difficulties in his own churches when an organic union would be promoted too strongly. He asked the delegates to broaden their vision and work towards true Reformed ecumenicity.

Rev. R. Decker represented the Protestant Reformed Churches. He recalled that in 1924 these churches had left the CRC because of its dealings with Rev. H. Hoeksema. This made his churches quite critical of the CRC. He advised the churches which recently had withdrawn from the CRC to move

towards a more structured unity and to seek fellowship with other Reformed churches following the model of the former Reformed Ecumenical Synod.

The Orthodox Christian Reformed Churches (OCRC) sent their best wishes by letter.

Withdraw from the CRC or stay and protest

An overture from the Calvin Christian Reformed Church in Rock Valley, Iowa sparked the most discussion.

Last year, in response to overtures of two member churches (Telkwa Reformed, and Hospers Christian Reformed) the ARC had taken a clear stand as to remaining in the CRC while protesting liberalism (like the Gereformeerde Bond in the Netherlands).

The ARC in answering these two churches had adopted the following declaration:

It is unbiblical to remain in a federation of churches where a synod ascribes to itself and to its declarations more power and authority than to the Word of God, (Belgic Confession 5, 7, 29, 32). So too it has now become evident that withdrawal from the CRC should occur. It appears that this withdrawal will be a prolonged process rather than an immediate and large-scale event

This year, the Rock Valley CRC proposed to delete from this declaration the statement

“So too it has now become evident that withdrawal from the CRC should occur”

and to read the opening sentence as follows:

“It is unbiblical to remain *without protest* in a federation of churches where a synod ascribes to itself and its declarations more power and authority than to the Word of God . . .”

The Rock Valley church argued that this reading is “less reactionary and judgmental” and that it is “legitimate for churches to remain in troubled denominations if they are actively working for Reformation.”

A majority of delegates spoke against the overture and wanted to maintain the stand of 1991. After ample discussion the ARC decided accordingly.

Upon a motion, the ARC also decided to add the following to the 1991 declaration:

The ARC welcomes as members both federated and independent churches who give testimony to the

truth of the Word of God as it is set forth in the historic Reformed Creeds of the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort.

It is clear that with this last statement the ARC wanted to tell the congregations which are still Christian Reformed but continue to fight against the unscriptural decisions are most welcome as members of the ARC. The ARC wants to encourage and support these churches as much as possible.

But in the meantime the ARC did not want to undermine its own credibility by undoing the declaration made a year ago on the basis of Scripture and Confession: withdrawal from the CRC should occur.

Interim committee or convening church?

Trinity Orthodox Reformed Church of St. Catharines overtured the ARC

“to dispense with the Interim Committee, replacing it with the practice of having calling (convening) churches in charge of organizing meetings, receiving overtures, drafting agendas etc.”

This church argued that since the ARC is a meeting of churches, also the convening and organizing should be done by a church and not by a committee of some people appointed for several years. From past experience they had learned that interim committees tend to become too powerful which easily leads to hierarchy. They also knew of other churches (e.g. the Canadian Reformed Churches) where a local consistory effectively does this work, avoiding the dangers mentioned.

Although several delegates spoke in favour of the overture, it did not receive majority support and was defeated.

The ARC and the Confessional Conference

Dr. N.D. Kloosterman of Mid-America Reformed Seminary reported on the progress made by the Confessional Conference for Reformed Unity.

As you might remember (See *Clarion*, Year End Issue of 1991, p. 550, 554) the purpose of this Conference is to strengthen the unity of the faith within Reformed churches and to consider the formulation of biblically based statements of faith. Since the ARC felt that this should not be a private initiative but an ecclesiastical matter, the ARC decided last year to support this idea of a Reformed Confessional Con-

ference. Faithful churches of the Reformed and Presbyterian traditions would be invited to participate. On the agenda would be the drafting of Reformed statements of faith on egalitarianism, evolutionism, and ecclesiology.

Dr. Kloosterman told the assembly that the first meeting is set for July 21-24, 1993 at Wheaton College, Illinois. The agenda was not yet finalized although the theme is to be evolutionism. The drafted material will first go to the member churches for their consideration. The first papers can be expected by January 1993. The churches will always be in charge of the final product.

This report prompted several questions. Some of them were:

Are the churches not being fooled into a grandiose and unreal scheme?

Are the participants all truly Reformed?

What will be the final status of the statements produced? Will they not function as extra-creedal declarations? Do we need them?

Why not urge some qualified people to write a good book on these topics?

Does this Conference not put too much stress on the ARC and demand too much of its resources? Therefore hindering it instead of helping?

In his attempt to answer the questions Dr. Kloosterman referred to the discussions of last year and the decisions then taken by the ARC churches to endorse the idea of this Confessional Conference. He further mentioned that the other options referred to (writing a book etc), are not mutually exclusive. But a book written by private people has no normative standing. As to the status of the statements produced, that

will be up to the churches to decide. But he defended the need of such affirmative statements in order to be more effective in attacking contemporary evils. At the same time we will be working on the strengthening of the unity of faith. When there is fear for un-Reformed influence, all material will be at the disposal of the churches and they will have the final say.

Upon a motion the ARC endorsed the plan for the Confessional Conference as it had been laid out.

The meeting appointed a subcommittee to replace the work of the Interim-Committee in relation to the Confessional Conference: the Revs. R. Leestma, P. Murphy, R. Sikkema.

J. Mulder, C. Van Dam

(To be continued) 

Text of fraternal speech

as delegate at the meeting of the Alliance of Reformed Churches

November 1992, Lynwood, Illinois

Esteemed brothers,

Dr. Van Dam and I are thankful that your interim committee invited the Canadian Reformed Churches to send fraternal delegates to your meeting.

We had the privilege to attend your meetings in 1990 and 1991. Then we had to say that we were present in an unofficial capacity.

Since the churches we serve have a General Synod only once every three years – the last one met in the Spring of 1989 –, the developments in the Christian Reformed Church could hardly have the official attention of our broadest assembly, general synod.

That did not mean that local Canadian Reformed Churches were not following events with great interest. Especially those close to Orthodox Christian Reformed or Independent Reformed Churches tried somehow to encourage their brothers and sisters in their struggle to remain faithful to the King of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ. As a result of such contacts Classis Ontario North (representing about 13 congre-

gations) proposed to the General Synod which is presently meeting in Lincoln, Ontario to appoint a committee for the promotion of ecclesiastical unity between Canadian Reformed Churches, and those who have left the Christian Reformed Church. Synod decided to appoint such a committee, which, among others, has as mandate, to represent the Canadian Reformed Churches at assemblies as this one.

This same synod also decided to appoint us as official deputies to your meeting.

We personally have not changed much, – as those of you who were here last year will observe –.

Nevertheless, we are very happy that we now can officially greet you and wish you God's blessing on behalf of all forty four Canadian (American) Reformed Churches with their membership of about 13,000.

Brothers, may I dwell on this for a moment to explain our gratefulness for a seemingly unimportant decision. You know that our churches (and our peo-

ple) are not perfect. I don't have to tell you that.

However, the purpose of this Alliance of Reformed Churches is (among others) "to assist the member churches in *promoting ecclesiastical unity and biblical obedience among the people of God.*"

You do acknowledge that the churches we represent belong to "the people of God." Therefore we pray that you in "promoting ecclesiastical unity among God's people" also will seriously look at the Canadian Reformed Churches. In that context we like to ask you the same as our fathers of the Synod of Dort did ask (in their conclusion to the Canons of Dort): please, do not judge the faith of the Reformed Churches "from the slander gathered from here and there." Neither judge us "from personal statements of some ancient or modern teachers." Judge our faith from "the public Confessions of the Churches" and the official decisions made by their synods.

We hope that you share our thankfulness for this decision of our recent synod. With this decision the Canadian Reformed Churches do reach out to you, (faithful Christian Reformed Churches, Orthodox Reformed, Independent Reformed Churches), "for the purpose of coming to ecclesiastical unity."

From the text of this decision it is clear that this does not mean – I think I should add this to prevent wrong impressions – that we want you all as soon as possible "to become Canadian Reformed." No! We must seek each other.

Here is a genuine attempt of our churches to be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ who also today gathers, defends and preserves His church by His Spirit and Word in the unity of faith.

Historically we are brothers from one and the same church family. In the past we have gone through similar struggles as many of you recently went through.

It is very hard and painful to part with a church which you loved and laboured for so many years. You desire to be truly Reformed in obedience to the Scriptures and the Confessions of the church. Therefore you had to do what you did. You "went out" to "stay in!" To stay in line with Apostles and Prophets, so "to have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ" (1 John 1:1-4) We have the same desire!

Sometimes it is easier for the "flesh" to stay where you are and not bother bringing about more unity. It will not work anyway, people say. It is sometimes tempting to acquiesce in the status quo. Each having our own brand of "Reformed church": free, independent, Orthodox, Canadian Reformed. But that is not according to the will of the Lord. He wants us "with one voice" to glorify God the Father and therefore He commands us to receive one another as Christ has received us.

In Ontario we recently had three public meetings organized by the Burlington Reformed Study Centre. All three dealt with the present situation of the Reformed Churches. How close are we? And what should be done? These questions are living among our people. In some areas of Ontario there are four different Reformed churches quite close together, all with their "own" Table of the Lord.

Three Thursdays in a row the main auditorium of Redeemer College was

filled to capacity, (a total of about 3500 people attended). This shows that many Reformed people do recognize the need to seek unity.

We realize very well that many discussions have to take place; we don't arrange this unity in a few meetings. God has to give it. But we have to be obedient and work on it.

And of course, local action, where possible, is necessary. But it is also clear that there are issues which go beyond the local situation and cannot be adequately dealt with by consistories. They need to be discussed on a different, broader level.

Brothers, you have to make important and difficult decisions. About the purpose and function of this Alliance. Again you are at a crossroads. Be assured of the great interest and the prayers of the Canadian Reformed Churches and of our readiness to be of support and assistance, if we can and may.

As guests we should not come with proposals but may we in closing suggest that you give your Fraternal Relations Committee the mandate to respond positively to an invitation of our Committee for Ecclesiastical Unity among Reformed Believers. We should start official discussions in order to prevent further fragmentation and promote unity. We should seek each other in obedience to the will of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who prayed that they all be one.

Brothers, in closing may I quote the Apostle Paul:

"May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you for the glory of God."

Romans 15:5-7

May the LORD bless you in all your liberations.

J. Mulder 



DECLARED eligible for call:

Rev. H.M. Van Essen

72 Stonechurch Road, West, 26
Hamilton, ON L9B 2H6
Phone (416) 318-8097

CALLED and ACCEPTED to Vernon, BC:

Rev. D. Moes

of Watford, ON

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

Rev. R.A. Schouten

of Calgary, AB

BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE:

All correspondence should be addressed to:

Board of Governors,
c/o Rev. D.G.J. Agema, secretary
85950 Canboro Rd, RR 1
Dunnville, ON N1A 2W1

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:

Rev. C. Van Spronsen

13355 - 60 Avenue
Surrey, BC V3X 2M1

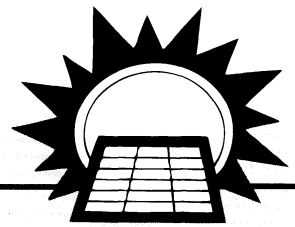
NEW MAILING ADDRESS:

Canadian Reformed
Church of Brampton
150 Main Street, North
PO Box 74071
Brampton, ON L6V 1M0

AMERICAN REFORMED FELLOWSHIP

The weekly worship services held at Palmetto, Florida will be conducted by the Rev. J. VanRietschoten during the month of January and by Rev. Dr. J. Faber during February. Both are Minister of the Word in the Canadian Reformed Churches. All are welcome. For information call (813) 722-5001 or (813) 955-4497

RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Another year slipped by. It seems only a little while ago that we had to get used to 1992, and now we have to switch to 1993.

Yet 1992 was a year full of happenings, happy ones and sad ones. Many birthdays were printed in the Ray of Sunshine, and many cards were received by the people celebrating those birthdays. There were also two men, Robert and Herman, whose birthdates had to be taken off our calendar, because the Lord took them to Himself. Robert and Herman don't need our ray of sunshine anymore, for their lives are full of sunshine now.

But we are still here, and sometimes we don't quite understand why we are here. Our lives seem so useless if we compare them to those of some other people. Yet we are not allowed and we don't have to think that way. The Lord has a purpose for each one of us. Look at this picture. Maybe we should call it a jig-saw puzzle. Each piece of the puzzle is a letter. There is a letter for everyone in the Ray of Sunshine, the initial of everyone's first name. You could glue the puzzle on the back of a picture, and then cut it up. Putting it back together again will not be easy! Every piece is a different shape. Some are bigger, some are smaller, some are fancy, some are plain. Yet every piece belongs somewhere in the picture. Every piece is needed, no matter how small, or how far to the side it is.

That is how it is in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. You could compare that church to a jig-saw puzzle. Every member of the church is a piece of the puzzle. Some pieces seem big and fit right in the centre of the puzzle, like the ministers, the professors, teachers, elders, and deacons. Other pieces seem small and very unimportant. Yet the place in the church pew where we sit every Sunday, is just as important as all the other seats. To the Lord all the pieces in the jig-saw puzzle are the same. The Lord Himself gave every piece its shape and function. Not one of them can be missed in God's plan. All those pieces have to be together and to work together. The pieces even need each other to fit snug, otherwise the whole puzzle will fall apart.

Is this not beautiful? We may know that we belong in Christ's church, and the Lord needs the church to fulfill His plan. For the Lord will gather His people, His church at the day of Christ's return. What we, people of the Sunshine column are allowed to do is to wait for that day and to pray for it to come soon. When we follow God's Son Jesus Christ day by day, joyfully bear our cross, and cleave to Him in faith, hope, and love, we may know for sure that at the last day we may appear without fear before His judgment seat. For Jesus Christ died for us and washed away all our sins.

"May we forever praise and magnify Thee and Thy Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Spirit, the only true God."
(Form for Baptism of Adults)

*Let them proclaim His Name with dancing,
With harp and song His praise advancing,
For in His people God takes pleasure;
They are His joy and treasure.
The humble ones, who to Him flee
The LORD adorns with victory.
Let all the just their glory voice
And in their God rejoice.*

Psalm 149:2

From the mailbox:

The staff and residents of the ANCHOR Home want to thank everyone who has been sending birthday and Christmas cards to the home. The cards are not only appreciated by the recipients, but by the other residents and the staff as well. The days around birthdays become very special with all these cards rolling out of the mailbox.

For all of them: Thank You very much!

Birthdays in February:

Connie Van Amerongen

Russ Road, RR 1
Grimsby, ON L3M 4E7

Connie's 28th birthday is on the 12th.

Cora Schoonhoven

24 James Speight
Markham, ON L3P 3G4

Cora's 42nd birthday is on the 18th.

A special request for Albert Dorgeloos. Albert's initial is not in the jig-saw puzzle. The reason is, that Albert has withdrawn his membership from the church. This means, that he does not want to be a piece in God's jig-saw puzzle anymore. That is an awful thing. Albert's birthday is on the 12th. Anyone who wants to send him a card can of course do so. But please try to make him understand what the consequences are of his decision. There is still a way back for him. Maybe we can encourage him to take that way. We pray that the Holy Spirit may work into Albert's heart. To live in obedience of faith to the Lord is the only way of true happiness.

Albert's new address is:

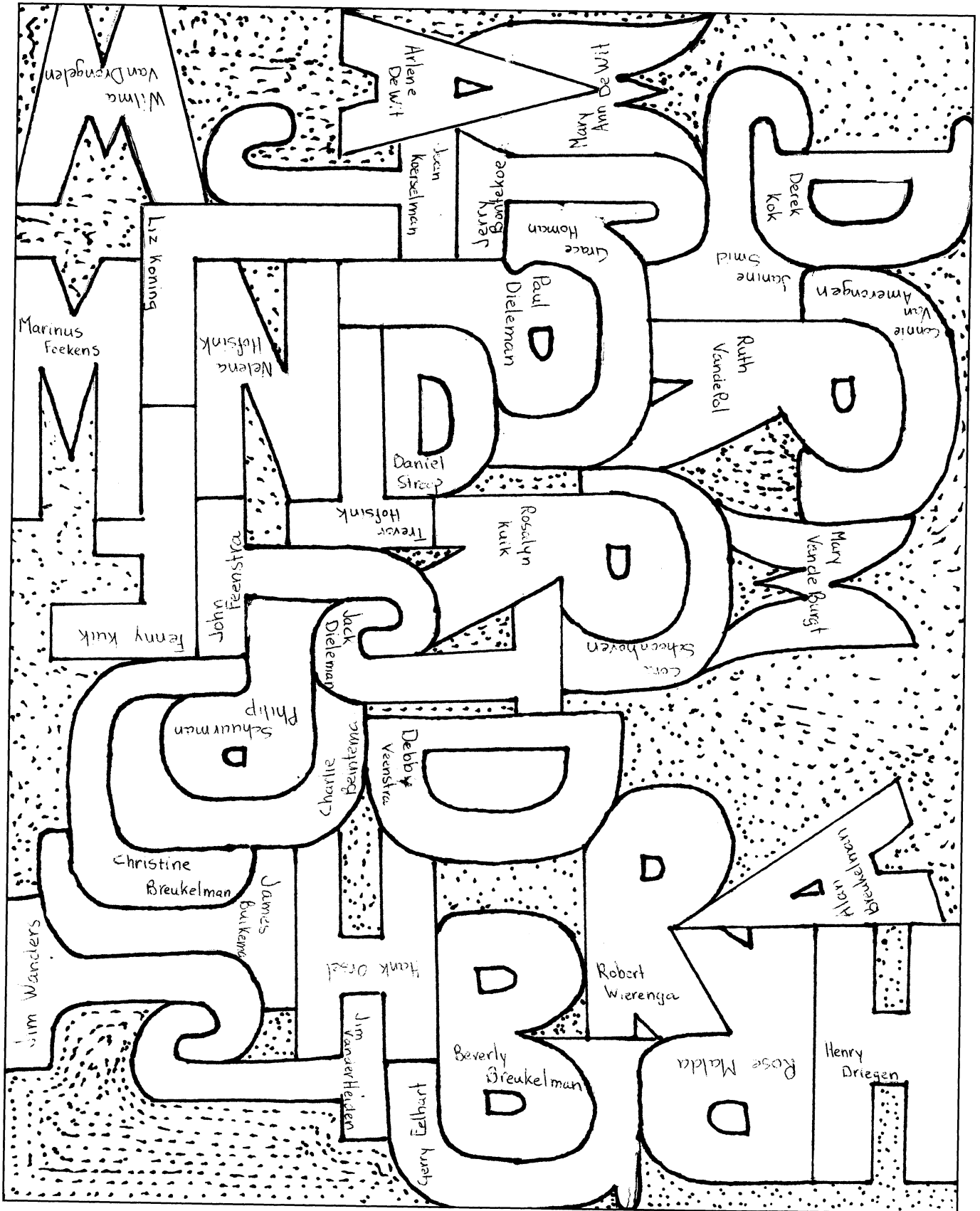
Albert Dorgeloos

102 Silvercreek Pkw., Apt. 905
Guelph, ON N1M 7J4

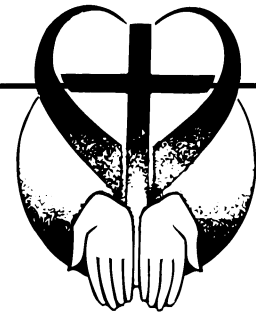
Until next month,

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

RAY OF SUNSHINE: JIG-SAW PUZZLE



Development which impacts lives



Though small by some standards, the Community Development Project (CDP) which we support in Bangladesh has a great impact on the approx. 1,000 families it serves. It reaches out to the poor and needy through literacy training, income generating activities, and health and training programs, bringing hope and a better quality of life to those involved.

Located in northwest Bangladesh, the Jaypurhat district in which the CDP works is typical of much of Bangladesh. Of the total population of this district, 93% live in rural areas and more than 80% of these are marginal farmers living in extreme poverty. Though virtually landless, they still depend directly on agriculture for their livelihood (for example, working as day-labourers for others) since they have no other marketable skills.

Very few development agencies assist in this district so there was a real void. In this needy environment, CR-WRF started its development program in 1984 under the leadership of Peter and Geraldine Ysselstein. The project has grown to include ten regular staff under the leadership of Habel Kisku, team leader and project manager. Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund Committee Field Director, Roy Berkenbosch, together with a board comprised of church of God representatives supervises the program. CDP's long-term goal is to extend assistance to all needy people in the Jaypurhat district but funds do not allow for such ambitious activities as yet.

Still, actual accomplishments are commendable. During Sept. 1990-August '91, for example, 974 target group adults, 1799 children, 503 mothers and 282 pupils (a total of 3,558 individuals) received extensive assistance through literacy classes, income generating projects, cottage industries and handicrafts, health and training projects and leadership training.

One of the main activities CDP promotes is the formation of cooperatives which unite small groups of poor people to promote their socio-economic development. Community Development Project provides training in financial and management skills to enable

the members to manage their cooperatives independently.

The most important component of the groups is the *savings* program. Members contribute regular weekly savings which though small, when pooled are able after a while to provide funding for

Sumonto's Story

This is a story of Shree Sumonto Mahanto, about 38 years of age, from village Isorpur, Jaipurhat District. He is a member of a Community Development Program cooperative group formed in April, 1988 by CDP Field Trainer Dipok Murmur for the purpose of helping poor, landless people improve their standard of living.

At the beginning, Sumonto was one of thirty members of the group. He was one of the poorest, heading a family of six: he, his wife and four daughters. At the time he joined the group, Sumonto was earning an average monthly income of only 400 taka (approx. \$12 U.S.). Most of the time he was unemployed. Sometimes, out of desperation, he reluctantly resorted to smuggling in order to earn enough to feed his family. But even this was not enough to meet his family's basic needs.

His family was in a state of crisis. With inadequate income, he and his wife starved themselves in order to allow their children to eat. Their children were unable to attend school. The whole family lived in a tiny hut made of bamboo and straw and wore poor, tattered clothing.

Sumonto became a member of the coop in April, 1988. From the outset, he was an active member of the group and was elected to be its treasurer. He performed his duties well and took good care of the group's assets. After several months, the group was able to purchase two rickshaw vans and Sumonto was appointed as supervisor of this project. He was paid 30 taka a week for this work. But this was not enough to really help his family.

The group members tried to convince Sumonto to start a betel leaf business and even proposed to provide him with some financial support to start the venture. Finally he agrees and accepted their proposal. The group provided him with a 3000 taka loan. He started the business and being very industrious and interested, did well. He soon began to make a good profit. Spurred on by his initial success, he worked even harder and committed himself to his work so that he was able to repay the whole loan within a year's time.

Sumonto is now fully involved in his business, increasing his capital and doing well. At present he earns an average of 1700 taka per month. He is very happy since he has been able to create a permanent source of income for his family. He is no longer frustrated with uncertain income and he is not tempted to smuggle for his livelihood. His wife and children are well fed and clothes, his children attend school, and the family lives in a new house with strong mud walls and a tin roof. Sumonto has a vision for doing even better and prospering his family in all respects in the future.

(Written by Habel Kisku, CDP Project Manager)



Some of the girls

One of the many coop groups which have been formed



income-generating projects such as rice husking, raising of goats, poultry and vegetables, fish cultivation, handicrafts, cottage industries, and rickshaw van operations – all of which aim at increasing members' incomes and independence. Together, 20 - 30 people can often accomplish what one alone never could. Last year, for example, seventeen coops, made extra money by raising ducks and chickens. Seventy-eight women in six coops, were regularly involved in handicraft work to supplement their meagre family incomes. Community Development Project staff helped them to develop their sewing and market their products.

Community Development Project assists with health concerns as well through its vaccination and health education programs. In 1991, 145 women in eleven coops attended a series of seventeen lessons covering disease identification, sanitation, water, etc. Nutrition lessons and the training of Village Health Assistants who provide simple medical treatment at minimal cost round out the Health component of CDP's program.

Most of the adults in the villages are illiterate. Therefore, as a primary

EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT!

A United Nations Population Fund study done in 46 countries determined that a 1% rise in literacy rates is three times as effective in lowering infant mortality as a 1% rise in the number of doctors.

building block of development, CDP provides an eight-month functional literacy and numeric project. The goal is to enable participants to read simple books, write their names and addresses and maintain accounts and records for their group coops. Last year literacy training was provided to 301 people in 14 different groups.

Under the capable supervision of CRWRC staff, CDP effectively brings

hope and healing to hundreds of extremely poor people. All national staff are Christians and the work is done (and such motivation shared whenever possible) out of thankfulness to God and in prayerful obedience to His commands.

Your gifts enable this work to proceed and we ask that you continue to give in accordance with the measure of blessings with which you have been blessed. May the Lord keep us all from self-absorption, opening our eyes continually to the needs of others. May our gifts, returned to their Giver, be as a pebbles in a pond, creating ever-widening circles of blessing. **C**

Gifts for the works of CRWRC may be directed to:

Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund

PO Box 85225
Burlington, ON L7R 4K4

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



Classis Ontario-North, September 18, 1992

1. On behalf of the church at Brampton, Rev. G. Nederveen opened the meeting by reading from Isaiah 43:25-44:8. He led in prayer and had the meeting sing from Ps. 61:3,4.

2. The delegates of the church at Toronto examined the credentials and found all churches to be lawfully represented by their *primi* delegates except the church at Fergus which was represented by an alternate.

There were instructions from the following churches: Brampton, Burlington-South (2x), Elora and Guelph.

3. Classis is constituted.

4. The officers suggested at the previous meeting are appointed.

Rev. G. Nederveen – chairman; Rev. J. Huijgen – clerk; Pastor Ron Gleason – vice-chairman.

Memorabilia: Rev. Nederveen welcomes Rev. G.H. Visscher back into Classis-Ontario North and congratulates the church at Burlington-West. He also congratulates the delegates from the church at Chatsworth with the acceptance of the call extended to Rev. P.G. Feenstra. He wishes the church at Guelph strength during its vacancy. He mentions the two calls of Rev. W. den Hollander – Grand Rapids and Abbotsford – and congratulates the church at Orangeville. He remembers the vacant churches: Brampton, Burlington-South, Elora, Guelph, Lower Sackville and Ottawa. He welcomes the missionary, Rev. H. Versteeg who is in Toronto on furlough. In that regard, the chairman also mentions that Rev. R. Schouten declined for the mission work in Irian Jaya. The chairman remembers the very sad event of the resignation of Rev. K. Marren from his mission work in Smithers, BC and also remembers Rev. Ralph Boersema who would be undergoing surgery for a detached retina in BC shortly.

5. With the necessary additions being made the agenda is adopted. One of the first items to be dealt with before the agenda proper is the signing of the subscription form. The chairman reads the form and it is then signed by Rev. G.H. Visscher.

6. Reports:

a. A report is tabled from the church for the auditing of the books of the treasurer (Burlington-West). The books were found to be in good order.

b. The Committee for Financial Aid (Guelph) reported that the fund has been inactive during the last period. There are no requests for assistance for the coming year.

c. Church for auditing the books of the Fund of Financial Aid for Students of the Ministry (Fergus) is not present. The church at Fergus is requested to be more expedient in this matter and to table the report at the next meeting of Classis Ontario-North.

d. The Committee for Needy Churches presented a letter with two appendices. The committee proposed that "instead of the \$28.70 assessment as decided by classis September 13, 1991, we propose that classis decide to change the *assessment for 1992 to \$16.75.*" Furthermore, "That classis decide to place the assessment for 1993 at \$2.50 per comm. member until one or both mentioned churches receive a minister."

After some discussion these proposals are carried.

e. Church for auditing the books of the Fund for Needy Churches (Orangeville). The members of the Council of the church at Orangeville were appointed to examine the books. They were found in good order.

7. Question Period according to Article 44 of the Church Order. Two churches asked advice.

8. Proposals or Instructions from the churches.

a. Approbation of the church of call of Rev. P.G. Feenstra. The appropriate documents are all present and in proper order. It is decided that Rev. G. Nederveen will be delegated to the installation scheduled, *D.V.*, for October 18th, 1992. Rev. Nederveen speaks a word of congratulations to Rev. P.G. Feenstra and thanks him for his work. He also expresses his gratitude that Rev. Feenstra is remaining in Classis Ontario-North.

b. An instruction from the church at Brampton for preaching arrange-

ments for Jan.-June '93. *January* – Aasman; *February* – Visscher; *March* – den Hollander; *April* – Feenstra; *May* – Gleason; *June* – Huijgen.

c. An instruction from the church at Elora also for pulpit supply Jan.-June '93. *January* – den Hollander; *February* – Feenstra; *March* – Gleason; *April* – Huijgen; *May* – Nederveen; *June* – Visscher.

In addition, pulpit supply was tentatively arranged for the churches at Ottawa and Lower Sackville.

Ottawa: *January* – Visscher; *February* – Gleason; *March* – Huijgen; *April* – Nederveen; *May* – Visscher; *June* – Aasman.

Lower Sackville: *February* – Aasman; *April* – den Hollander; *June* – Feenstra.

d. An instruction from the church at Burlington-South to appoint Rev. G.H. Visscher as counsellor. The request is granted.

e. An instruction from the church at Guelph to appoint Rev. P.G. Feenstra as counsellor. The request is granted.

9. Correspondence received.

A letter was received dated June 5, 1992, from a brother of one of the churches within the classis dealing with the matter of the singing of Hymn 1A. The letter was read and declared admissible. After some discussion, the following reply was given: Synod '89 adopted the proposal of the standing committee that "it remains within the freedom of the churches to use this text and melody." (Acts, art. 145.b.5, pg. 107). Classis decides not to grant the request of the appellant. Moreover, it is not within the province of classis "to pronounce that in the present circumstance the singing of Hymn 1A ought to be suspended in our churches, until the text (and melody) of this Hymn have been adapted to the officially adopted text of the Apostles' Creed."

A letter dated August 24, 1992 was received from the same brother concerning the regulations of classis, especially with regard to the regulation dealing with acceptance of letters of appeal being submitted just prior to the meeting of classis. The brother's letter

was declared admissible. After some discussion, the following was decided:

a. It is regrettable that in his remarks Br. A shows contempt for office-bearers and ecclesiastical assemblies and writes in an unchristian manner.

b. For broader assemblies to do their work expeditiously, it is necessary that regulations be in place concerning timing and submissions.

c. These regulations serve the purposes of justice in allowing delegates to prepare their positions thoroughly and come to a fair judgment.

d. Anyone who is needy or handicapped can receive ample support and assistance in the local church to submit an appeal for justice.

e. In their regulations and practices, broader assemblies show flexibility in these matters when satisfied with the reasons given, thus not placing undue restrictions upon appellants.

10. Appointments:

a. Convening church for next classis: Burlington-East. Time of meeting: 9:00 a.m. Date: December 2, 1992.

b. Suggested officers for next classis: Chairman – Rev. G.H. Visscher; Clerk – Rev. G. Nederveen; Vice-chairman – Rev. J. Huijgen

c. Committees or deputies.

1. Committee for examinations: Coordinator: Rev. P.G. Feenstra; Exegesis O.T.: Rev. J. Huijgen; Exegesis N.T.:

Rev. P. Aasman; Doctrine and Creeds: Pastor Ron Gleason; Knowledge Holy Scripture: Rev. P.G. Feenstra; Church History: Rev. G.H. Visscher; Ethics: Pastor Ron Gleason; Church Polity: Rev. G. Nederveen; Diaconology: Rev. W. den Hollander.

2. Church visitors: Brampton: Aasman/den Hollander; Burlington-East: Feenstra/Gleason; Burlington-South: Huijgen/Nederveen; Burlington-West: Aasman/den Hollander; Chatsworth: Visscher/Gleason; Elora: Feenstra/Huijgen; Fergus: Nederveen/Visscher; Grand Valley: den Hollander/Feenstra; Guelph: Aasman/Gleason; Lower Sackville: Huijgen/Nederveen; Orangeville: Visscher/Aasman; Ottawa: den Hollander/Feenstra; Toronto: Huijgen/Nederveen.

3. Church for taking care of the Archives: Burlington-East.

4. Church for the inspection of the Archives: Burlington-South.

5. Classical Treasurer: Mr. J.J. Poort, 1131 Fisher Avenue, Burlington, ON L7P 2L2, (416) 335-8084.

6. Church to audit the books of the Classical Treasurer: Burlington-West.

7. Church for financial aid to the students for the Ministry: Guelph.

8. Church to audit the books of the fund for financial aid to students: Fergus.

9. Committee for Needy Churches: Mr. J. Kottelenburg (Brampton); Mr. G. Lodder (Guelph); Mr. J. Vanbodegom

(Orangeville), treas. Address: 43 Brenda Blvd., Orangeville, ON L9W 3L3.

10. Church to audit the books of the Fund for Needy Churches: Orangeville.

d. Delegates for Regional Synod, December 1992.

The ministers elected and delegated are: P.G. Feenstra, J. Huijgen, G. Nederveen, and G.H. Visscher. Alternates: W. den Hollander, R. Gleason and P. Aasman, in that order. The elders elected and delegated are: A. Hordyk, H. Jager, L. Jagt, C. VanDam. Alternates: H. Bouwman, P. Broekema, K. Sikkema, J. Hutten, in that order.

11. Personal Question Period.

Rev. G. H. Visscher expresses his thanks for the words of welcome and hopes for good cooperation among the delegates. Some others also make use of the personal question period.

12. Censure according to Art. 44 C.O. – not necessary.

13. Adoption of the Acts and Press Release.


The Acts are read and adopted.

The Press Release is read and approved for publication.

14. Closing.

The chairman requests the delegates to sing from Ps. 106:24 and closes in prayer.

For Classis Ontario-North of
September 18, 1992

Ron Gleason, Vice-Chairman 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

For a start let's wish each other the Lord's blessing in the New Year!

Our heavenly Father made this new year, 1993.

He made us, His children.

He will care for us, too, in this new year.

He has *promised* us that.

We can *count* on Him!

He knows when we hurt.

He hears when we pray.

He is there for us every day.

Put your hands in His.

He knows the way.

He knows the goal.

Trust and obey.

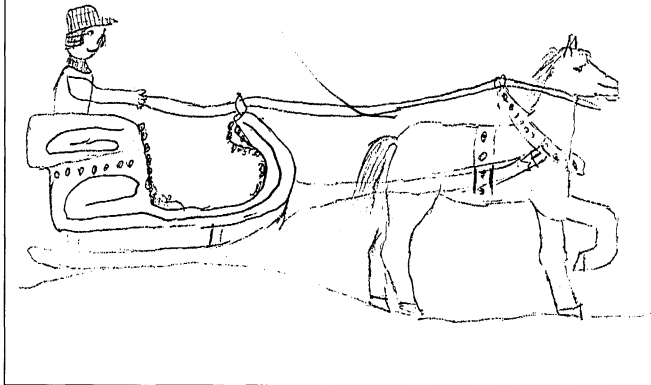
DURING THE HOLIDAYS . . .

Busy Beaver *John Verhoeff* has a holiday story for you. He wrote:

"During the holidays we went X country skiing and down hill skiing, swimming and going to Winnipeg. Down hill skiing was my best because one person that I knew was with me. We would race down the steep huge hills. In the morning we had a ski instructor. We learned to zig-zag and go up the hill.

WINTER PICTURE

By Busy Beaver *Richard Oosterhoff*



WINTER FUN!

By Busy Beaver *Francine Vanwoudenberg*

Winter! Winter! it's all around;
 Storms and blizzards to be found.
 Bright and sunny days, too, no doubt!
 And on those days everyone's out!
 Everyone goes out to play
 Though it's not very long that you will stay

Because of a cold, frostbitten nose
 And also because of frozen toes.
 And when you finally come in
 you'll say
 "Out there it's just too cold for me!"
 Then over hot chocolate you
 can watch T.V.



Quiz Time!

BIBLE QUIZ

By Busy Beaver *Alyson Bosch*

Pick the right one.
 governor king wagon hole Pharaoh Potiphar baker

- Joseph was put in this _____.
- Joseph worked for _____.
- Joseph told the _____ about his dream.
- Joseph was sent to _____ to tell the meaning of his two dreams.
- Pharaoh made Joseph _____ of Egypt.

(See answers)

ANIMAL WORD SEARCH

By Busy Beaver *Melanie Muis*

- | | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| cow | tiger | mouse |
| horse | sheep | swan |
| cat | owl | bird |
| rabbit | pig | wren |
| dog | monkey | catfish |
| cat | fish | eel |



R H X V C O W B D Y P T
 E A Z J Y F W L H R G S
 D M B A X I B N E F B A
 L N G B U S Q G K C I C
 M O O H I H I O I A R A
 D W N O K T S G J P D T
 M R I R E T A R P Z A F
 O E L S E R P C E Q S I
 U N W E L W E I E W S
 S M U N K E Y V H R A H
 E G O L D T I S S P N
 F G T C A L F S Z I N T



PICTURE RIDDLES

By Busy Beaver *Deanna Wierenga*

- | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | F = | K = | P = | U = |
| | G = | L = | Q = | V = |
| | H = | M = | R = | W = |
| | I = | N = | S = | X = |
| | J = | O = | T = | Y = |
| | | | | Z = |

- What bus sailed the ocean?
- What kinds of beans don't grow in the garden?
- How do you know the ocean is friendly?
- What is in the center of America and Australia?