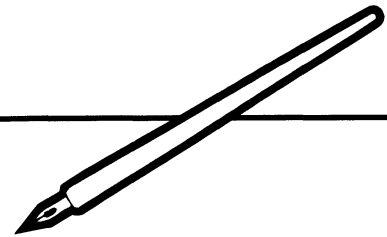




Clarion
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Reflections on Reflections

In *The Messenger* of December 1992, Rev. C.A. Schouls, minister of the Free Reformed Church at Vineland in Ontario, wrote a "Guest Editorial" under the title "Reflections on the ARC Meeting of November '92." The reader knows through the report of Rev. J. Mulder in this and the previous issue that the ARC meeting was the annual meeting of the Alliance of Christian Reformed Churches. Rev. Mulder and Dr. C. Van Dam were delegated to this meeting by our Synod of Lincoln. Together with the Rev. C. Pronk of St. Thomas, Ontario, Rev. Schouls was delegated to this meeting to represent the Free Reformed Churches. In this editorial I would like to reflect on part of the reflections of colleague Schouls.

First he gave some information on the Alliance and its member churches. In the second part, Rev. Schouls presented to the readers of *The Messenger*, with some additional thoughts, excerpts of the words with which he had addressed the ARC meeting and in which he made a suggestion for a course of action. I present here the first part of this entire second section of his Guest Editorial, adding some remarks and questions, or, let us say, some reflections of mine. The second part will, D.V., come in the next issue. Rev. Schouls spoke to the ARC meeting:

The ARC is at a cross roads. We believe the time has come for you to stand back and to take stock of what you have and where you may be going. The number of independent churches has greatly increased over last year. What shall you do? Has the time not come that you organize into a denominational-like structure? In your situation it may be advantageous to have this as a loose structure for the time being. Would this not alleviate much of the procedural uncertainty which is in danger of hampering your development? "But," some will say, "will yet another Reformed denomination not show the world our weakness?"

The world will little note and less care about such an event. Others will ask, "Should there not be an effort to join an existing body?" Laudable as such a notion may be, we fear, it may, in the end, do nothing more than create divisions within such an existing body. Denominational distinctives, when pressed into the mold of uniformity, may well react with explosive power. Rather than force such unity at this time, we see that the formation of a new denomination may even be the occasion for the creation of a real, workable form of co-operation

between Reformed denominations and churches. It will require a separation between the ARC and the Fellowship. Such separation should not be construed as a division of ways, along lines of principle, but more a peeling of the one layer from the other so that each can develop as it should.

Colleague Schouls is probably right when he says that "the world will little note and less care about" the formation of still another (Reformed) denomination. I, too, think that it will not reach the front page of, for instance, the *Globe and Mail*. However, it certainly would show our weakness. And it would make it even harder to explain this division to those who come from the outside world and who are attracted to the Reformed faith through evangelism. Such a person might, probably will, ask: You believe that Christ unites those who believe in Him and that He wants them to be one. He says this in His Word, in John 17, in Eph. 4, and in other places. You as Reformed Churches have the same confession and basically the same Church Order, and you assert that you want to abide by them. Why are you not all together one church? Must we not confess that this, indeed, is our weakness? Should we not express our confession more strongly and say that this division is our sin?

Rev. Schouls continues to point out that pressing for unity instead of forming another denomination "may, in the end do nothing more than create divisions within such an existing body," because of the fact that "Denominational distinctives, when pressed into the mould of uniformity, may well react with explosive power." Again, my colleague might be correct in this evaluation of the situation, in particular in the churches which he serves. One can also admire this honest evaluation of the (sinful) reality. However, such an evaluation only underlines our human weakness, yes, our sin before the Lord of the church.


We read here the term "denominational distinctiveness" which can "react with explosive power" against a being pressed into uniformity. Does this mean that the uniformity spoken of here is human uniformity? Or should we speak here of unity in Christ? Should we not listen to the apostle Paul, also here, when he stresses the unity in Christ to the congregation at Corinth. There one group of believers found their distinctive characteristics in following the Peter as they conceived him. Another group adhered to Apollos as they perceived this fellow-worker with Paul in his distinctive

ways. And a third group wanted to stick to Paul as they thought of him as distinct from the others. The apostle fought against such a division between believers on the basis of specific distinctives. They had all their unity in Christ. This unity in Christ, the Christ as proclaimed by the apostles and confessed by the church, was stressed by Rev. Gangar of Wellandport's independent CRC time and again.

In line with this suggestion that the different "Reformed denominations and churches" remain separate according to their distinctives, Rev. Schouls suggests to the members of the ARC to separate. On the one hand there will then remain the Alliance of Reformed Churches for those who still stay in the CRC, while those who seceded from the CRC and became independent will form a federation in the "Confessional Fellowship of Reformed Churches." Rev. Schouls assures, "Such separation should not be construed as a division of ways, along lines of principle, but more a peeling of the one layer from the other so that each can develop as it should."

In the first place, is there a difference between "denominations" and "churches"? In the second place, what does Rev. Schouls mean when saying, "Such separation should not be construed as a division of ways, along lines of principle"? Does this mean that the true unity of faith and in obedience of faith to the Lord remains and is not endangered even when the one group of churches secedes from the CRC, seeing this as an act of obedient faith, while the other group of (conservative) churches remains in the CRC? Is this an advice for the present situation as well as for the future? It would fit with the advice that each church go its own way according to its distinctives. I would like to ask Rev. Schouls this question: Is this position and advice not the very opposite of what the father of the Secession said in the days after the "Doleantie"? At first Dr. A. Kuyper and those with him saw the "Doleantie" as a separation from hierarchical governing bodies but not from the Dutch Reformed Church as such with all the believers still in it. This view was a hindrance for the men of the Secession to come to unity with Kuyper. Secession churches and "Doleantie" churches united in 1892 only when the people of the Doleantie accepted the proposal of the Secession Synod stating that they agreed that "breaking the ecclesiastical fellowship not only with the governing bodies of the Dutch Reformed Church but also with its members in a corporative and local sense is commanded by God's Word and the Reformed Confession and therefore is necessary."¹ One of the reasons for the "Free Reformed people" in 1892 not to go along with the Union was that this statement was not clear and decisive enough in rejecting the teaching of Kuyper on the church. Does the norm of 1892 in the Netherlands not count in 1992 in North America? Do I misunderstand my colleague? Or do the Free Reformed Churches not speak the language of the confession regarding the church anymore as this was shown in 1834 in the Act of Secession and Return and was maintained in 1892? Has their line of thinking changed?

There is more to read and to ask. But it has to wait till the next time, D.V.

¹ "...dat verbreking van de kerkelijke gemeenschap met de Besturen van de Ned. Herv. Kerk niet alleen, maar ook met de leden in corporatieve en plaatselijke zin, door Gods Woord en de Ger. Belijdenis geboden en dus noodzakelijk is." I have taken this quotation from the brochure of L. Lindeboom, *Mag en zal de Vereeniging doorgaan?* (Is Union allowed and will it come about?), Heusden: Gezelle Meerburg, 1892. 



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Geertsema

Coeditors: J. De Jong, C. Van Dam and W.W.J. VanOene

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION

41 Amberly Boulevard
Ancaster, ON, Canada L9G 3R9

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE

MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.

One Beghin Avenue

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Suffering and Care of the Souls₃

By S. Foster

“Our soul is restless until it finds rest in Thee, O Lord. For Thou hast made us for Thyself”

Augustine

The church and care of the soul

When a person experiences emotional suffering, because of his or her own sin, or by being wronged by another, it is obvious that there will be certain effects. In some few cases there are no lasting psychological and spiritual effects, and these people quickly heal. In these cases, people have had the suffering quickly removed from them; they are able to accept it and move ahead without any continuing problems. That this occurs with some people is true, and is something to be thankful for. In many cases, however, this is not the way it happens. Depending on the severity of the emotional suffering, healing can be a long term process affecting spiritual growth.

Sexual abuse, physical beatings, psychological abuse, child neglect, as well as a whole gamut of other possible causes such as the loss of a loved one, economic problems, broken homes and others, have led some to suffer serious emotional, psychological and spiritual problems. These people do not always seem to be suffering heavily because it is not necessarily visible to the public. They are *functional* in society, meaning, they work, go to church, have friends and are generally active in society to a greater or lesser degree. But privately, within themselves, they have been damaged and have inner scars from past experiences. Psychological problems can affect one spiritually, this must be admitted. They may suffer a strained relationship with God and community. They are *functional*, yes, but, what we witness of these suffering souls is an adjusted personality, one which is a “mask” and not a real presentation of who they really are. Some people believe that if a person is functional in society that this is enough to be thankful for, considering their situa-

tion. The problem with this view is that it leaves the cause of their problems unresolved. A disruptive, but hidden problem can affect a person’s relationship with God and church and with oneself. This can prove to be devastating to personal salvation and meaningful relationships. This is true whether we personally realize it or not.

Discovering those people who suffer in private is of course a great problem. If these people do not come forward, what do we do? Those who are suffering have to seek guidance, many will not do this. Maybe they do not take seriously their own suffering. Or they have been raised in such a manner to reject the “reality” of emotional suffering. That someone does feel that he or she has a problem, is at least a good reason to believe that there is a problem of some kind. Some say “it’s all in your mind” as if this is supposed to make the suffering unreal.

Lack of admittance of a problem might also exist because those suffering cannot see that real help is available to them. Sometimes people feel that their church community is as far as they should look for help; if they feel that it is not available there, then they look no further. There can be other reasons for not admitting that there is a problem. People can have the idea that they will not be accepted if they come forward to a consistory member or another brother or sister in the church. Both in church communities as well as society at large, there still is great skepticism about emotional suffering; not so much that it exists, but whether it is important enough to try to correct. The beginning point for ending these misapprehensions is to show acceptance, admitting the reality that any problem, even the most hideous in our eyes, can enter our

circles. Those who suffer must find a supportive environment where trust, understanding, and care can be found. Trust! Those who suffer might not come forward because they do not trust those who are to care for their soul! This lack of trust can be merely perceived by a troubled heart, it can also be the result of specific experiences. Those who suffer can have the impression that people are afraid of admitting that their community can be infected with serious problems. They can shy away from such problems because they do not know how to handle them.

To not take emotional suffering seriously due to specific causes gives a definite message to those who are suffering. This message is that their problem is to be kept out of the communion. This communion can be the world. It can also be the church. Again, the beginning point for ending such attitudes is to show that we realize and accept that any problem must find a supportive community. To deal with these concerns does not mean that a personal problem should become public knowledge. This would not be encouraging at all! It means open discussion and education about what it is to be suffering through significant emotional problems. It means discussion of what to do about these issues in general and also in specific instances.

The result will be a growing awareness in the light of Scripture, of our own sin and the sin around us, an awareness also that our personal sin can harm not only ourselves but others, too, and that at any time we ourselves can become the victim of sin. Hereby we must not only focus our attention on the victims and those who suffer, but also on the ones who cause the suffering. It has been well said: “When someone con-

tinually disrupts the public place for whatever reason, everyone wants the person to 'get help' and seek a change of mind, but leave someone to suffer alone and everyone remains silent." Why silent? Because, (it is said), there is nothing to talk about. This is very far from the truth. There is lots to talk about.

From where comes help and aid?

In relation to caring for the souls of the church, God promised He would set a shepherd over us (cf. Ezek. 34:11-31). The Scriptures tell us that Christ is the chief Shepherd for the church (Jn. 10:11-16), and we have elders, shepherds under Christ to tend the flock (1 Pet. 5:2). Therefore, the care of the souls is undertaken by the representatives of Christ on earth.

In the church *soul care* falls into the hands of pastors, elders and deacons, although everyone in the communion of saints makes up the supportive environment of the church. In relation to the varied trials which Christians experience and the care needed for salvation, we must ask ourselves how much we should expect from the consistory. Acknowledging that God sends His Spirit as Helper and Counsellor (Jn. 14:16) to what extent are the pastors, minister and elders to handle certain problems? Are they expected to care for souls, when the healing required is healing from deep psychological trauma? Do we expect consistory members to have the training to recognize signs from those who remain silent about being victims of abuse, such as sexual abuse, physical beating, or psychological abuse? If the consistory members realize signs from those who suffer silently, do we expect them to have the skills to properly draw out of a victim their feelings and the causes of these feelings? Do we expect them to deal with those who do not yet feel, or do not have, the reality of forgiveness and grace in their hearts because of their sin or because of hatred toward an abuser? For example, if a victim of abuse suddenly comes forward and pours out his or her heart, announcing all their horrible pain, is the consistory member expected to be ready for this? Anyone would be caught off guard for sure, but are they expected to be more sufficiently prepared than anyone else in the congregation? Are they expected to be more prepared than any of the rest of us? Those who suffer can hold the pain hidden within themselves for so long, once it comes out, it can come

out in a fierceness of passion which can stun; and now will be the time to handle it. There can exist in the mind of abused persons an emotional or psychological block, instead of stubborn rebellion, that hinders being receptive for the message of the gospel. All this requires wisdom, it also requires knowledge of what to do, it requires skills and so many other qualities. Are the consistory members expected to have all these qualities?

We know that we cannot require all this from all consistory members. Many problems can be handled by a competent consistory. However, you cannot have available in every consistory trained and spiritually qualified psychotherapists for those deeper problems, the ones where prolonged suffering exists. Retrieving the cause of such suffering will likely prove to be a difficult task, since it has been buried and covered up for a period of time. Retrieving the true causes and feelings related to the suffering requires involved counselling by those with appropriate skills. Few consistory members would meet these criteria, and in fact they are not expected to. These questions are not meant to pronounce judgment on consistories, suggesting they are inadequate. They are meant to show that the consistory, as well as most everyone in the church, are not capable of dealing with the more involved emotional problems. Realistically, members of the consistory and all the other members of the church *cannot* fill all the qualities necessary to handle the needs of these sufferers. These cases are *specific* cases of suffering, not the general "caring of the soul." Soul care in general wants the whole person to be restored to a right relationship with God and community; it wants to cure from particular sins, and to care in such a way as to foster spiritual growth. Soul care which deals with specific problems of suffering cannot work on the whole life in relation to God and community, but must isolate the cause of the suffering.

Healing from suffering is the goal of counselling whether from consistory or from psychologists. The former allows for spiritual development essential for the health of the soul, the latter a therapy of the mind. "The primary goal of spiritual guidance is spiritual growth, not psychological growth. Similarly, the primary goal of psychotherapy is psychological, not spiritual growth."⁷ Each has a unique goal, but they often effect one another. Admittedly, this is why

there is reason for concern. The worry is over the possibility of psychological manipulation over true biblical values. This calls for proper discernment of who is going to be the counsellor. A secular therapist who has anti-Christian attitudes is dangerous, but so is a Christian therapist who misuses Scripture in the healing process. Discernment is necessary *whenever* a therapist is consulted.

Psychotherapy and soul care do not have to exclude one another. A competent therapist, Christian or non-Christian, can establish a relationship with a trustworthy and respected person who discusses spiritual problems with the patient, given that the patient allows permission for doing this. This does not involve a dual aspect of counselling, but open communication of appropriate matters.⁸

The conclusion is: what is needed is knowledge of the limitations we have as care givers. We need to have the wisdom and courage to turn to those who have the training and appropriate skills and are competent to counsel our brother or sister. For the sake of our brother or sister, we must seek out the capable counsellors, be it psychotherapist, or social worker, or other capable people. This *must* be done when necessary. We all know that in the church there are mixed views about going to professional therapists, especially if this therapist is not a Christian. Much has been written about this⁹ and will continue to be written. It is not being claimed that Christ is not sufficient for our salvation (see B.C. Art. 22), nor does it contradict the teaching of Scripture and confession which says we are not "*to seek or invent any other means of reconciliation with God than this only sacrifice, once offered, by which the believers are perfected for all times*" (B.C. Art.21). Christ is sufficient, and there is no other means of reconciliation with God. As was said in the previous article, it is only by the reconciliation to God through the blood and indwelling Holy Spirit of Christ that one can seek their salvation in Christ. No psychotherapy can reconcile us with God. But therapy might be able to remove the emotional "blocks" to the Gospel of reconciliation caused by suffering. If it is God's grace and in good time, this will occur. This is all we can hope for from therapy.

For our purposes, we must acknowledge that proper counselling will be required and in many cases this cannot

be found within the consistory when dealing with the kind of problems we have been addressing. A very important beginning to rectifying this situation has been undertaken within our churches. A committee has been appointed which is now called "Counselling Services Networking Committee" (C.S.N.C.). This committee has as its goal, according to Article 2 of its mandate, the task of assisting officebearers in directing Canadian Reformed members to the appropriate counselling services available in the hope that suffering might be alleviated. This, of course, means "Biblically sound and Confessionally faithful approaches to the use of available counselling services" (Art. 2 of Mandate and Guidelines).

It is our responsibility to one another to seek out the appropriate people for counselling those who have need for these services in order to further a healthy relationship to God and community. It is our duty to Christ: "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me" (Mt. 25:45).

⁷David G. Benner, *Psychotherapy and the spiritual Quest*, (Baker Book House Company, 1988), p.153

⁸Benner, p.155; Rev. W. Pouwelse, *Like Living Stones*, (Premier Publishing: Winnipeg, 1985), p.74

⁹Many Christian books contain information about this dilemma. The following are recommended. Rev. W. Pouwelse, *Like Living Stones* (Premier Publishing, Winnipeg, 1985), chapter five. David G. Benner, *Psychotherapy and the Spiritual Quest* (Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1988). Gary Collins, *Can You Trust Psychology?* (InterVarsity Press, 1988).

(Note of the Editor: *This third article and the two preceding ones were presented to Clarion by br. Steve Foster, who taught for a number of years in our Ferguson school. They were taken up since it was considered good that we together keep discussing these matters. As br. Foster writes, not all think the same about the help of trained counselors such as social workers and psychotherapists. The experience of the one differs from the experience of the other. However, we all are aware that also in*

our churches we have brothers and sisters with deep problems caused by different forms of abuse who need help and support. There is also the fact that an unbelieving therapist can lead an emotionally or psychologically suffering member further away from the great Healer, Christ Jesus. This shows the need for "Bible-believing" Christian therapists who not only work in close cooperation with relatives, ministers and elders, but also themselves work with such a psychological insight and wisdom as is clearly bound to and built on God's Word, that is, the gospel of Christ as the only and complete Redeemer through His blood and Holy Spirit. It shows also the necessity of our officebearers to give and make much time for the study of God's Word and for the reading of proper literature. And, last but not least, let us as members of one body, with the gifts we have, seek to help each other as hands and feet and eyes and ears, and so on, for each other, also keeping in mind that we do not all have the same gifts. J.G.)



REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By R.A. Schouten

A (Belated) Resolution for Church Members

Many people have the habit of making "New Year's resolutions. A resolution is a way of focusing yourself on certain goals. By placing a time frame around your goals, they become much more concrete.

I thought it might be useful to compose a New Year's resolution for church members. This would be a way of focusing our hearts and minds on what God expects of us as Christians and as church members and could be a way of recommitting ourselves to the service of the Lord.

First, some definitions:

"Resolution:" the act of resolving; the state of being resolute; active fortitude.

"Resolute:" having a fixed purpose; determined; constant; steady.

"Resolve:" to decide or determine to do something.

Now the resolution:

I, _____, by the grace of God, hereby resolve to commit myself fully to the service of the Lord. I do sincerely believe the whole content of the Word of God which is taught in this my congregation. With all my heart, I resolve to steadfastly continue in this Christian faith. To this end, I promise to use all reasonable means to learn the Word of God.

On both Sunday morning and afternoon, as well as on special occasions,

as often as the Lord calls me by his appointed officebearers, I promise to diligently present myself for the worship of God, unless I am prevented absolutely by ill health or inclement weather. God's Word I resolve to read every day without exception. Every opportunity to come together with my brothers and sisters in order to study the Sacred Scriptures, I will employ. (Catechism homework I will regard as a sacred obligation.)

I will strive to be a living member of this congregation. To that end, I will be kind and cheerful to my fellow members. Instead of criticizing arrogantly and gossiping foolishly, I will seek opportunities to serve them. Readily and cheer-

fully, I will use my gifts for their benefit and well-being. With a considerate word or a friendly visit, I will seek out those who are lonely or distressed. I will fight against all petty selfishness arising in my heart. When they err or go astray, I will exhort my brothers and sisters and I, in turn, will humbly receive their admonitions. Regularly, I will bring the firstfruits of my material goods and resources to the Lord.

I promise to continue always in prayer. Day by day, I will seek God's grace for the forgiveness of my sins and His Spirit for the renewal of my life.

I will also bring before His throne the needs of my church. I will pray for the sick, the lonely, the grieving, the downcast and the erring. In the midst of this perverse and godless generation, I will ask God to preserve all the members of my congregation so that they do not fall in temptation. I will bring before His throne those called to


lead my congregation, asking that He would bless them with wisdom and courage. I promise to submit in all things lawful to the instruction and discipline of those placed over me in this congregation. I will pray for my city, my country and for all those appointed to rule. Using all opportunities to let the light of the gospel shine, I will work for the moral and spiritual improvement of the society in which I live.

I will forsake ungodly entertainment and will remove worldly influences from my home, knowing that it is better to be radical now than sorry later. Day by day, I will fight against my old nature and seek to walk in the Spirit. (I will strive to relate to my boyfriend/girlfriend with integrity. With God's help, I will keep my body pure, both before and within marriage) (I promise to submit to my husband and to strive to be a true helper to him in his life.) (I will love

my wife sacrificially, cherishing her as a great gift from God.)

(I will instruct my children in the Christian faith. I will strive with all my strength to give faithful and godly leadership in their lives, knowing that it would be better now to have a stone tied to my neck and to be drowned in the sea than to cause any of the little ones to stumble.)

To the utmost of my power, I will work with my brothers and sisters for the continued availability of education which provides a godly, safe and Christ-centered learning environment for the children of my congregation.

Could you with integrity fill your name in the blank space above? Do not do so quickly, without thought, for you must count the cost of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. On the other hand, if you can't fill in the blank, are you really a member? 

The Alliance of Reformed Churches met – November 17-19, 1992₂

The ARC and the Westminster Standards

When the Christian Reformed Alliance became the Alliance of Reformed Churches (ARC) last year and broadened its basis and purpose, it was to be expected that the question of adding the Westminster Standards to the Constitution of the ARC would be raised. That was indeed the case and a committee was appointed to study this matter. The report of this committee was now discussed and its recommendation adopted.

The Constitution of the ARC reads now as follows:

Purpose of the Alliance

The Alliance of Reformed Churches is an association of churches that are united in an effort to give effective 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, the Canons of Dort and the Westminster Standards, and to assist the member churches in pro-

moting ecclesiastical unity and biblical obedience among the people of God.

Basic Confessional Statements

In light of God's infallible and inerrant Word, we confess and declare as an Alliance of Reformed church councils:

1. That we sincerely believe and subscribe to all the articles and points of doctrine set forth in either the Belgic Confession, the Heidelberg Catechism, and the Canons of Dort or the Westminster Standards as fully agreeing with the Word of God.
2. That we promise to teach these doctrines diligently. . . .

One of the grounds for this decision was that

the Confessional Standards of both the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards have been acknowledged for centuries as valid expressions of the Reformed Faith in the wider Reformed community

The Alliance decided to accept the version of the Westminster Standards being used by the OPC and the Presbyterian Church in America.

Since this decision concerns a change in the constitution it will first go to the member churches for their approval and then be ratified next year upon an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the delegates.

During the discussion of this matter we were asked for our input. We told the meeting that the Canadian Reformed Churches are happy with the Three Forms of Unity as official standards and have no desire to exchange them or add to them, but the Westminster Standards have always been considered as a Reformed confession. Also the International Conference of Reformed Churches (ICRC) of which the Canadian Reformed Churches are members, have as basis the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards.

The ARC providing ecclesiastical structure?

Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge (minister, Rev. Jelle Tuininga)

overtured the ARC to reconsider its structure and purpose since the Alliance was never meant to be permanent. It came into being because of a crisis situation in the CRC that one day should be resolved one way or another. Lethbridge asked: "Can a church remain for ever in the CRC and still be a member of the ARC?" They wanted more clarity. An advisory committee had considered this important issue and recommended to add the following to the above mentioned Statement of Purpose:

(The Alliance of Reformed Churches is an association of churches that are united . . . to assist the member churches in promoting ecclesiastical unity and biblical obedience among the people of God,)

giving counsel, encouragement and advice to both *federated and non-federated churches*, providing ecclesiastical structure to independent Reformed churches, and providing fraternal relations to all who desire to uphold, propagate and defend the historic Reformed faith.

The Lethbridge overture and this committee-recommendation provoked quite some debate! Especially delegates of the Independent churches spoke against it. According to them the ARC is becoming too broad with its double purpose of assisting churches still Christian Reformed and those who have withdrawn themselves from the CRC. They were of the opinion that the Independent churches do not need the ARC to provide them with an "ecclesiastical structure." According to them they can decide that on their own and they told the meeting that an informal "structure" is in place already called the Confessional Fellowship of Reformed Churches. A study committee is also already working on the question "whether or not they should join an existing denomination, form a new one, or remain unaffiliated." However, an amendment to delete the sentence

providing ecclesiastical structure to independent Reformed churches was defeated. After more discussion the recommendation was adopted with the smallest possible majority.

At this point the discussions reflected some of the tension among the member churches. The obvious cause being the fact that the ARC is an association of CRC and Ex-CRC churches. The Independent churches are not in favour of the ARC developing into a new "denomination" or federation of churches.

A recommendation to set up a committee which will have to report to the next ARC meeting regarding the implementation of providing ecclesiastical structure to independent Reformed churches, was defeated by a great majority.

Who can be members of the ARC?

The Trinity Reformed Church of Lethbridge also asked the ARC whether there are any set boundaries to membership of the ARC. It seemed to them completely "open-ended." The meeting did, however, not find it necessary to define the parameters of membership but simply reaffirmed Article II of the Constitution:

All Reformed church councils in agreement with the *PURPOSE OF THE ALLIANCE OF REFORMED CHURCHES*, the *BASIC CONFESSIONAL STATEMENT* and the *ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION* are eligible for membership in the Alliance of Churches.

Mission and financial assistance students

Last year the ARC established a standing Committee on Missions in order to advise congregations with regard to mission opportunities and needs, both foreign and domestic. Many member churches were in the present situation often at a loss which mission effort to support.

The Committee on Missions now served the meeting with a report and supplied the churches with a list of rec-

ommended mission causes. Among many other worthy causes also these were recommended:

World Missions Dominican Republic (Rev. Neal Hegeman, Clinton CRC); Caribbean Christian Ministries (Rev. G.W. Donnan); Christian Liberty Mission (Rev. Ralph Smith, Japan); Christ for Russia (Rev. Nick Vogelzang, director).

It was emphasized that it was the task of the local churches to contact these agencies directly.

In this context it was good to see that the ARC wants to maintain the Reformed vision that mission is not the task of a committee, board or society but primarily of the local churches. The following purpose statement for the Mission Committee was adopted:

The task of missions, both funding and direction, is primarily that of the local church. The purpose of the Mission Committee of the ARC is to forward to the churches information as available, that can be helpful to churches in fulfilling their mission responsibility.

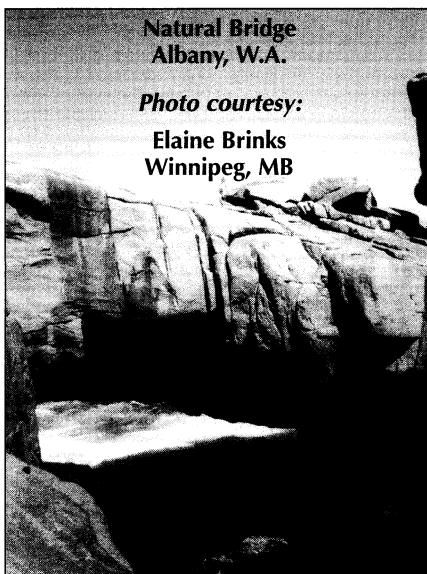
The same principle was maintained when dealing with pastors and ministerial candidates facing financial problems because they have left the CRC. Considering Scripture passages as for instance 1 Tim. 5: 3-8; 17-18; 2 Cor. 8: 13-15; 11:7, the ARC decided to recommend to the churches that first of all local councils have the privilege and responsibility in this respect. If a local congregation cannot meet the need they are encouraged to seek assistance from neighbouring member churches of the ARC.

Other decisions

Also the following decisions may interest you:

- To achieve greater membership continuity churches which cannot attend the annual meeting should send a notification in writing. The annual membership fee for this year was set at \$50.00. Members are required to communicate their council's decision regarding continued or terminated membership by June 1 each year.
- The ARC urged consistories to remind the members of the churches that in keeping with the principles of Matthew 18, the avenue of protest and/or appeal begins with an address to the local consistory. If a problem cannot be resolved there, the consistory should seek the advice of a mutually agreed upon

OUR COVER



Natural Bridge
Albany, W.A.

Photo courtesy:

Elaine Brinks
Winnipeg, MB

neighbouring Alliance consistory. A final appeal may be addressed to a meeting of the Alliance.

A committee was appointed to continue the study of these matters.

- The next meeting of the ARC will D.V. be held November 16 - 18, 1993 again in the Independent Christian Reformed Church, Lynwood, Illinois.

Confessional fellowship of Reformed Churches

On Thursday morning, November 19th the ARC finished its agenda. In the afternoon the *Confessional Fellowship of Reformed Churches (CFRC)* met in the Lynwood church.

The chairman was the Rev. Calvin J. Tuininga who opened the meeting on behalf of the convening Orthodox Reformed Church of St. Catharines, ON. Rev. J.S. Gangar of Wellandport ORC served as clerk.

This was the second meeting of the CFRC. The first one was held in May 1992 in Wellandport, ON. Since considerably more churches (about thirty) were represented now than at that time, Rev. Gangar explained that the CFRC is definitely not in competition with the ARC. It is a fellowship of independent, Reformed churches (at present mostly from Canada), who are all members of the ARC but also want to help each other as churches in matters of mutual concern. They have no constitution but agreed to work together for the mutual benefit on the basis of God's Word and the Three Forms of Unity. They are as yet reluctant to move towards a new and permanent "denominational structure." Instead they are opting for a fellowship of churches which assist each other for this interim to prevent drifting apart. They also need each other's advice in difficult discipline cases and to stimulate and coordinate youth activities. The May 1992 meeting examined Candidate John A. Bouwers for five hours and admitted him to the Ministry of the Word. He now serves as pastor of the Immanuel Orthodox Reformed Church of St. Catharines.

This second meeting had no extensive agenda but was called together to create an opportunity for an open and frank discussion. Although all delegates have much in common having been active members in the CRC, now they are "on their own" as independent churches, and they need each other to discuss their problems in order to prevent fragmentation.

The main topic of discussion was a preliminary report on the topic "*Biblical Principles with Respect to Relationships Between Christian Churches.*" From the discussion it was clear that no one wants to go in an independentistic direction but on the other hand most of the delegates were also scared to enter too soon into some kind of provisional church federation. Especially those who had recently broken with the CRC. They are afraid for a new hierarchy. Some even defended that in spite of all the safeguards built into the Church Order of Dort (no church, or minister, or elder may lord it over another, our Art. 74 C.O.), yet churches which maintain this Church Order always fell again victim to this sin of hierarchy. There were also delegates who were at this moment not in favour of too much structure in order to keep the way open for affiliation with another existing Reformed federation of churches.

Also the relation with the ARC was a point of discussion. Some (e.g. the Rev. Dick Wynia of Calgary) spoke against using the ARC as an ecumenical umbrella for various Reformed churches all keeping their own distinctives. Others (elder Peter Moen) warned that this CFRC may cause division among members of the Alliance. He encouraged the churches to hold on to those CRC congregations within the ARC which are still struggling within the Christian Reformed Church. Rev. Gangar, who clarified and defended the report, denied that the CFRC turns its back to the ARC. He encouraged the churches to maintain their Reformed heritage with a biblical, Reformed church polity. His response to those who wanted to distinguish between "being" and "well-being" of the church: "If a Church Order does belong to the well-being of the church, by all means we should have one! Don't be re-actionary!"

The chairman encouraged the delegates to send further criticism on the report of the study committee to the clerk. The matter of denominational structure, entering into a federation of churches, adopting a Church Order will certainly be discussed again.

Some practical matters were also dealt with:

- Should we not start the publication of a sermon series for "reading services"? Some available series were mentioned (e.g. "Living in the Joy of Faith," by the Rev. Cl. Stam), Rev. W. Leigh (Telkwa) was asked to coordinate the publication of sermons.

- A list of addresses of Young Peoples' groups in each congregation will be published.
- The next meeting of the CFRC will be held in May 1993 in the St. Catharines area.

Conclusion

There was a definite desire to be faithful to the Lord and His Word, both in the meetings of the Alliance as well as in the one of the Confessional Fellowship. When there were differences, they were discussed not in terms of conflict but in a spirit of understanding and harmony. In a newly found unity of faith they all wish to serve the Lord in His church gathering work.

The more the CFRC grows in numbers, (and it most probably will), the more the character of the ARC will continue to change. From the discussions we may conclude that it will probably more and more become a platform where truly Reformed churches of North America will come together to help each other in being faithful to the Lord and the faith He has entrusted to His churches. That is a tremendous task in this present world of false and pseudo-religions. What the ICRC does on an inter-continental level, the ARC may seek to realize on continental level.

Whether the involvement of the Alliance in the Confessional Conference for Unity is such a laudable development, is very debatable. We are not yet convinced that, beside the Creeds which we have, we need contemporary statements of faith with an official ecclesiastical status to fight modern heresies. It will also be very difficult to arrive at a consensus among believers with such different doctrinal backgrounds and histories.

In conclusion we like to raise the question whether our churches, especially those locally involved in discussions with Independent Reformed Churches, should not *consider* the possibility of becoming a member of the Alliance. Are we in the developments which are taking place, doing enough by being observers and as such standing on the sideline? Do we with our history and heritage not have a task to become more directly involved in order to learn from others and to assist others in the good fight of the faith, promoting unity and obedience among the people of God?

J. Mulder
C. Van Dam



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor:

I was very distressed after reading "Once more – the *Book of Praise!*" by G. VanDooren in *Clarion*, Volume 41, No. 22. Before discussing anything else, I will point out a prevalent mistaken notion about the *Psalter* used by the Free Reformed Churches in North America. We do not use the *Psalter Hymnal*. In fact, we do not sing any hymns in the worship services. We sing the same psalms taken from the same Bible as our Canadian Reformed sisters and brothers do.

To prove his point in the article, G. VanDooren emphasizes the Reformation quite extensively. Calvin, one of the "great Reformers," emphasized a threefold function of singing in worship services: (1) a means to glorify God; (2) a means of teaching and instruction; (3) a means of comforting and encouraging God's people. I feel that both the *Genevan Psalter* and the *Psalter* measure up to these standards for singing liturgy.

Furthermore, when Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi, singing praises to God, I think we can quite safely assume that they were not singing Genevan tunes and yet God heard their praise.

When discussing church unity, it would be more appropriate to consider what the Lord tells us to do in His Word out of brotherly love in order to further God's kingdom and to glorify Christ's name. That would be more important than upholding traditions, no matter how good some Reformed traditions may be. Unity will never be found if Christians start demanding others to "drop their hymnals," confess their sin and return to better traditions.

In the Free Reformed Church, the younger people have grown up with the *Psalter* and have learned to love and appreciate the psalms of praise. The melodies speak to them and they have become familiar to them. The "beloved old" country concept does not mean much to them any more. The older Free Reformed members have also learned to appreciate the *Psalter*, even though many of them reminisce often about the

Genevan psalms. This is understandable because it belongs to their upbringing. But they feel they can glorify God with their hearts just as much with the *Psalter* as the *Book of Praise*.

Many more things can be said in regards to this issue but all I really want to ask is for understanding, sensitivity and brotherly love as portrayed in God's Word when trying to move towards unity in Reformed Churches. I am not asking the Canadian Reformed to drop their Psalmbook or saying that we should hang on to our *Psalter* with all our might because the one is better than the other. Let us instead try to build one another up in faith and knowledge and in the grace of God.

Sincerely,
One of the Younger
Free Reformed Members,
Brian Bilkes
Phone: (604) 856-4702

Dear Brian,

Thanks for your letter. I would like to react to it in the following manner.

1. If I have made the impression as though the Free Reformed Churches just took over the *Psalter Hymnal* from the Christian Reformed Church, I apologize. I'm sure I was not wrong in speaking about "an older edition" but I know quite well that "your" churches do not sing all those hymns. Now you say, "we do not sing any hymns in worship services." What about the songs of Mary, Zechariah, Simeon? Did not Paul write the following about "worship services": "addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart?" (Eph. 5:19, see also Col. 3:16, 17)

2. Why are you so "very distressed" when you do the same what I did: say a good word for our Psalm Book? My articles were written in reaction to a superficial and all-too-easy shoving aside of our *Anglo-Genevan Psalter*. You defend your songbook, I define mine, ours.

With Paul I would say: "on equal terms." You defend your way of singing in church; okay. I defend "mine." And then we sit down and talk.

3. But it really is not "on equal terms." The *Book of Praise* represents and preserves a Psalmbook of more than four hundred years old. Its tunes are still sung by Reformed believers all over the world. It took us a quarter of a century to get it across the ocean. The *Genevan Psalter* is not a "Canadian Reformed speciality" or peculiarity. It is the songbook of the Reformed Reformation. I have those 400 years to back me up.

4. The next step (I quote) ". . . that would be more important than upholding traditions, no matter how good some Reformed traditions may be . . ." What more "Reformed traditions" would you be willing to drop? The Genevan Psalms, of course. Also the second service? Or Catechism preaching? Or, maybe, the Church Order . . ."

What is "tradition?" It is, in our Bible, the passing on from the one generation to the next. It is continuity. It is, what your forefathers did: "Secession and Return." You should try to find out how often in the Psalms is spoken "from generation to generation." And in my view upholding the "Reformed tradition" is as important as finding each other under one church-roof before the Lord returns.

5. A final remark. Recently our missionary showed us a video of his work in Irian Jaya. Several adults were baptized in the river, and then . . . ? I could hardly believe my ears: the whole congregation sang (I did not see any musical instruments) – they sang from the top of their voices Psalm 100, – and they – straight from the Stone Age and cannibalism – they sang it on (you know it already! – the Genevan tune!) When I then hear some, coming from a long Reformed "line," that the Genevan tunes are so difficult . . . that we better drop them, – then I say: shame on you!


Brian, if you still hear me, I quote and fully agree with you: "let us try to build one another up in faith and knowledge and in the grace of God."

Yes, indeed, I preached recently about Revelation 2:4,5: “you have abandoned the love you had at first” and in my sermon I pressed upon the hearts of the younger generation that they, all of them, have to take over for themselves,

all the treasures given to previous generations. Because if you “younger people” do not do that, that whole heritage will get lost.

Yours in the Lord,
G. VanDooren

P.S.

I have never dreamed that towards the end of a long life I would have to defend the *Reformed Psalter* to Reformed believers. 

BOOK REVIEW

By C. Van Dam

Calvin's Sermons on 2 Samuel

John Calvin, *Sermons on 2 Samuel. Chapters 1-13*. Trans. D. Kelly. Carlisle, Pa.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1992. (678 pages, \$46.95 U.S.)

With the publication of this first volume of Calvin's sermons on 2 Samuel, we have been considerably enriched by Scriptural, sensitive, and practical sermons on a portion of Scripture that is not often preached on. For the first time, these sermons (which were taken down in French shorthand by scribes) are now available in English. The noteworthiness of this event is underlined when one considers that this is the only exposition on this part of Scripture by Calvin. The translation offered here reads very well and has benefited from more than one revision.

Calvin preached right through 2 Samuel in 87 sermons. The 42 sermons comprising this volume were preached during the week days from May 23 to September 7, 1562, sometimes preaching every day, six week days in a row. On Sundays Calvin generally preached on a New Testament text, although for the second service he sometimes went to the Psalms.

Calvin's sermons were more like running commentaries on the passage in question, interspersed with application, rather than the developing and explication of a central theme. What especially struck me about these sermons were their close adherence to the biblical text, their directness, their focus on

Christ, and their practicalness. Calvin does not waste any words as he approaches the text and gives a simple straightforward exposition. It is remarkable how quickly he then brings the text close to his listeners, to encourage, exhort, and admonish. Calvin's preaching must have gripped the original hearers in a very personal way. One does not have to go far to see some of these features in Calvin's preaching. One encounters them already on the very first pages. It may be good to give this example.

In his sermon on 2 Samuel 2:1-16, Calvin begins by noting David's life was in constant peril and anguish because of Saul. Only if God removed Saul would that change.

Yet when this did happen, David began mourning, and the death of Saul was harder for him to bear than his own death. This is not because of Saul himself, but because of the consequences. For the people of God were so disastrously defeated that it seemed as though the worship of God would be abolished. It is quite certain that the well-being of the Church was more precious to David than his own life. So when it seemed that God wished to give him relief, it was then, in fact, that he became even more distressed. Thus, we can see how God exercised him in all sorts of conditions, which provides an example for us.

Let us remember this at times when the Lord multiplies our sadness. For we may be expecting him to reassure us. Indeed, he may give us the opportunity to feel his grace, and yet at the same time we may have the opposite experience of being angered and frustrated. Since this has already happened to David, we will by no means find it a new experience. So when God does not put an end to our distress and anxieties, we will not complain at all. In fact when he withdraws one perplexity from us, he sends something else on us from which we were desperately fleeing! Thus, our faith and our patience have to be tried in various conditions. Let us humble ourselves to what God knows to be just and expedient. Above all, let us benefit from the example of David, so that we will not be dismayed when we experience what God was doing to him.

Notice how Calvin immediately sets the correct frame of reference for understanding the text by moving from David's predicament to that of the people of God. At the same time Calvin without delay engages the listener. It is noteworthy that in the above illustration, Calvin twice uses the word "example." It is a word occurring quite often in these sermons; but, one should be forewarned, not always with the same meaning. In the present illustration, Calvin uses the term to stress the com-

mon humanity and God we share with David. This is not to suggest an individualistic, exemplaric approach, but it does testify of Calvin's great sensitivity to the fact that believers from widely different ages were part of the same church whom God continues to guide and direct in ways not unheard of before.¹

A clear example of Calvin's Christ-centric focus is his preaching on 2 Samuel 7 (sermons 20-26). This chapter contains magnificent promises of God to David. David is not to build a house for the LORD, but God will give him a house.

Throughout his exposition, Calvin shows the central place of Christ. He is the fulfillment of the promised seed, the Son of God (pp. 325-333) and of the temple (pp. 314, 321-323, 328). We are also involved for in Christ God's people are His temple (p. 328) and in Him we too are children of God (p. 330). This latter point is important for that explains how God can speak of this promised seed and son as committing iniquity and needing chastisement (2 Sam. 7:14-15). This cannot apply to Christ who is without sin, but to us who are members of His body and who have been reconciled to the Father through Christ and received forgiveness (pp. 331-334). God's chastisement which He sends upon the faithful

is paternal. "But in not exempting them from his corrections, he keeps them by these very means in hope of his mercy and of the salvation which he has offered" (p. 335).


Within the confines of this review, let me briefly mention some other points that struck me. In reading these sermons one breathes as it were the atmosphere of persecution and sorrow that the believers in Calvin's day had to contend with; but, one also notices that although we live in outwardly far different circumstances many problems which the church faces are the same today. Calvin in his preaching could address topics like a just war (pp. 36-37, 457-462), the danger of prosperity and materialism (pp. 42-43), sins against the seventh commandment with which the church also struggles (e.g., divorce, pp. 95-96, incest and rape, pp. 615-628), and the use of alcohol (pp. 204, 500-502), to mention some obvious examples.

The place which preaching occupies today is far more limited than it was in Calvin's day. Services at 6 in the morning on weekdays in the summer and at 7 in the morning during the winter are unknown to us. Yet the place of preaching was and remains absolutely crucial for the well-being of the church. By preaching, the Word of the Good

Shepherd is to be brought near to the sheep and applied to the situation of the day. As Calvin described preaching:

The preaching of the gospel is like God descending to earth in order to seek us. We must not abuse this simplicity of the Word of God by disdain it. Rather, we must receive it all the more, recognising that he indeed deigns to transfigure himself, so to speak, that we might approach him (p. 235).

Reading Calvin's sermons, once again reminds one of the awesomeness of the wonderful task of preaching, a task central to Calvin's activities. How privileged ministers of the Word are! They may have the duty to study the Scriptures and administer the Word on Sundays. How privileged Reformed people may be to hear the Word Sunday after Sunday, and to be encouraged and activated to read and study the Word during the week. I sometimes get the uneasy feeling that, generally speaking, the Word may no longer have the large place in the lives of church members during the week that it once did. Reading this volume of sermons may help change that.

¹Cf. further on the use of "example" in Calvin, e.g., M.H. Woudstra, "The Use of 'Example' in Calvin's Sermons on Job," in *Beziel Verband* (1984) 344-351. 

PRESS RELEASE

Classis Ontario-South, December 9, 1992, Hamilton, Ontario

Opening

On behalf of the convening church of Laurel, Rev. B.R. Hofford calls the meeting to order. From Scripture he reads Ezekiel 36:16-32. He requests the delegates to sing Ps. 85:1, 3. In prayer a blessing is asked over the meeting.

Credentials and Constitution

The credentials are examined and found to be in good order. It is reported that all the churches are duly represented and that the Deputies ad Art. 46 C.O. are present as well. Classis is declared constituted. The moderamen is as follows: Rev. B.R. Hofford, chairman;

Rev. J. De Gelder, clerk; Rev. D.G.J. Agema, vice-chairman.

The chairman reads the Form of Subscription and requests Rev. G. Wieske to sign this form.

Agenda

The agenda is adopted.

Examination of Rev. H.M. Van Essen

An attestation from the church at Ancaster is received with thankfulness. Rev. Van Essen presents his sermon proposal on Genesis 3:1-7. In closed session the proposal is discussed. Classis judges that there are no objections to continue to examination. The deputies of regional synod concur with this. Rev. Van Essen is examined in Exegesis

O.T., Exegesis N.T., Doctrine of Holy Scripture, Church History, Diaconology, Church Polity, Knowledge of Holy Scripture and Ethics.

In closed session the exam is discussed and judged to be sufficient. Classis, with the concurring advice of Deputies of Regional Synod, decides to declare Rev. H.M. Van Essen eligible for call within the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Classis further decides to confirm the decision of Classis Ontario-South of Sept. 23/24, 1992: "to take note of and to accept with thankfulness that Rev. Van Essen has been faithful to his call according to his declaration as a minister." Considering his prior ordination and seeing that his present situation is temporary, classis decides to grant Rev.

Van Essen the right to preach the Word and to administer the sacraments for the period of one year. The financial support due to a minister of the Word, however, will be granted only upon installation in a particular congregation.

Classis asks Rev. Van Essen to express his agreement with the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the Three Forms of Unity and to promise not to teach anything which conflicts with this doctrine. Classis also decides to provide Rev. Van Essen with a Declaration of Eligibility, which may serve as the required declaration in the line of Art. 5B and 9 C.O.

The chairman congratulates Rev. and Mrs. Van Essen and expresses the hope that the Lord will open the way for Rev. Van Essen to serve within the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Question period ad Art. 44 C.O.

The chairman asks the required questions. The church at Laurel asks for advice. Advice is given.

Correspondence

The consistory of the church at Rockway sent a letter with a proposal re-

garding the Fund for Needy Churches. Classis decides not to accept this proposal.

A letter from the church at London regarding the Acts of the previous classis is dealt with.

Appointments

Convening church for next classis: Lincoln. Place of meeting: Lincoln. Date: March 10, 1993. Proposed moderators: Rev. T. Hoogsteen - chairman; Rev. B.R. Hofford - clerk; Rev. J. De Gelder - vice chairman.

Question Period

A question is asked regarding the cancellation of Regional Synod East 1992.

Censure ad Article 44 C.O.

The chairman judges that Censure ad Art. 44 is not necessary.

Seeing that this classis might be the last at which Rev. R. Sietsma will be present the chairman addresses him with fitting words. He expresses the wish that Rev. Sietsma may soon be able to take up his task as missionary in Brazil.



CALLED to Ancaster, ON and Brampton, ON

Rev. H.M. Van Essen
of Hamilton, ON

DECLINED to Abbotsford, BC
Rev. C. Bouwman
of Byford, W.Australia

Acts and Press Release

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

Closing

The chairman requests classis to sing Ps. 87: 1, 2, 4 and leads in prayer of thanksgiving. Classis is closed.

D.G.J. Agema, vice-chairman e.t.



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

Quite a few Busy Beavers told me they have a new baby in their family.

They are proud!

They are happy!

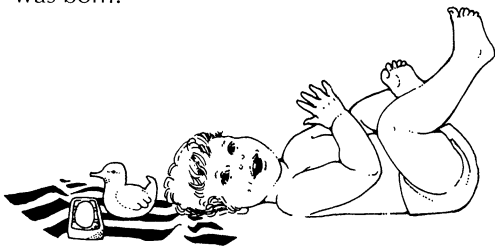
They love the babies' smiles.

What a precious gift to the family from our heavenly Father!

The BIG brothers and sisters are a gift to the baby, too!

Read about that in Busy Beaver *Julie Bratcher's* poem.

Julie told me she wrote the poem when her little sister was born.



AMY

Amy! Amy! Little child.

When you were born we nearly went wild.

Your short dark hair and cute pink cheeks

Will be remembered for more than weeks.

Everyone loves you and I will say

"I will love you" every day.

8.5 was your weight at birth.

When you were born we filled with mirth.

Your hands and feet were so small.

Next to you I felt so tall.

When you are 9 I'll be 18.

There's quite a difference in between.

You're not even 1 day old,

But when you're older you'll be told,

"Always remember the great love

From the heavenly Father above."

I was disappointed when my youngest brother was born.
 I was disappointed he wasn't a sister for me.
 But when he learned to "coo" and "talk"
 I forgot about the sister.
 I just loved him.
 He was so sweet.
 And I still love him!
 He's a great brother!

Do you have a new baby at your house? Would you like to share a favourite story about a new baby brother or sister?

We would love to hear from you! Please write to:

Our New Baby
 c/o Aunt Betty
 Premier Printing Ltd.
 One Beghin Avenue
 Winnipeg, MB
 R2J 3X5



FEBRUARY

BIRTHDAY WISHES

You have a February birthday?
 All the Busy Beavers join in wishing you a very happy day and the Lord's blessing in the year ahead.

We hope you have one excellent day celebrating with your family and friends!

Sarah Nobel	1	Dennis Van Oene	14
Jaclyn Dehaas	2	Francine Van Woudenberg	16
Thelma Blom	2	Tanya Dehaas	20
Michael Breukelman	3	Jason Vande Burgt	21
Crystal De Jong	3	Nelena Bergsma	23
Charla Meyer	3	Cara Faber	24
Miranda Krabbendam	4	Tim Linde	25
Melissa Hovius	5	Heather Leyenhorst	27
Sophie-Ann Ravensbergen	6	Anya Malda	27
Tony Bikker	7	Marjorie Vanderwoerd	28

Quiz Time!

NAMES AND SIGNS

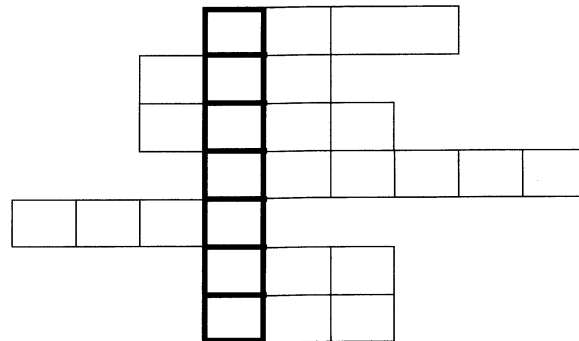
from Busy Beaver *Cheryl Van Andel*

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. _____ Ten Commandments | a. Noah |
| 2. _____ Multi-coloured coat | b. Solomon |
| 3. _____ Rainbow | c. John the Baptist |
| 4. _____ Whale | d. Jonah |
| 5. _____ Sycamore tree | e. Jonathan |
| 6. _____ Wisdom | f. Judas |
| 7. _____ Sling | g. Gideon |
| 8. _____ Harvest field | h. Daniel |
| 9. _____ 30 pieces of silver | i. Elijah |
| 10. _____ Lion's den | j. David |
| 11. _____ Purple cloth | k. Lydia |
| 12. _____ Locusts and wild honey | l. Moses |
| 13. _____ Bow and arrow | m. Jehu |
| 14. _____ Fleece | n. Rahab |
| 15. _____ Ravens | o. Zaccheus |
| 16. _____ Beautiful hair | p. Lot's wife |
| 17. _____ Racing chariot | q. Aaron |
| 18. _____ A scarlet cord | r. Ruth |
| 19. _____ Pillar of salt | s. Absalom |
| 20. _____ Golden calf | t. Joseph |
| 21. _____ Stolen birthright | u. Wise-men |
| 22. _____ Patience | v. the Lord Jesus |
| 23. _____ Bearing gifts | w. Paul |
| 24. _____ Shipwreck | x. Jacob |
| 25. _____ Crown of thorns | y. Job |

(See answers)

FIND THE CODE IN THE BOXES

by Busy Beaver *Melissa Deboersap*



1. I growl. Who am I?
2. I buzz. Who am I?
3. I am a season that drops leaves.
4. I can go loud and soft.
5. I have _____ than you.
6. I can _____ faster.
7. The Lord Jesus does not _____.

The Code says _____.
 (See answers)



BUILD A SCORE

by Busy Beaver *Jeremy Koopmans*

Jeremy writes:

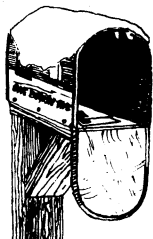
"You have to try to get a lot of points by using letters worth higher points. As you see, the letters are worth points. You have to make words with these letters. For example, for #1 you could fill in "black," which is worth 27 points, not 28 because the "B" was already on the chart. Do you understand? If not write to my address:

Box 1263
Houston, BC
V0J 1Z0

10 = L, O	6 = R, I	3 = V, J
9 = W, D	5 = C, F	2 = E, T
8 = H, K	4 = S, A	1 = B, G
7 = Q, U		

I hope you enjoy this new puzzle.

1.	B				
2.		U			
3.			I		
4.				L	
5.					D
6.					S
7.				C	
8.			O		
9.		R			
10.	E				



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Richelle Kruisselbrink*. We are happy to have you joining us. Thank you for the puzzle and the picture, too. I'm looking forward to hearing from you again, *Richelle*.

Welcome to the Club *Rebecca Kruisselbrink*. The more, the merrier! We hope you'll really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Have you taught your dog not to jump up on you? Bye for now, *Rebecca*.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Melissa Deboersap*. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already sharing your recipe and a puzzle! What activities do you enjoy besides puzzling, *Melissa*?

And a big welcome to you, too, *Tim Linde*. I see you enjoy sports. So where do you play hockey, *Tim*? Thank you for the puzzle!

Hello, *Julie Bratcher*. It was nice to hear from you again! Congratulations on your new sister. Do you enjoy helping to look after her, *Julie*?

Thank you for an interesting puzzle, *Jeremy Koopmans*, and also for the riddle questions. I see you have been very busy! What did you enjoy most during your Christmas holidays, *Jeremy*?

You are a good puzzler, *Cheryl Van Anandel*. Keep up the good work! And thank you for sharing. Write again soon, *Cheryl*.

Hello, *Cecilia Barendregt*. I see you mean to keep the Busy Beavers busy, too! Are you enjoying winter, *Cecilia*? Do you have a lot of snow?

How did you enjoy your birthday, *Pauline Boeve*? You are lucky to have a new baby sister, congratulations! I see

you keep very busy writing letters, *Pauline*. Keep up the good work!

How did your Christmas assembly go, *Jessica Dehaas*? I think you enjoyed playing the drum most of all, am I right? Did you have a good holiday, *Jessica*? Bye for now.

Hello, *Heather Muis*. I see you enjoy puzzling, too! It was good to hear from you again, and I think you will enjoy today's puzzles, too. Bye for now, *Heather*.

I hope you find a pen pal, *Andrew Bos*. In *Clarions* No. 19 and No. 24 of last year are the names of other Busy Beavers who are looking for pen pals. Lots of success, *Andrew*! And thank you very much for your drink recipe.

Hello, *Jessica Bos*. It was nice to hear from you again. I think you sent in a great recipe for the Busy Beavers to enjoy. Bye for now.

I see you were busy making up a puzzle to share with us, *Jason Linde*. I hope you will enjoy the ones the other Busy Beavers are sharing today, *Jason*. Write again soon.

You are a good puzzler, *Christa Jansen*. Keep up the good work! And thank you for sharing! What was your best day of the Christmas holidays, *Christa*?

Answers

Code in Boxes: Code: Beavers
1. bear 2. bee. 3. fall 4. volume 5. more 6. run 7. sin

Names and Signs:
1. l. 2. t. 3. a. 4. d. 5. o. 6. b. 7. j. 8. r. 9. f. 10. h. 11. k. 12. c. 13. e. 14. g. 15. i. 16. s. 17. m. 18. n. 19. p. 20. q. 21. x. 22. y. 23. u. 24. w. 25. v.

My score on *Jeremy Koopmans' Build a Score* was 245! Can you beat that?

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty

