

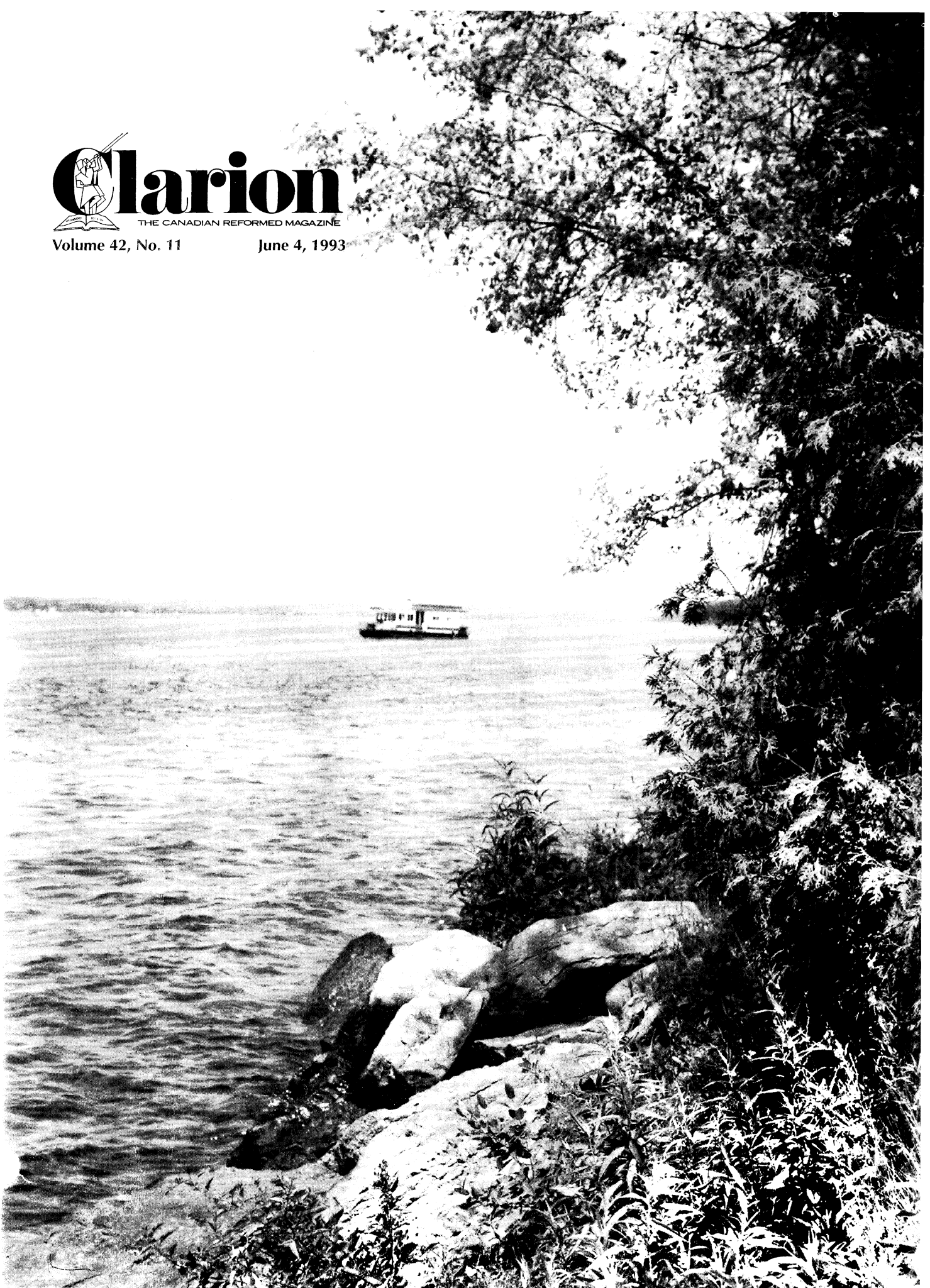


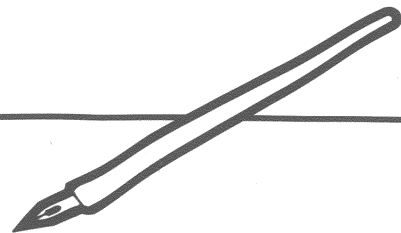
Clarion

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Living Together Before Marriage, and Discipline

The situation

Sometimes I hear that consistories these days are finding it difficult to use discipline in the case of young people – one or both of whom are members of the church – who live together as husband and wife. There was a report without any accompanying critical remarks in *Nederlands Dagblad*, May 7, 1993, about a speech by a minister in the Netherlands Reformed Churches (Nederlands Gereformeerde Kerken; formerly, outside the federation) held on a “Day of Contact” for the women in these churches. Dealing with this problem, this minister gave the following picture of the present situation, according to this report:

Up to the first half of the sixties it was just normal that sexual intercourse and marriage belonged together. Today living together is generally accepted. Before it was so that marriage was possible only when the man could support a family. Today, with the means for birth control, this is no longer a problem. Also young Christians have almost fully accepted these means and often no longer even think about the pros and cons. To live together or not, is no longer a question in our society.

The situation in the Netherlands is such that the government views living together legally the same as being married. For many, to marry is no longer acceptable, while for a living together simply a contract is made up. Often it is still so that a couple living together intends to marry officially later, but has a number of reasons not to do so yet.

The question is, when living together is recognized by the government as a legal relationship and is accepted by the society you live in, what should consistories do?

The advice given in the speech was: “We should approach this situation in a different way than was done twenty years ago. We should not deal with this problem in the sphere of discipline but with a pastoral motive.” The basis for this advice is:

If the government makes living together similar to marriage, the church must have the possibility to solemnize this living together in an ecclesiastical ceremony. We should have this possibility in order to prevent greater evil. People must be approachable on the basis of faithfulness to each other and of the Word of God. This (situation) is a challenge for the church to find ways and structures which give direction to our society.

As on other points, the Netherlands is ahead of Canada in legalizing new morals. Times – that is, customs – change. In this situation the advice given is: make the best of the situ-

ation by treating living together as being of the same binding force as an official marriage relationship. Educate people who live together in such a way that they accept their relationship as binding just as a marriage covenant would be binding in the light of God’s Word. The church, however, should not follow the government in legalizing living together.

The picture of Scripture

The scriptural basis for all speaking about human sexual relationships is Gen. 2:24. Christ maintains this basis in Matt. 19:5 and so does Paul in Eph. 5:31. A man shall leave his parents and cleave to his wife; and those two shall be one flesh. When it says here “cleave to his wife,” we can say that this implies a cleaving not to any woman but to that woman who has become “his wife.” In the Bible this becoming the wife of someone happens in an official wedding ceremony. The Old and the New Testament give us the same picture. As examples I can mention the manner in which Jacob receives Leah and Rachel as wives, and the fact that there was a wedding feast which the Lord Jesus Christ attended in Cana. Speaking about the revealed will of God, we can only say that a sexual relationship is legal only in the framework of marriage.

Therefore, what Shechem did to Dinah (Gen. 34), first defiling her and then falling in love and seeking her as his wife, is called a “folly in Israel” which “ought not to be done” (Gen. 34:7). The same we read in 2 Sam. 13 where Amnon, a son of David, wants to lie with his stepsister Tamar. She tells him not to do so, “for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this wanton folly.” And she advises Amnon “to speak to the king, for he will not withhold me from you” (2 Sam. 13:12-13). These last words mean; he is willing to give me to you in marriage in the normal way, that is, via a wedding ceremony. These stories from Genesis and Samuel confirm that sexual intercourse and marriage belong together.

Discipline or pastoral guidance

How should a consistory deal with this problem? First of all, we have to ask: what is the cause of this phenomenon of people living together outside of an official marriage relationship? In the second place, it is very important to see what the effect of this lifestyle will be in the church.

The cause of this lifestyle is evidently the new morality of these post-Christian times in which God’s commandments are

eplaced by modern man's own insights. This lifestyle is the consequence of the secularization process. Clearly, it has become the lifestyle of the world as opposed to that of the church which holds on to God's Word. Therefore, when this living together creeps into the church, it is a worldly lifestyle that enters the church. Further, marriage, in the Bible, is a stable, legal relationship that is not to be broken. Living together without marriage undermines, and even denies, the character of the relationship as being indissoluble. There is, therefore, no other way than to conclude that living together is in conflict with what God has revealed as His will with regard to the sexual relation between a man and a woman (a man and *his* wife). In other words, living together without a legal marriage is living in sin, according to God's Word.

What will be the effect when such a lifestyle becomes common and is also accepted in the church? The church will take over the secular style of the world. In doing so, the church will not maintain the antithesis between God's Word and the philosophy of the world, between faith and unbelief, between obedience and disobedience. The result

is that the church will no longer be the light of Christ for the world. The church will have no message for the world anymore, because it cannot call the world to repentance from sin, living in sin itself.

Conclusion

Our conclusion is obvious. The church must maintain the truth of God's Word. It is called to be the pillar and bulwark of the truth. Therefore, the church has to continue to maintain that living together without marriage is living in sin. If there is no repentance from this sin in humble conversion to God, consistories have to apply discipline. The manner in which this is to be applied may differ from case to case, but this must be the principle. Only when consistories apply discipline when there is no amendment of life, will they show true pastoral care for the sheep of the flock. At stake are the holiness of the Name of our God, our Creator and our Redeemer from sin, and the holiness of His people, His church, as well as the repentance and salvation of those living in sin. **C**

Developments in Redemptive-Historical Preaching

By J. De Jong

Text of a speech held at the Canadian Reformed Church at Carman on Saturday, March 6, 1993. Only slight alterations have been made. Notes have been added for the benefit of readers who wish to pursue the material somewhat further.

I have been asked to speak briefly on redemptive-historical preaching, specifically in regard to the more recent discussion on this topic as raised by Prof. C. Trimp in the Netherlands. I then thought it would be helpful to pay some attention to the overall development in Prof. Trimp's work, seeing he has recently retired from duty at the Theological University in Holland. You may then take this short speech in part as a token of respect and appreciation for the work of this stimulating scholar, who in all his work has shown himself to be the true model of the *poimen*, the shepherd who cares for the sheep.

What is redemptive-historical preaching?

I am conscious of the fact that the redemptive-historical method is one

which is increasingly falling out of favour today, and that we have a younger generation that hardly realizes what it is about. This is very unfortunate, because it means that there is a larger group of people in the pew who have little idea of what preachers are trying to do with the so-called historical texts of Scripture. And if the method is not understood, the sermons will be that much more ineffective for the listener. People will be more apt to lose the train of thought if they have no idea about the principles operative in the craft of building the sermon.

Allow me then to review briefly what the essential principles of this method are all about. I concentrate on the development as spearheaded by K. Schilder, and expanded by B. Holwerda and M.B. Van 't Veer.

The context

The central rule of this method is that a historical text must be preached in the framework of its historical context. This method is generally contrasted with the exemplaric method, in which Old Testament events or personalities were

taken out of their contexts and used as examples for moral behaviour today. It is also contrasted with the method of artificial typology, which sees in every Old Testament figure a type of Christ. Thus, for example, as Potiphar left everything to Joseph's charge, so we are to leave everything to the charge of Jesus, his great antitype. In all these methods, the figure or event is taken out of its context, and then made to serve as a model for the believer today.

Redemptive-historical preaching leaves the characters of a narrative in their context. Its fundamental principle is that the narratives of Scripture record the mighty acts of God in His dealings with His people and with the nations of the world. These are acts of salvation for His people, and acts of judgment for all who oppose His salvation work for His people. In the progression of the narratives we meet the unfolding drama of the way of God with His covenant people.

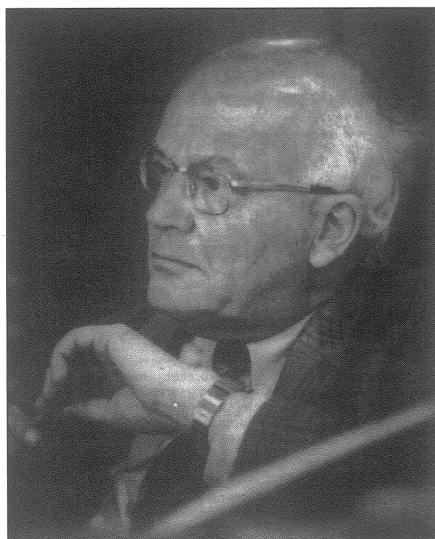
The purpose

With any passage in the Old Testament or the gospels, the fundamental

purpose or thrust of the account must be uncovered. This must always be seen in relation to Christ. In other words, the text must be placed not only in its immediate context, but also in the wider context of the whole history of redemption. The key thought in the old covenant is: the struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent, Gen. 3:15. This struggle has a universal character and governs all of redemptive history. Essentially history is determined by three all-pervasive court cases: the fall into sin, the judgment on the cross, and the final judgment at the last day.

The events

Redemptive-historical preaching stresses the requirement of preaching the *magnalia dei*, the mighty acts of



Prof. Dr. C. Trimp

God. M.B. Van 't Veer in particular stressed this point in his article on this method.¹ We cannot use the Old Testament as one big allegory, or as a book of signs or metaphors. We are to see it as the unfolding of the revelation of salvation history of God. The history of revelation is to be distinguished from the history of salvation. Yet in both cases we are dealing with factual material, and actual events. Thus, one must construct a sermon with the time line in mind. The overarching question is: how does God come, through the events described in the text, to the fulfilment of His work in Jesus Christ? The preacher need not leave his text to come to Christ, but should focus on what God is doing in the Son at any given specific historical point.

Trimp's "Resumption"

In the winter of 1986 Prof. Trimp gave a series of lectures on redemptive-historical preaching. These lectures attracted a good number of students, and I remember that they were the subject of much discussion at the time. The results of these lectures were published in a booklet called: *Salvation History and Preaching. The Resumption of an Incomplete Discussion*.² In the title, Trimp alludes to the fact that the discussion between the proponents of the exemplaric method of preaching and the redemptive-historical method was never really completed. As S. Greidanus pointed out, the problems surrounding the conflict on baptism and regeneration took the center stage, and after the Liberation the proponents of the different methods found themselves in different ecclesiastical camps as well.³

What are some of the salient features of the contribution of Prof. Trimp on this method? Let us look at a brief survey of the points he raises.

The Scriptures as narrative

One of the elements that received little or no attention among the first proponents of the redemptive-historical method is the narrative character of Scripture. This is understandable, since it was only in more recent times that hermeneutics and biblical studies have given attention to this aspect of the Scriptures. In the light of this new research, Trimp suggests that all the emphasis of the redemptive-historical method on the linear or historical line to Christ is overexposed. The biblical accounts are primarily to be seen as multi-layered dioramic pictures, which look at events from various points of view. Hence the specific dimension of *narrative* must be reflected in the sermon. The preacher must ask questions like: why was this written in this particular way? What are the key elements in the content and structure of the account? He must also pay attention to key structural features of narrative and their significance in comparison with parallel or related narratives.⁴

Fellowship

The overexposure on the idea of linear progression led in Prof. Trimp's view to an underexposure of the idea of fellowship (omgang) in the redemptive-historical school. His point is that the progression serves the fellowship, rather than the other way around! For

example, in a sermon on Abraham, often all emphasis fell on Abraham's role with respect to the coming of Christ. But then the concept of friendship with respect to God's relationship with Abraham fell into the background. Yet these are elements which must be highlighted, because they show the style of the God of the covenant in His relationship with His people.

Example

Trimp also disagrees with the complete rejection of the idea of example which characterized the approach of the early redemptive-historical school. Prof. B. Holwerda maintained that the term "exemplum" had no historical connotations whatever.⁵ Trimp maintains that the historical dimension is not necessarily lacking in this term. In op-



Prof. B. Holwerda

position to all "psychologizing" on Old Testament figures, Holwerda maintained a sharp distinction between the *ordo salutis* (order of salvation) and the *historia salutis* (history of salvation). In other words, one ought not to use all kinds of Old Testament figures to describe the Spirit's way of working faith and regeneration in the hearts of God's children. Here Trimp prefers not to apply such a sharp distinction, and is willing to allow for some discussion of the Spirit's work in the believers of the old covenant, as long as the historical context is respected.

Sound and Echo

In 1989, Dr. Trimp published the book *Sound and Echo. Through Preaching to Faith Experience*, in

which he continued on the course he established in 1987.⁶ It became clear that the element of "omgang" or "fellowship" began to receive increasing attention in his work. In this book, Trimp reaches back into the history of preaching in the Dutch churches to analyze the development of the relation between preaching and faith. He notes that during the time of the Secession two kinds of sermons were distinguished: subjective and objective. The former kind was praised, the latter frowned upon. The Liberation of 1944 was essentially a confrontation with the tradition of the Secession and the so-called Second Reformation in Holland ("Nadere Reformatie"). In opposition to the subjectivism dominant in this period, the Liberation led to a new emphasis on God's covenant and its promises in the preaching. In His covenant Word, God opens His heart to us. Trimp says that the true covenantal preaching liberates our "feeling life" so that it becomes fully involved in the service of God. The capacity of our feeling life will always remain imperfect in this life. Yet, experience cannot be ruled out as a dimension of faith. Experience is a daughter of faith, the result of an obedient listening to Scripture.

In his historical study, Trimp shows how the Reformers, in particular Calvin and Luther, saw the preaching of the Word of God as the presence and active working of the living God. The good news of the Scriptures must be laid on the hearts of the congregation. The period of Reformed *scholasticism* saw the emphasis shift away from the living covenant relationship to a mechanical model. Instead of representing a living voice, God's revelation becomes a dead letter, a cold, methodical set of concepts. Faith becomes one of the virtues that human nature must acquire. Preaching becomes a scholastic treatise, a summary of mechanical steps necessary to acquiring the state of grace.

The period of the second reformation ("Nadere Reformatie") makes a swing to the opposite extreme, and centralizes the experiential aspect in the preaching. This led to a style of preaching called: *differentialized preaching* ("onderscheidelijke prediking"). Distinctions were made in the congregation between the doubting, the saved, the mature, the unrepentant, and so on. Inordinate attention

was given to the actual experience of the characteristics of conversion in one's soul. Ultimately, the preaching acquired a strong experiential and man-centered focus.


Trimp then examines the character of normative, covenantal preaching. He begins with an analysis of the Reformers' use of the word "promise." He states that this term was not taken as a pledge that God will do something in the future, but as God's speaking in the present. This is how it ought to be understood today as well.⁷ God proclaims a good tidings by which we are all acquitted *today* through faith. God gives His grace not in substantial categories (Rome), but in His word of power. Trimp then disputes the thesis that true covenantal preaching posits an exact balance between promise and demand in the covenant. If one would follow such an approach, he enters into the waters of a cold objectivism. Trimp intimates that some of the preaching (and/or writing) in the Liberated churches may have leaned in this direction. Promise and demand is presented as a factual "balance sheet," with the congregation left to decide for themselves where they fit in on the sheet. For

Trimp, the demand in the covenant can only be fulfilled in the way of appropriation of the promise. In other words, the demand is part of the promise. The promise must then be preached with this dimension of grace in mind.

All this has led Dr. Trimp to a deeper reflection on the relationship between preaching and faith. Preaching is the vehicle by which the eternal things are applied to our lives. We cannot but respond to the preaching. It quickens our resistance, but also activates our faith, and believing acceptance. It drives us to overcome the resistance to the Word which lives in our sinful hearts, and leads us to the "echo" – the communal, unified song of praise and thanksgiving to the redemptive work of God.⁸

An assessment

The above sketch is only a brief survey of Trimp's position. Yet I hope it is clear that in all this Trimp has charted a new course, and in this course he has followed a very careful, but also deliberate strategy. He wants to recover the *emotive* element in the homiletical field of vision, without falling into subjectivism. At the same time, he wants



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IN THIS ISSUE

Editorial — Living Together
 Before Marriage, and
 Discipline
 — J. Geertsema246

Development in
 Redemptive-Historical
 Preaching
 — J. De Jong247

Remember Your Creator
 — Christian — G.Ph. van Popta ...251

Ray of Sunshine
 — Mrs. R. Ravensbergen252

Press Review —
 Opportunities for the
 Reformed Faith in
 Eastern Europe — C. Van Dam ...253

Church News254

Ancaster Welcomes a
 New Pastor
 — Bill Dejong255

Our Little Magazine
 — Aunt Betty256

to use this specifically scientific aim in service of the more practical aim of reevaluating and reassessing the relationship with the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken. What should one say about this development?

In this sense I do not think that Trimp has succeeded in "resuming" an incomplete discussion. Rather, he has started a new one. In this round of discussions his partners are not people from the synodical camp, but from the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken." This only stands to reason, since I think that the aim to restart an older discussion was not sufficiently cognizant of the historical time gap between the forties, and the climate today. Representatives of the exemplaric school as they existed in the forties and fifties are hard to find in the synodical churches today. There doctrinal deterioration has led to a new radicalism in the preaching which is totally estranged from the debate of the thirties and forties.

With respect to the direction taken, I think Prof. Trimp gives us some essential contributions to the view of preaching which can assist us in improving its practice today. Specifically his concern not to ignore the element of the people's participation in the salvation acts of God is a new dimension which certainly was not always sufficiently considered by all the first proponents of the redemptive-historical method. On the other hand, it should be stressed that Holwerda warned against the introduction of false dilemmas, including a false dilemma between subjective and objective preaching, as well as between the Word and the Spirit.⁹ Thus, while there may have been some one-sided emphases in the redemptive-historical method as first propounded, there was not a deliberate failure to include the aspect of faith and its experience in the approach that was taken.

I believe that we must adhere to the fundamental principles of the redemptive-historical method as outlined by its first proponents. Dr. M.B. Van 't Veer said that there could be no synthesis between the two approaches, and I believe that he was right. This does not mean that we should neglect the role of example in the preaching. But its role will always be qualified by the essential redemptive-historical approach to the text.

What about the recovery of the emotive element in the preaching? This is partly a function of the gifts and character of the preacher. Yet, the Word must be laid on the hearts of the congregation! The preacher must do his utmost to ensure that the Word strikes to the heart of the listeners. Therefore the emotive element in any given Old Testament narrative can serve as a comparative or analogical point of reference to deal with the same aspects of the relationship between God and the believer today. But then historical differences must always be duly accounted for. I see this as most far-reaching development in Trimp, which certainly asks for further reflection and consideration.

Particular caution must be exercised with respect to passing moral judgments on Old Testament figures. Often the sacred writer himself makes a judgment, so providing clear lines for the preacher. But in many cases, the question as to whether a specific course of action was right or wrong is not easy to determine, and even if it is discernable, it is not the central idea in the passage. A more important theme to my mind is that despite the many weaknesses and shortcomings in the actions of the saints, the LORD God still uses these actions to accomplish His salvation purpose.

The proper approach to preaching historical texts provides a continual challenge to the preacher. We certainly can be grateful for the unique contribution of Prof. Trimp to this important topic. Our hope is that the contribution he has made will also serve to enhance this method of preaching for years to come. It is also to be hoped that the method of redemptive-historical preaching is continually revised and developed to improve the preaching on the historical passages of Holy Scripture.

What about the discussion with the "Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken"? This is indeed a positive note in Trimp's work. This discussion is most necessary! We all need to take a closer look at the true character of the "experiential moment" in the preaching, without falling into the waters of a man-centered subjectivism! In the Netherlands there are certainly some positive tokens of real headway being made in this area. That is an example for us to follow in discussions with the Free Reformed Churches!

All this points to the fact that we are far from finished in the task of re-

flecting upon and improving the art of preaching – in general, and on Old Testament historical passages in particular. May the Lord grant that preachers apply themselves to this task with ever new zeal and vigour, that the Scriptures may be fully exploited according to their essential purpose – for proclamation of God's mighty deeds!

¹This article has been translated into English. See M.B. Van 't Veer, "Christological Preaching on Historical Material of the Old Testament," mimeo, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Orange City, Iowa 51041. The article was first published in R. Schippers (ed.), *Van den dienst des Woords. Een boek over de prediking naar Gereformeerde belijdenis*, Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1944, pp. 117-167.

²The actual Dutch title is *Heilsgeschiedenis en prediking. Hervatting van een onvoltooid gesprek* (Van den Berg, Kampen, 1987).

³Prof. Trimp here refers to the survey text on the redemptive-historical method: S. Greidanus, *Sola Scriptura, Problems and Principles in Preaching Historical Texts*, Wedge Publishing, Toronto, 1971, p. 51.


⁴This is not to say that Dr. Trimp follows in any way the modern trend called "narrative homiletics." It is not the place here to outline this new trend. Suffice it to say that it is based on a false dilemma between "history" and "story." Trimp himself gives an excellent survey of this new homiletics, see his article "Narratieve homiletiek?" in J. Van Genderen, et. al., (eds.) *Ten dienste van het Woord. Opstellen aangeboden aan prof. dr. W.H. Velema*, Kok, Kampen, 1991, pp. 180-195.

⁵See B. Holwerda, "The History of Redemption in the Preaching of the Gospel" mimeo, Mid-America Reformed Seminary, Orange City, Iowa, 51041, p. 7. This is a translation of the article which first appeared in *Gereformeed Theologisch Tijdschrift*, 1942, and later was incorporated in the collection of articles entitled "...Begonnen hebbende van Mozes...", 2nd ed. Van den Berg, Kampen, 1974, pp. 79-118.

⁶The Dutch title of the book is *Klank en weerklank. Door prediking tot geloofservaring*, (De Vuurbaak, Barneveld, 1989).

⁷Trimp makes this point in a part of his book which has been translated into English. See C. Trimp, "The Promise of the Covenant: Some Observations" in R. Faber (ed.) *Unity in Diversity. Studies Presented to Prof. Dr. Jelle Faber on the Occasion of his Retirement*, Premier Printing, Winnipeg, 1989, pp. 71-78.

⁸See here C. Trimp, "God brengt de mens ter sprake," in A.G. Knevel, *Bevindelijke Prediking*, (Kok, Kampen, 1989) and *idem*, "De mens in de prediking" *Almanak FQI*, (Zalsman, Kampen, 1989).

⁹See his article "Evenwichtconstructies met betrekking tot de prediking" in *Populair wetenschappelijk bijdragen* (Oosterbaan & Le Cointre, Goes, 1962), pp. 1-33. 

REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Christian

In this column I have been writing a few things about the various names which the book of Acts uses to describe those who believe in and who follow the Lord Jesus Christ. One such name is "Christian." This is now the most common name for believers. Very likely, you would use this name sooner than any other, such as Believer, Disciple, Saint, or Follower of the Way, to describe who you are and what you believe. However, this name gained prominence gradually.

According to Acts 11:26 the name was first used in Antioch. It says there: "... in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians." This name was coined to describe those who believed in Christ, who baptized in His name, and who followed Him. Luke wrote that they *were called* Christians. Others called them by that name. The disciples did not invent this name. The pagans of Antioch devised it to describe what they saw as a new Jewish sect.

Besides Acts 26:28, the only other biblical occurrence of the name is in 1 Peter 4:16. Peter wrote to encourage persecuted believers. He told them to rejoice in the midst of persecution because they were sharing Christ's sufferings. Their persecutors were reproaching them because of the name of Christ. Peter told them that there was no shame in suffering as a Christian. Those who suffer under that name are blessed. They will share in the glory of Christ.

Three Roman writers, Tacitus, Suetonius and Pliny, all writing in the early 100s, used the title. In every instance they spoke of "Christians" within the context of persecution. Tacitus and Suetonius wrote about how the Christians became Nero's scapegoats when he blamed them for the great fire that destroyed the city and savagely persecuted them. Pliny, a Roman officer, wrote about how he repressed the Christians in Bythina.

The name Christian became the one for which followers of Jesus Christ

were persecuted. As a result, in the second century "I am a Christian" became the triumphant confession of many martyrs.* This title, coined by unbelievers, used by those who persecuted believers as a name by which to deride and sneer at those who followed Jesus Christ, was taken over by those who belonged to Christ as a title of honour. The confession "I am a Christian" allowed one to share in the sufferings of Christ. It allowed one to suffer for the sake of Christ. It meant that you would share in the glory of Christ.

Our "Form for the Public Profession of Faith" makes a wonderful connection between professing faith in Christ, suffering and glory. Immediately after the candidates profess their faith the minister reads 1 Peter 5:10:

After you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself restore, establish, and strengthen you.

The Bible (1 Peter 4:12-16) makes a clear connection between the name Christian and suffering for the sake of Christ. History shows that the link exists. Our "Form for the Public Profession of Faith" understands that the relationship is there.

Who is a Christian? A Christian is one who confesses Christ as Lord and accepts all the implications and consequences of that confession, to the point of death.

Our confessions echo this. In Lord's Day 12 we confess that we are called Christians because we reflect the three-fold office of Christ of prophet, priest and king. We share in the anointing of Christ. As God anointed Him into an office, so we too are anointed as officebearers. The *Catechism* is very observant here. Jesus Christ suffered in His office. He died on the cross not as a tragic victim of a vicious plot but because of His office. He died as the great Prophet of God who spoke the Word of God but whom

the people rejected. He died as the great High Priest who brought the perfect sacrifice. He died as the great, although rejected, King of Israel. We, as members of Christ by faith, as those who share in the anointing of Christ, must reflect His offices. As prophets we must confess His Name even in the face of hostility. As priests we must sacrifice ourselves to Him. As kings we must fight against sin and the devil, the great persecutor.

Christ suffered because of His office. We must be willing to suffer in and because of the office of Christian.

Article 29 of the *Confession* describes the marks of Christians. It speaks of a whole-hearted, unqualified devotion to Jesus Christ. Christians bear the yoke of Christ even when the false church persecutes them.

There are two wrong uses of the word Christian which are worth mentioning. First, there have been those who have sought an exclusive application of the name to describe their church or sect. The problem is that the focus shifts from the call to bear the reproach of the world and the false church for the sake of the Name of Christ to certain characteristics about one's church or sect.

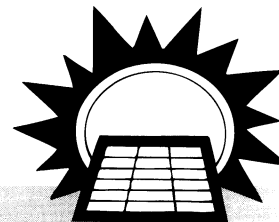
Second, there is the popular use of the word Christian. People use it as a term to describe certain ethical standards, social attitudes, or even political affiliations, which supposedly reflect the outlook of a broad Christianity. This cheapens the Name which means "one who belongs to Christ."

Let us not use the beautiful name Christian in either of these incorrect ways. Let us reserve it to describe those who belong to Christ and who will follow Him to the point of suffering and death.

Are we Christians?

*Martyrdom of Polycarp 10; Eusebius, *History* V.I, 19.

RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.
Ephesians 5:17

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Last month we discussed the gift of prayer. This time we will go on with that yet, and we will try to see why the Lord's Prayer is such an important prayer.

The Lord's Prayer is divided into different petitions, and we will deal with the third petition, where we pray, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

We as God's children depend totally on the Lord. We cannot do anything on our own, but we have to ask always for God's help, His approval, and His guidance. This is not always easy. Often we want things to go our way, or we want to do the same things as the people of the world do. But that is not going to work. For when we pray, "Thy will be done," then we ask the Lord to help us to do everything in obedience to Him. Then we also ask Him to help us to see that what God wants us to do is the best for us. When we pray for that, the Lord will give us faith and trust in Him. Then, in faith, we can obey the Lord, and praise and thank Him for the task we receive from Him.

We have to carry out our God-given task. God has given everyone of His children their own personal task. Just like He gave His angels a task. We read in the Bible about angels. Angels visited Abraham and Lot, Gideon, and the mother of Samson. Those angels carried out their tasks perfectly. They concentrated totally on what they had to do; they loved doing it, because they did it in obedience to the Lord. The angels in heaven are an example to us: the way they do their tasks in heaven, that is how we have to do our tasks, too.

Sometimes we are not too happy with our God-given task. We would like to do more, be more important, or do something easier. Especially when we are sick, or very old, or handicapped, or without work, or lonely, or poor, or . . . you can add your own thing, maybe. Then we say, "I wish I could be like So-and-so," or "Why can't I . . ." But then we forget that the Lord knows us. He knows what is best for us. He divides the tasks, and makes everyone do what is best for him or her. Just like at home. Everyone has to do certain things in and around the house. Your mom tells everybody what to do. Your mom knows exactly what everyone can do – so nobody has to do anything that is too difficult for him or her. To your mom all the children are equally important, and so what they do for her is important as well.

That is how the Lord works it, too. The only difference is, that the Lord does not make any mistakes. He knows each of us perfectly well. So when you have a very difficult task, like being sick, etc., then the Lord has assigned it to you, because He knows you can do it! He knows that you can serve Him while being sick, or poor, or handicapped. Not that it will always be easy for everyone. There is often a struggle inside: the struggle between being obedient and disobedient, or between praying,

"Thy will be done" and thinking "My will be done." But we do not have to fight that out on our own. We will win, when we let the Holy Spirit work in our hearts, so that through Jesus Christ we will ask for help. Trust in the Lord and pray to Him, "Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." The Lord will hear that prayer, and enable us to do His will "as willingly as the angels in heaven" (L.D. 49).

*Show Thou unto me, Thy servant,
All Thy ways and teach Thou me,
So that, by Thy Spirit guided,
Clearly I Thy paths may see.
In Thy truth wilt Thou me guide,
Teach me, God of my salvation;
All the day for Thee I bide,
LORD, with eager expectation.*

Psalm 25:2

From the Mailbox:

Marinus' mother sends us the following note:

"Sharing and Caring"

A big thank you to all those who sent cards to Marinus Foekens for his birthday. Marinus enjoys the opportunity to experience the communion of saints with his Christian brothers and sisters, from all the different places around the world.

Mrs. M. Foekens

Birthdays in July:

James Buikema will be 32 on July the 4th.
"Anchor" home, 30 Road, RR 2,
Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0

Charlie Beintema will be 18 on July 20.
29 Wilson Avenue,
Chatham, ON N7L 1K8

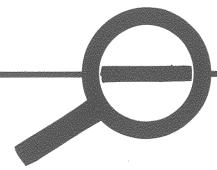
Jim Wanders will be 32 on July 28.
538 Wedgewood Drive,
Burlington, ON L7L 4J2

Tom VanderZwaag will be 40 on July 29.
"Anchor" home, 30 Road, RR 2,
Beamsville, ON LOR 1B0

Tom was living at his parents' home in Hamilton. He has been recently admitted to the "Anchor" home. No doubt, he will enjoy receiving mail.

Happy Birthday to all of you.
Until next month,

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



Opportunities for the Reformed Faith in Eastern Europe

The special place of Hungary

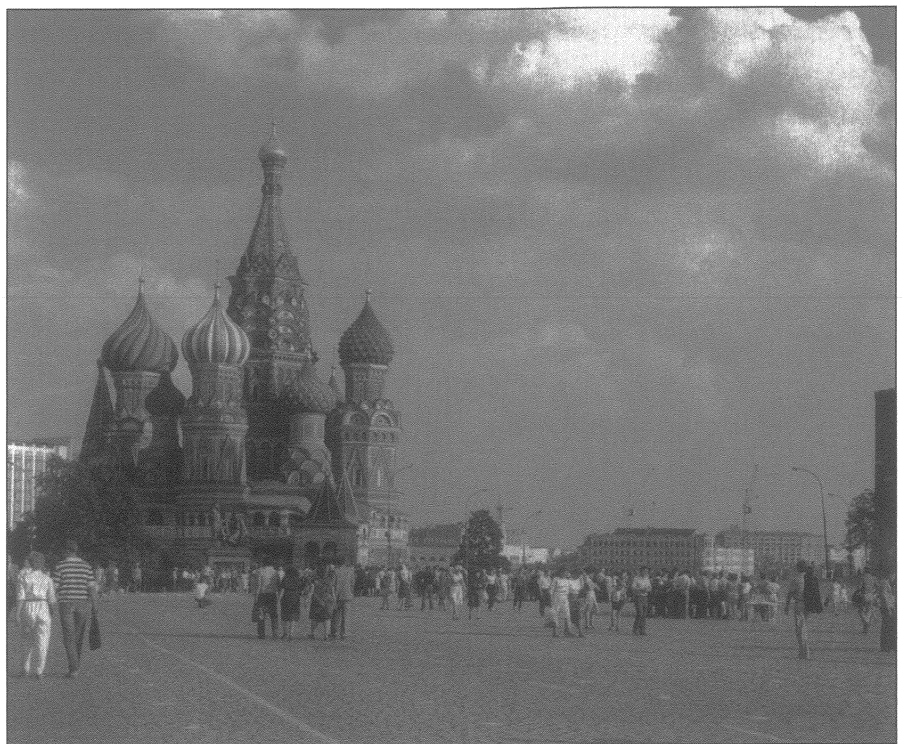
Although it seems difficult to believe, given present realities, Hungary was at one time a large influential nation which included parts of present day Poland, Romania, Czechoslovakia and the Ukraine. More importantly, Hungary was at one time a Reformed nation which has been compared to the past Reformed character of the Netherlands. Not surprisingly there has always been a close contact between the Dutch and the Hungarian Reformed Churches.

The Reformed past and the continuing presence of a large Reformed church in Hungary is important to keep in mind when considering the present challenge. How is the Reformed faith to be most effectively supported and introduced (where it is still unknown) in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS, the former USSR)? Surely an urgent question considering the many un-Reformed and non-Christian organizations that are busily trying to fill the spiritual vacuum. Not surprisingly, part of the answer is to work through the Hungarian churches.

Dutch efforts

Members of our sister churches have been working in Hungary for the last twenty years or so and have encouraged many Reformed people during their time of oppression. Forty thousand died in the persecutions! Now that communism has fallen, the efforts to help are more open and more possibilities present themselves.

Fundament, an organization run by members of our Dutch sister churches, has as its goal to strengthen the Reformed character of churches af-



Red Square

ter the fall of communism. Last year it decided, in close consultation with the Theological University of our sister churches to work together with the Theological Academy of the Hungarian Reformed Churches in Debrecen by supplying a teacher at the Academy. Drs. J.J.A. Colijn was found willing. He works there as a professor of Dogmatics and besides teaching this subject, provides theological language courses and in this way introduces Hungarians to Western theological

writings. He also teaches more practical subjects and lends his assistance to catechetical instruction in the Carpatho-Ukraine where many Hungarian Reformed churches are found.

Also our Dutch sister churches themselves have become involved. The Regional Synod of Gelderland has decided to consider the Ukraine as their new mission field. The church at Hattem was designated sending church and no time was lost. Rev. M. Nap has accepted the call for this new work and he

has also been installed (14 May, 1993). It is hoped that a second missionary can be called soon. After a year of orientation in the Ukraine, Rev. Nap will study missiology in Kampen for one and a half to two years and then start the actual work. Exactly what strategy will be followed has not been published, but it is clear that it will consist at least in part in attempting to strengthen the Reformed character of the Hungarian Reformed Church. It also appears that the Dutch churches will cooperate with American efforts to establish Reformed theological education in the Ukraine.

American efforts

The Denver based *Christ for Ukraine/Russia* also wants to support and strengthen the existing Reformed churches and ministers and they have a good working relationship with the Dutch churches. The enthusiastic director, Rev. N. Vogelzang, notes that planting small Bible Mission Schools are absolutely essential. There indigenous ministers can be trained and these men can in turn work as ministers and missionaries.

In a trip through the Carpatho-Ukraine last fall, the Rev. Vogelzang, with the help of Prof. Colijn and others, was able to start the process of purchasing an old military camp outside Beregovo/Beregszasz. If all goes well and the expected support is forthcoming from the Hungarian Reformed Church and our Dutch sister churches in Gelderland, it will become the site of the first Seminary Bible Institute beyond Arospatak, Debrecen, and Budapest. Located near the border of Hungary and Ukraine, this seminary will have at least 80 students from nearby towns. The teaching would be done by Ukrainian Reformed ministers, professors from the Reformed faculties at Sarospatak, Debrecen and missionary professors like Drs. Colijn from the Netherlands. Also volunteer teachers are expected to help from the U.S.A. and Canada.

It is difficult for us to imagine the situation in Ukraine. The Communist regimes would not permit Christians to enter higher learning. Apart from those with a university education who were converted after the fall of communism, the level of education among the Reformed believers is generally not high. This situation presents challenges to seminary education and initially at least this education will of necessity be quite basic.

The present challenge

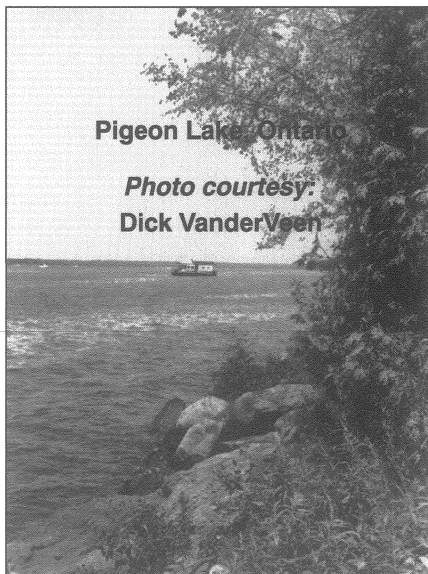
Much is happening in eastern Europe. After years of atheistic oppression, a yearning spiritual hunger remains unsatisfied. Young people are confessing their Lord in large classes of over a hundred. Church building is going on in many places and there are many pleas for help to their Reformed counterparts in the western world. As Rev. Vogelzang so passionately put it:

Now is the golden opportunity to teach the noble Calvinistic faith in the Ukraine and the Russias. With the Lord's help we can do the impossible! *Let our children learn Russian!* Let us give of our surplus. God will be true to His promise of sustaining and supporting us if we help undergird the greatest revival of the last 100 years!

Although there is much activity going on in eastern Europe, very little is being done by Reformed people, and yet it is the Reformed faith that is so desperately needed.


Attention is also being paid to literature. A Ukrainian edition of the Heidelberg Catechism has been found. Dr. N.H. Gootjes has finished translating the Calvinist confession of Cyril of Lucar (1629) from the Greek original so that it can be more readily translated into Russian and other languages of CIS. Also the shorter Westminster Catechism has been translated into Russian. Fur-

OUR COVER



Pigeon Lake, Ontario

Photo courtesy:
Dick VanderVeen



CHURCH NEWS

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:
Rev. K.A. Kok
 118 Hilltop Road
 Norristown, PA 19401 U.S.A.
 Phone: (215) 279-7387

* * *

CHANGE OF ADDRESS:
 Covenant Canadian Reformed
 Church of Lower Sackville
 95 Lively Road
 Middle Sackville, NS
 B4E 3A9

* * *

As of June 6, 1993, the CHURCH AT WINNIPEG, MB will have four services per Sunday.
 9:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m.
 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

thermore, the *Geneva Bible Foundation* under Reformed Theological Seminary president L. Whitlock and R.C. Sproul hopes to have a Russian NIV Study Bible ready this year.

Because of favourable exchange rates, much can be done with relatively little money, but the work of *Christ for Ukraine/Russia* does not have assured funding and gratefully receives all gifts. May these labours for the Reformed faith be blessed!

Those interested in supporting this cause or desiring more information can write:

Stichting Fundament
 C. Fabriusplantsoen 26
 2391 GR Hazerswoude-dorp
 Drachten, the Netherlands

Christ for Russia
 14152 East Linvale Place, #303
 Aurora, CO
 80014 U.S.A.

The above was compiled from reports in Nederlands Dagblad, and Tot aan de einde der aarde, as well as from documentation provided by Christ for Russia.



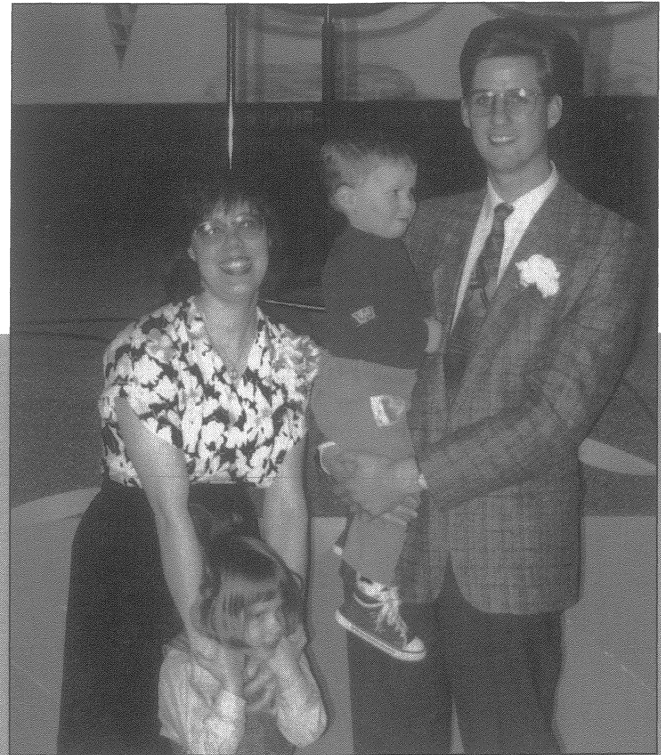
Ancaster Welcomes a New Pastor

With joyful thanksgiving to God the Provider, the Ancaster congregation welcomed Rev. Van Essen and family in a communal evening specifically designated for that purpose. The events which successfully took place were coordinated under the careful supervision of Mr. and Mrs. Ben and Hannah Harsevoort, whose expertise was requested when the idea was first presented by the young people.

For those readers of *Clarion* unfamiliar with him, Rev. Van Essen formerly pastored a church in Brantford belonging to the Reformed Church of America (RCA). Following a personal struggle in that denomination against the encroachment of Arminianism and the implicit disregard for the Confessions, he and his wife liberated themselves, together with their children, and became members of the Canadian Reformed Church in Ancaster. His desire to preach the good news remained, however, and after successfully meeting all the requirements stipulated in the Church Order, he was declared eligible for call in the Canadian Reformed churches. Although calls were extended to him by a number of congregations, he and his wife prayerfully decided to accept the one extended by the Ancaster church, for which we thank God.

The welcome evening was officially opened by Mr. Bill Smouter, former chairman and present vice-chairman of the consistory, with hymn singing, a prayer for blessing, and the reading of Psalm 146. The event of receiving a new pastor is certainly a joy for the soul, but on this occasion it was also the body which rejoiced when the celebration began with a delicious potluck dinner.

Mr. Ben Harsevoort, our Master of Ceremonies, wasted no time in commencing the entertainment portion of the evening. He pleased young and old by warming our vocal chords with songs such as the more culturally popular "Poor Little Bug on the Wall," complete with numerous variations.



Rev. and Mrs. H.M. Van Essen, Kara and Joel

A number of Bible study societies then shared their joyful thankfulness in welcoming the ministerial family with various forms of entertainment. The Young Peoples' Society, "In His Service" sang "Sing Alleluia to the Lord" having the female voices compliment those of the males and "Let All Things Now Living" in four-part harmony. They were followed by the Women's Society, "Thy Word is Our Light" which innovatively designed a trivia game where Rev. Van Essen, upon hearing the location of a Canadian Reformed church, had to match his fellow colleague ministering there by pinning his name on the appropriate place on a given map of Canada. He did not disappoint us, correctly matching most of his colleagues with their respective

churches. The Evening Bible Study Group sang, "May the Mind of Christ My Saviour" as a hymn of prayer, changing a number of first person personal pronouns to the second person in order to wish God's blessing specifically on the ministerial family.


The comic highlight of the evening was "the Ancaster Philharmonic" which was presented by the Young Peoples' Society "Remember Your Creator." In airband format, this orchestra, complete with a mad conductor, jubilantly played a number of classical music pieces and at one point even had consistory members playing the "instruments" with none other than Rev. Van Essen conducting. When the Women's Society "Deborah" showed Rev. and Mrs. Van Essen visual representations of Bible

books and requested that they alternately identify them, we were amazed by the high score of correct identifications the couple attained. Michelle and Melissa Bartels then sang, "As the deer" and "Shine, Jesus, Shine" together in artistic harmony and were followed by the combined choir of Hamilton and Ancaster which, under the able direction of Mrs. Grace Smid, closed the en-

tertainment portion of the evening with three beautiful choral works.

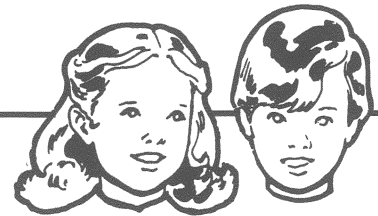
Before Rev. Van Essen himself gave thanks in prayer, Mr. Ben Harsevoort appropriately read from Acts 8, drawing our attention to the narrative of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch. This story reveals how Philip, upon receiving the Spirit, preached the good news of Jesus to the eunuch who then went on his way rejoicing. It is our wish that Rev.

Van Essen may faithfully preach this good news to us, equipping us for every good work that we too may go on our way rejoicing. We welcome Rev. and Mrs. Van Essen together with their children, Kara and Joel, and we rejoice for prayers heard, with thanksgiving to God the Provider.

On behalf of the congregation
Bill DeJong 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

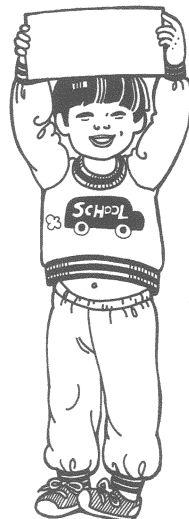
Birthday party coming up?

Games and stunts are great ways to have real fun together.

Here are two stunts you might like to play.

(You could look in your library for a book with *more stunts* and games!)

Have fun!



FOREHEAD AUTOGRAPH

Try to write your name on a piece of paper placed against your forehead.

PASS THE HAT

The players stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder. Each player wears a silly hat. When the leader says, "Hats, left" or "Hats, right," each player takes off his hat and places it on the head of the person on that side of him. "Hats, off" means hold your hat in your hand. "Hats, on" means leave the hat alone. Anyone who misses is out of the stunt.

Quiz Time!

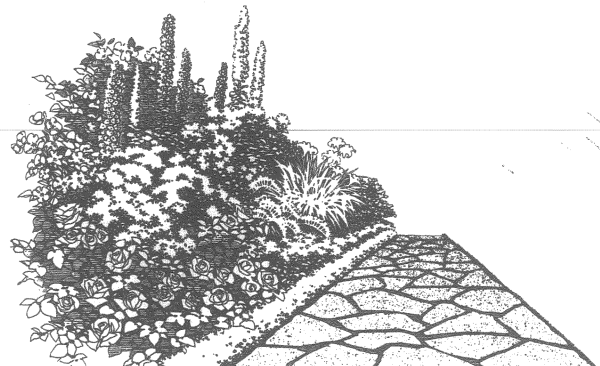
FAVOURITE CODE

by Busy Beaver *Danielle Ostermeier*

B +	H 	O 	T O
D -	I 	R ··	U 
E =	L ::	S *	W x
			Y 

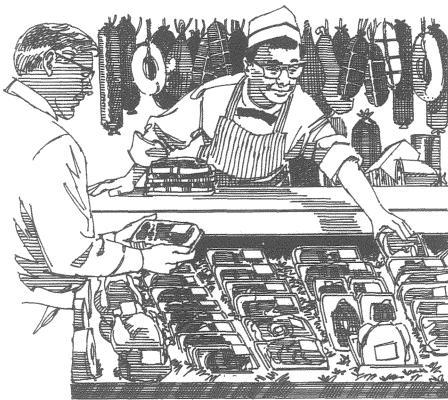


WORD SEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Nelena Bergsma*

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

Baker	Jobs	Pilot
Banker	Lawyer	Plumber
Carpenter	Manager	Policeman
Dental assistant	Minister	Salesman
Dentist	Missionary	Secretary
Doctor	Mother	Stewardess
Engineer	Nurse	Storekeeper
Farmer	Optometrist	Teacher
Fireman	Pharmacist	



SPRINGTIME

*The snow is gone,
 The winter's been long.
 The grass is now growing,
 The cows are lowing.
 The trees have leaves
 And there's a little breeze.
 Bees are humming,
 The geese are still coming.
 It is springtime!*

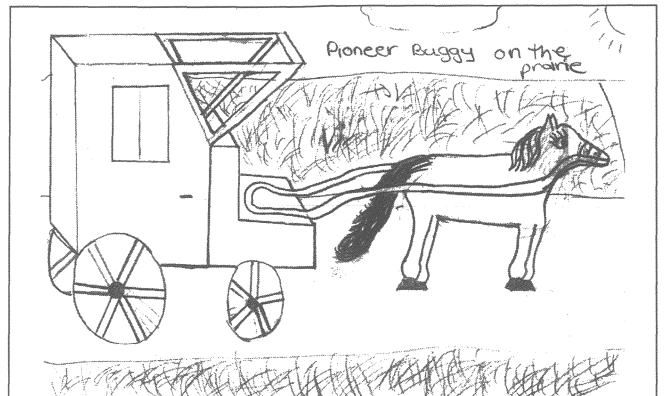
by Busy Beaver *Rachel Wierenga*

HIDDEN WORD RIDDLES

Some people's name have a hidden word in it. Here are some riddles about names with hidden words. Each riddle asks a question about the person, and the answer is always, "Because there's a, or an, (the hidden word) in his/her name. For example, a riddle about the name EARL might be: "Why can Earl hear so well?" Answer: "Because there's an EAR in his name (EARL)." See how it works?

1. Why is JANICE always cold?
2. Why is MILTON so heavy?
3. Why is JOYCE always happy?
4. Why can MARTIN draw so well?
5. Why can't you believe LESLIE?
6. Why doesn't CHRISTOPHER ever finish things?
7. Why doesn't RACHEL feel well?
8. Why can't you trust PATRICK?
9. Why can JANET catch fish so easily?
10. Why should EDWARD be a soldier?
11. Why does CHARLOTTE have so much of everything?
12. Why does STEWART always have plenty to eat?

(See answers)



PICTURE

by Busy Beaver *Laura Aasman*

Do you need an idea for a cool drink? You could try Busy Beaver *Andrew Bos'* recipe for

THE WHITE RABBIT'S GINGER-APPLE FIZZ

What you need:
 1 cup apple juice
 2 scoops vanilla ice cream
 ginger ale

What you do with it:
 1. Pour 1/2 cup apple juice into each of 2 tall glasses.
 2. Add 1 scoop of ice cream to each glass.
 3. Fill the glasses with ginger ale. Stir.

Serves 2



FOR YOU TO DO

Pentecost!

What a wonderful day for the church! The Lord Jesus sent His Holy Spirit to *live* in the hearts of the believers. And what does the Holy Spirit *work* in the lives of God's children?

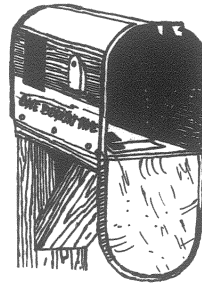
This text tells us:

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. . . . Gal. 5:22, 23

Maybe you would like to memorize this text!
Can you think of ways to help yourself memorize it easily?

One example might be that the first two "fruits" start with "lo" and "jo."

Will you share your ideas with the other Busy Beavers?



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Kristin Vandergugten*. We are happy to have you join us. I see you are a real Busy Beaver already, sending in an interesting puzzle! Will you write and tell us about the *best* book you read lately, Kristin?

Welcome to the Club *Laura Kanis*! I see you like drawing. Keep up the good work! Write again soon, Laura.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Danielle Ostermeier*. Thank you for an interesting puzzle. I think the Busy Beavers will enjoy doing it. Bye for now, Danielle.

Hello, *Lydia Penninga*. I enjoyed your Spring picture. I'm glad your pet is doing so well. Do you have special days at your school this month, Lydia?

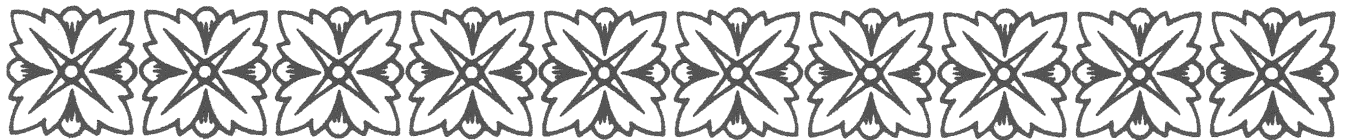
Answers to Hidden Word Riddles

1. Because there's ICE in her name. 2. Because there's a TON in his name. 3. Because there's JOY in her name. 4. Because there's ART in his name. 5. Because there's a LIE in her name. 6. Because there's a STOP in his name. 7. Because there's an ACHIE in her name. 8. Because there's a TRICK in his name. 9. Because there's a NET in her name. 10. Because there's WAR in his name. 11. Because there's a LOT in her name. 12. Because there's STEW in his name.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Love to you all,
Aunt Betty



With thankfulness to our heavenly Father we announce the birth of our son

JEFFREY CORNELIUS

Born May 30, 1993

A brother for *Kimberly*
and *Colin*

Rob and Annie Dewitt
(nee Dijkstra)

Box 31, Group 525, RR 5
Winnipeg, MB
R2C 2Z2

For the LORD is good and His love endures forever. Psalm 100:5

We give thanks to our Creator for the birth of a son

GARETT ANDREW

Born May 19, 1993

A brother for *Alyssa,*
Scott,
Devon
and *Janae*

Larry and Anne Hillmer

22 Balaban Place
Winnipeg, MB
R2C 4A4

May the glory of the LORD endure for ever, may the LORD rejoice in His works. Psalm 104:31

Praising the name of the Lord, who continues to bless us, we announce the birth of our son and brother

GRAEME KENNETH
WILLIAM

Born May 16, 1993

Ed and Cathy Jager
(nee Hoff)

Alanna, Jeffrey, Brittany, Gavin
14 Bexhill Drive
London, ON N6E 1W9