



Reformation Day 1993

“Let’s Hope it was not a Ghost!” Some Remarks on the Calling of Luther

By J. De Jong

When Martin Luther was ordained as a priest in the great cathedral of Erfurt in 1507, it was a festive occasion. Friends came from Eisenach, and his parents, Hans and Margareth Luther also attended in a stylish retinue. Luther’s father Hans had never been happy with Luther’s decision to enter a monastery, but at Luther’s ordination he was determined to abandon all resentment, and make the best of it. Still harbouring misgivings, at some point after the official ceremonies he asked Martin if he was sure that his new position was a divine calling. Luther resolutely replied that it was a divine call, to which absolute obedience was required. Hans replied, with characteristic medieval piety, “Let’s hope it was not a ghost!”

These words did not sound strange to Luther. In fact they were characteristic of his youth and family situation. Like any other family of the time, the Luther family lived with the vivid superstitions dominant in the medieval period. If there was a thunderstorm outside, Hans would say, “The devil is loose!” If there was an unnatural sickness or tragedy, Margareth would say: “What witch is responsible for this?” So it is also understandable that the calling of Luther reflects this kind of world. At the same time, Luther went through a complete mental transformation in the space of fifteen years, a transformation which resulted in a whole new view of what it meant to be called by God. In this article we will briefly trace this development in Luther, showing that He who called Luther was not a phantom or ghost but the living God, who is known in His Word.

The thunderstorm

Why did Luther enter the monastery? Actually his father had directed him to pursue a career in law, and in those days one did not question the will and directions of one’s father. After he graduated as Master of Arts in 1505, Hans made the necessary arrangements for Martin to enter the Faculty of Law. He even had a wealthy young girl picked out for him, since he was afraid that his son would not maintain the continence required of an upstanding youth. Thus he looked forward in anticipation to the progress of his gifted son which would also bring him some material and social advancement.

In the summer of 1505, Luther had returned home for a week, and was on his way back to Erfurt by horseback when suddenly lightning struck directly in front of him. So forceful was the bolt that he was thrown off his horse. In fear and dread he cried out, “Help me St. Anne! I will be-

come a monk!” From that moment there was no turning back for Luther. He did not tell his parents about his decision, but immediately prepared himself to enter the monastery. As was to be expected, Hans was beside himself with rage. He wrote a very angry letter to Martin, rebuking him for his rebellion. But Martin placed the call of God above the duty he owed to his parents.

The invocation of St Anne, known in medieval piety as the mother of Mary, was also not out of place. St Anne was the patron saint of miners, and Hans Luther was first a miner, later an entrepreneur involved in mining. Luther’s entire livelihood came from the mines. Perhaps we can see in his invocation an expression of the sentiment that occupied his mind. It may well be that he saw the entrance into the monastery as the only way for him to pursue an independent path, contrary to the wishes of his fathers, and at the same time, receive a blessed life, that is, a life free from God’s wrath. Invoking St. Anne would only seal that wish.

The invocation of St Anne, which must have happened more frequently in the Luther home, may also have contributed to the choice of the monastery which Luther entered. He had several to choose from but he presented himself to the monastery of the Augustinian Friars in Erfurt. St. Anne was a patroness of a Brotherhood closely connected with these Augustinian Friars. Here, too, the motivation of appeasement for making a decision contrary to parental directives may have contributed to Luther’s turn to the Eremite order in Erfurt. This was a very strict order, and Luther immediately took all its rules and regulations very seriously.

Remarkably, Luther remained resolute about his calling, even though he did not know the Scriptures, the love of God or His mercy as he later spoke of it. He entered the monastery to find a gracious God. This was also considered a normal action in the context of the time. God spoke in lightning and thunderstorms, and His call was absolute.

In the monastery

Once he entered the monastery Luther was plagued with temptations and struggles far greater than those he had ever experienced before. These struggles, which because of their unique character are called *Anfechtungen*, had a very deep and dark character. Basically they concerned Luther’s search for a gracious God. They can only be understood within the context of Luther’s time. He practiced all the rules of his order very strictly. He engaged in self-flagellation, and was often weak and hungry. He confessed every sin, to

the point that the confessors could hardly keep up with him. Still he was filled with fear, doubt and remorse. Yet he persevered in his calling. He saw his decision as a vow which could not be revoked. He also began to climb the ladder to the priesthood, and each step along the way involved a new vow.

In 1503, the Augustinian friars received a new vicar general in the person of Johann von Staupitz. He lived in Tübingen at the time, but later moved to Wittenberg where Frederick the Wise had opened a new university. Von Staupitz was professor of Biblical Studies at Wittenberg. But his duties as vicar general also led him to visit the many monasteries under his charge. He also visited the Erfurt monastery, and met Luther for the first time there in 1506. He heard of Luther's immense interest in biblical studies, and once he learned how quickly he applied himself to the memory of the Scriptures, he began to watch him closely, seeing in him a likely successor for his own position in Wittenberg. Von Staupitz brought Luther to Wittenberg in 1508, for one year. He also encouraged Luther in his spiritual conflicts, directing him to see the predestination of God only in Jesus Christ. He also encouraged him to pursue his Doctor's degree in Biblical Studies. When Luther protested that all this would be too much for him, and that he would die doing it, Von Staupitz said: "Don't worry about that. God can use a good advisor in heaven, too!" – a statement that reflects the confidence he had in Luther. So Luther was directed back to the task at hand, and driven to pursue it with that much more acumen!

Doctor of Biblical Studies

Luther obtained his doctorate in 1512. Von Staupitz immediately earmarked him for the position of professor of Biblical Studies in Wittenberg. Luther took his new position very seriously. Indeed, he saw it as a calling received from God. He was still troubled by spiritual turmoil, and still driven by the search for a gracious God. But he saw the task he was appointed to do as given to him by God. There is one line from the monastery to the lecture room of Frederick the Wise's new university in Wittenberg: Luther sees himself as directly called by God.

Later, after the years of struggle with the Roman church, Luther spoke about his calling in this way:

However, I, Dr. Martinus, have been called to this work and was compelled to become a doctor, without any initiative of my own, but out of pure obedience. Then I had to accept the office of doctor and swear a vow to my most beloved Holy Scriptures that I would teach them faithfully and purely. While engaged in this kind of teaching the papacy crossed my path, and tried to hinder me in it. How it has fared is obvious to all, and will fare still worse. It shall not hinder me. In God's name and call I shall walk on the lion and dragon, and tread on the young lion with my feet.¹

Initial confrontations

After the explosion which attended the publication of the 95 theses in 1517, Luther began to be called to appear before various ecclesiastical and civil authorities concerning his way of teaching. His first appearance was before an Italian legate by the name of Cajetan. The hearing was held in Augsburg in 1518. Luther was very depressed on the way to Augsburg. He thought he would be no match for the Italian, and that he would soon be burned at the stake. "What a

disgrace I will be to my dear parents!" he said. And why wouldn't he think in this way? His parents had hoped the best for him as a monk and priest, and now they would hear that he stood diametrically opposed to the leading figures in the church!

Cajetan said that Luther only has to say one word of six letters, *revoco*, the Latin for *I revoke*. As well as recanting his errors, Luther had to promise not to teach them again, and had to promise to refrain from activities which destroyed



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Martin Luther

the peace of the church. Luther asked: "Of what then do my errors consist?" Cajetan replied by pointing to two of the ninety-five theses, one dealing with indulgences, the other with the mass (Thesis 7 and 58). We will not go into the content of the theses here, but only listen to the exchange between the two men on these points. With respect to thesis seven, Luther said "On this point I cannot recant." Cajetan said: "This you must do today, or you will be condemned!" It sounded as if the stake was already being erected. But Luther recalled his doctor's vow. He said that the words of Scripture stood higher than any *Bull* of the pope and that therefore he could not recant unless his theses were proven wrong by Scripture. Cajetan replied that the pope stood above Scripture, and above the councils. This was the end of the matter for Luther. The next morning, he got up and left, without facing Cajetan again. He left a letter for him telling him he could not recant, since he could not do anything against his conscience.²

A year later, in Leipzig, Luther was called to a public debate with John Eck, the principal defender of the Romanist position. In this debate Luther rejected blind obedience to Rome, and also maintained that Pope and council could err. All the articles of faith could only be established on the basis of Holy Scripture. Hearing his stand on Holy Scripture, Duke George of Saxony cried out: "The plague is upon us!," and from that point on Luther had another fierce enemy, one that was powerful indeed. Yet he could not be moved to change his position by virtue of his vow to uphold Scripture.

At Worms

The period after the Leipzig disputation was a very busy one for Luther. He published his three famous pamphlets on the need for reformation, and this only added fuel to the fire. At last he was called by the Emperor to appear before the Diet at Worms in 1521. There Luther was called to acknowledge that he was the author of his books, and to retract their contents. Stalling for time, he demanded that the titles of the books be read. Then he asked for more time to consider the second demand. The next day Luther returned to the Diet with his speech, which contained his famous closing words:

Unless I am convinced by the testimonies of Scripture or clear reason (for I do not trust either the pope or the

councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against my conscience. God help me, Amen!

How did Luther come to this point? It is the same idea of calling which sustains him throughout this turbulent pilgrimage. Yet, his idea of calling has undergone a marked change. Whereas before he heard the voice of God in lightning and thunderstorm, he now hears the voice of God strictly in the Scriptures. Whereas before the God who spoke was a God of fear and dread, the God of the Scriptures was the God of mercy and love, the God who gives His Christ to the world.

Indeed, this is why the Scriptures were so very dear to Luther. They represented the vehicle to meet his salvation and his God. His time in the monastery and in Wittenberg was a struggle with the message of the Scriptures. At the same time it was a rediscovery of the riches of the Scriptures. This rediscovery basically has one form: to hear the voice of God in the words of Scripture speaking directly to the heart of man. In the Scriptures, Luther discovered the Christ who gave His life for the salvation of sinners. That glorious message, so long buried under the dust of the Romanist system of righteousness by works, compelled and drove the priest to take a stand different from those before him.

It is a long road from the entrance into the monastery in 1505, to the dramatic stand at Worms in 1521. Yet one line ties all these years together. Luther was called by God Himself to be an instrument for reform. God used the means of lightning and thunderstorm, father and prior to drive Luther to the Scriptures, and to the Christ of the Scriptures. Then He gave a new perspective to that Word, one determined not by the philosophy or theology of the day, but by those Scriptures themselves.

History has then proven that it was not a ghost that spoke to Luther around the time of his ordination. Neither was he a disgrace to his parents. Indeed, his father died in the confession of the new doctrine Luther had taught.

In fifteen short years there is a sudden change from one world to another, a transformation from the medieval to the modern world. Luther introduced a new view of calling, determined not by saints, demons and fear, but determined by the Christ of the Scriptures, and a life that demands undivided service, devotion and obedience – all out of gratitude to Him. In 1520, he wrote one of his most treasured works, called *The Freedom of the Christian Man*. In this short treatise, Luther's new view of calling shines through like a newly found pearl of great price:

Although I am unworthy and a condemned man, my God has given me in Christ all the riches of righteousness and salvation without any merit on my part, out of pure, free mercy, so that from now on I need nothing except faith which believes that this is true. Why should I not therefore freely, joyfully, with all my heart, and with an eager will do all things which I know are pleasing and acceptable to such a Father who has overwhelmed me with His inestimable riches? I will therefore give myself as a Christ to my neighbour, just as Christ offered Himself to me; I will do nothing in this life except what I see as necessary, and salutary to my neighbour, since through faith I have an abundance of all good things in Christ.³

Luther's language breathes the joy of a new freedom! But it was for him, the freedom of renewed and devoted service. In the light of this Reformation in thought and life we may carry out our calling and duty today, with humility and obedience before God and man, so honouring God's work in reforming His church. For all this was not man's work, but God's! A new wind blew over the whole of life, shaking the existing order to its very foundations. It was a divine work, and "the thing came about suddenly," as the Scriptures say (2 Chron. 29:36). This divine work was most aptly expressed in the words of a poem of the common man, shortly after the Reformation:

*Still today at this very hour
God saves His poor from the abyss
of tyrant, no matter how terrible,
And from profiteering merchants.
And makes them whole again,
Just as he ended spiritual hypocrisy
As soon as they believed his Word
For he remains true to his covenant.⁴*

¹Quoted in B. Lohse, *Martin Luther: An Introduction to His Life and Word*, Translated by Robert C. Schultz (Fortress Press, Philadelphia, 1986), p. 93.

²For the conversation, see W. Von Loewenich, *Martin Luther The Man and His Work* Translated by Lawrence W. Denef (Augsburg, Minneapolis, 1986), p. 138.

³H.J. Grimm, (ed.) *Luther's Works*, Volume 31, (Muhlenberg Press, Philadelphia, 1957), p. 367.

⁴Quoted in S. Ozment, *Protestants The Birth of a Revolution*, (Doubleday, New York, 1992), p. 131.

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Sola Scriptura and the Reformation in Zürich

By R. Faber

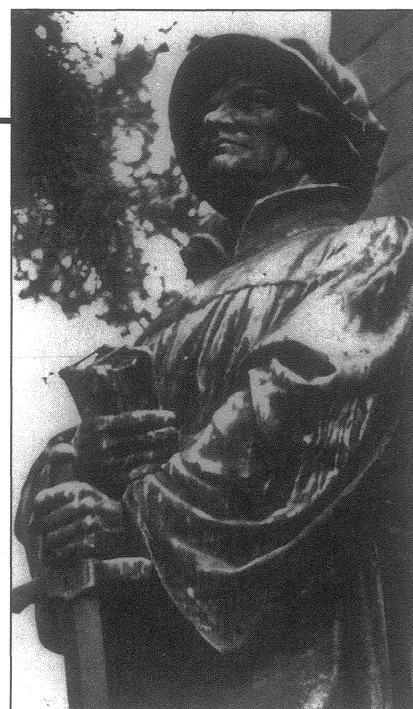
Introduction

Near the Wasserkirche in Zürich, Switzerland, stands a statue of Huldrych Zwingli. In his left hand the man holds a long sword, reminiscent of the sword by which he died fighting for the reformed faith in 1531. And in his right, slightly raised above the sword, Zwingli clutches a Bible; it was by this book that Zwingli lived and reformed the church in Switzerland. Especially after he became preacher in Zürich in 1519, was the Word of God the basis upon which Zwingli called for ecclesiastical change. Not only was the Word central to Zwingli's preaching, but it was also the focus in his debates with the Anabaptists and the Roman Catholics. In these disputes the Bible was the sole authority to which Zwingli appealed. Zwingli's expressed belief that even the edicts of the pope himself were inferior to the Word of God was destined to become a confession he would share with all Reformed believers in the sixteenth century. As the twentieth century draws to a close,

however, the confession that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God is under great strain and perhaps even in danger of being abandoned. Therefore, as we recall the Reformation on 31 October, we may recall especially the confession *sola scriptura*.

During the sixteenth century the belief that the Bible is the direct Word of God was expressed by all believers. Even before the time of the church-father Augustine was it confessed that the Bible was the holy, inspired, and infallible Word. But Zwingli's confession differed from that of many contemporaries, for he stated that the Word of God had been obscured and nullified by papal edicts by the traditional exegeses of the schoolmen, and by the power of the church. Zwingli observed that the edicts of the pope had replaced the Bible. Zwingli therefore taught that the Bible is the sole Word of God, and that one should not be swayed by the words of sinful human beings but should test those words in light of Scripture.

Zwingli stated the facts boldly: whereas man is a liar and speaks lying



Statue of Huldreich Zwingli

words, God is truthful and His Word is truth. In championing the truth of God's Word Zwingli frequently gave as proof-texts Romans 3:4 ("Let God be true, though every man be false") and Psalm 85:8 ("Let me hear what God the LORD will speak"). And he follows the apostle Paul when he writes, "No matter who a man may be, if he teaches you in accordance with his own thought and mind his teaching is false. But if he teaches you in accordance with the Word of God, it is not he that teaches you, but God who teaches him (Z I. 379.14)." Since the Bible is the Word of God writ-

ten by men inspired by the Holy Spirit, it cannot err. The infallibility of Scripture is opposed to the sinfulness of human beings. Furthermore, Zwingli argued, the church, consisting as it does of sinful human beings, may err and does err, whereas the Bible, having its origin not in man but in God, is inerrant. There were many occasions on which Zwingli had the opportunity to point out this simple truth. Let us consider two on which Zwingli especially professed “by the Scripture alone!”

1. The Lenten Fast of 1522

According to tradition, the Roman church had proclaimed a fast for the Lenten days of 1522. One evening shortly after Ash Wednesday, a number of Zürich citizens, among them Zwingli’s friend Leo Jud, had gathered in the house of the printer Christopher Froschauer, and purposefully broke the fast by eating sausages. The reason for this action, the citizens avowed, was an unusually heavy workload. The participants in the break-fast knew that the city Council might support the position of the Roman church and reprimand them. Zwingli himself had not joined in eating meat, but had approved of the deed by being present. Shortly afterward he preached a sermon “On Choice and Liberty Regarding Food,” in which he shows that the fast was an institution of the church not grounded in Scripture.¹ In the sermon Zwingli states that the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament were superseded by the Gospel and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Pointing to 1 Corinthians 6:12-14 and Acts 10:10-16, Zwingli shows that the eating of meat is a matter of Christian freedom and that the new dispensation differed from the old. Fasting is a human, not divine, command. Jesus Christ and the Bible rather than the pope and the church’s edicts, should be obeyed. Thus the eating of sausages during the fast led to Zwingli’s challenge of the church’s authority and the profession that the Bible is the final arbiter.

Reacting to Zwingli’s support of the break-fast, a certain Johann Fabri, acting as vicar general of the Bishop of Constance, accused Zwingli of holding heretical views and of destroying the church’s peace and unity. In August 1522, Zwingli responded to this charge by publishing a “Once and for All Defence” (*Apologeticus Archeteles*). In this work, which Zwingli had hoped would ease the tension between the Roman bishop and the reform-minded people

of Zürich, Zwingli asserts that the church cannot confirm what Scripture says, but rather that it is by Scripture that all ecclesiastical decisions should be judged. In other words, Zwingli states that he was holding views which the Roman church might deem as heretical, but which were in accordance with the Bible. It was the Roman church that advocated heresy! What is more, Zwingli writes, it was the Roman church of the sixteenth century which had broken from the one true church, and that Zwingli and the reformers maintained unity with the church of all ages in professing *sola scriptura*. It was in part due to this defence that the city Council decided not to take action against those who had eaten meat during Lent, and it expressed the desire that the matter should be clarified. The Reformation was taking hold in Zürich.

Late in the summer of 1522, Zwingli wrote an introduction to the study of the Bible called *On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*.² It had originated as a sermon for the nuns in the Oetenbach convent. Zwingli wanted to convince them, and the conservative Order of Preachers associated with the convent, that the reformation of the church was based upon the Bible. All who would study the Bible, Zwingli said, would learn from it that the Word of God is infallible and invincible. The pope’s edicts about fasting, celibacy for the priests, and veneration of the saints, were edicts spoken not by God but by a man. The book, Zwingli hoped, would convince his opponents that only the Bible speaks the truth.

First Zwingli shows that the Word of God is irresistible. “The Word of God is so sure and strong that if God wills all things are done the moment he speaks His Word (68).” Beginning with Genesis 1, Zwingli offers a host of proof-texts from the Old and New Testaments to support his conviction that the Bible is the Word of God. Only the Bible convicts the reader of his sins and shows the way to salvation. The Bible’s words are certain and the promises therein will be fulfilled. As final proof of the invincible power of the Word Zwingli writes, “The whole teaching of the Gospel is a sure demonstration that what God has promised will certainly be performed. For the Gospel is now an accomplished fact: the One who was promised to the patriarchs, and to the whole race, has now been given to us, and in Him we have

the assurance of all our hope (71).” The Word of God is certain.

Second Zwingli shows that the Bible is clear: thanks to God’s grace, the Spirit reveals the plain meaning of the Word to those who truly seek to know. The Bible is understood when one lays aside all preconceptions and assumptions. Zwingli suggests one way in which we should read Scripture properly: “You should reverently ask God for His grace, that he may give you His mind and Spirit, so that you will not lay hold of your own opinion but of His. . . . You must be *theodidacti*, that is, taught of God, not men . . .” (Z I.377.7-21). The Bible is clear and readily understood – “even by the blind” – because it is the Word of God. Zwingli hoped that the Order of Preachers would be convinced that the church needed to be reformed, and that only on the basis of Scripture such reform should be effected.

2. The Disputation of January 1523

The developments of 1522 culminated in the so-called First Disputation, which was probably held in January of 1523. The city Council had organized a public meeting at which Zwingli, representing the evangelical reform-minded clergy, would debate with Johann Fabri, representative of the Bishop and the Roman church. A majority of the members of Council now supported Zwingli, and the arbitrator, mayor Max Roist, was predisposed to favour Zwingli. Indeed the Council had stated several times that its decisions would be based solely on the Bible. It is interesting to note that the debate was to be held in the vernacular Swiss German and not in Latin, the language of the academy. This alteration afforded the many councillors who were not educated the opportunity to follow the debate and to decide for themselves who it was that spoke according to Scripture.

Furthermore, to show that the Bible would be the sole authority to which the debaters should appeal, the Council prominently displayed copies of the Hebrew Old Testament, the Greek New Testament, and a Latin translation. This display was intended to be an invitation to Johann Fabri to quote directly from the Bible those passages which he would adduce in his arguments. Zwingli’s command of the Bible was well-known, and all members of the Council knew that every argument would be accompanied by many proof-

texts. Fabri, on the other hand, had been instructed by the Bishop of Constance to act as observer rather than debater, and Fabri's intention was merely to advance the Orthodox Roman position. Accordingly in the debate he stressed the traditions of the church and wondered what would happen if one denied the authority of the bishop, the cardinal, and the pope.

In preparation for the debate Zwingli had circulated 67 Articles (*Schlussreden*) which summarized his position and which he was prepared to defend. Considered by many the first confession of Reformed protestantism, these articles were revised and published with explanatory notes in June of 1523. Even a glance at a few articles shows that the authority of Scripture was an important theme in Zwingli's speech. The first article states: "All who say that the gospel is invalid without the confirmation of the church err and slander God (1.1)." Of course the Gospel of salvation in Jesus Christ is central to Zwingli's theology and about God's self-revelation. Article 2 reads, "The


summary of the Gospel is that our Lord Jesus Christ, true Son of God, has made known to us the will of His heavenly Father and has redeemed us from death and reconciled us with God by His guiltlessness." Holy Scripture is supreme because in it God has revealed Himself and the only way to salvation. The fifth article further underscores the doctrine of *sola scriptura*: "all who regard other teachings equal to or higher than the Gospel, err. They do not know what the Gospel is (5.1)." In fact, "in the Gospel we learn that human teaching and human statutes are of no use to salvation (16.1)."

3. Conclusion

In the end Council decided that Zwingli's preaching was scriptural. His opposition to the falsely based institutions of fasting, celibacy, and veneration of the saints received the Council's support because Holy Scripture had shown that these customs were not of God. Furthermore, all priests in Zürich were instructed to preach the Gospel alone. Thus the authority of the Roman

church was subjected to the authority of Christ, the Head of the true church. And the papal edicts were subjected to the authority of the Bible. The Council's command that the Gospel should be the only basis for preaching was accompanied by this dire warning: "Should, however, anyone continue to resist and fail to corroborate his doctrine from holy Scripture, we shall proceed against him according to our good judgment, more severely than we would in our compassion prefer (Z I.467)." May this profession of *sola scriptura*, so firmly expressed in 1523, by Reformed believers in Zürich, also be made by many today.

¹The sermon, *Von Erkießen und Freiheit der Speisen*, was published in 1522.

²The German title is *Von Klarheit und Gewissheit des Wortes Gottes*; I shall quote from the English translation provided by G.W. Bromiley, *Zwingli and Bullinger* (Library of Christian Classics, Vol. 24. Philadelphia, 1953), pp. 49-95. Other quotations derive from *Huldreich Zwinglis Sämtliche Werke* (= Z. Berlin, 1905 -). 

Third Meeting of the ICRC

International Conference of Reformed Churches held at Zwolle, the Netherlands, September 1-9, 1993



The third gathering of the ICRC took place in the picturesque, provincial city of Zwolle, the Netherlands, from September 1-9, 1993. The constituent assembly of the ICRC had been held in Groningen, while the first two conferences were held respectively in Edinburgh, Scotland (1985), and Langley, British Columbia, Canada (1989). The 1993 Conference was scheduled to be held in Seoul, South Korea, but because the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin) did not yet have suitable facilities, the scene shifted to the brand-new "Koningskerk" ("Church of the King") in Zwolle.

Upon arrival in Zwolle, I noticed immediately how well the Conference

had been prepared by the organizing committee of the church in Zwolle-Zuid. A special ICRC flag billowed proudly in the blustery wind beside the Dutch tri-colour. The delegates were promptly signed in, photographed and tagged, provided with informative material, and united with their host families.

The 1993 Conference would prove to be the largest ever yet held in the short history of the fledgling ICRC. Eleven member churches each sent a delegation. Four churches were requesting membership in the Conference: the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), the Free Reformed Churches of North America (FRCNA), the Free Church of Central India (FCCI),

and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC). At least seventeen other churches sent observers to the Conference (see the list of observer-churches elsewhere in this report).

The total number of those who attended the Conference ran around seventy persons, an increase of thirty when compared to the last Conference in 1989. It certainly appears that the ICRC is alive and growing.

Prayer service

As has become the custom, the ICRC is preceded by a prayer service, conducted under the supervision of the hosting church. On August 31, at 7.30 p.m., the Rev. O.J. Douma, chairman of



the Dutch Deputies for Contact with Foreign Churches (BBK) led the service.

The sermon was based on Hebrews 13: 8, "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow." The theme of the sermon went as follows, "God delivers us from our pride by focusing us on Jesus Christ." Rev. Douma dealt with two points:

- a. Christ has always been what we should have been, and
- b. He sees to it that we shall be like Him.

It will be of interest to our readers that the entire liturgy for this service was taken from the *Book of Praise* of the Canadian Reformed Churches. The Canadian input was evident from the very beginning.

After the prayer service, the delegates, host families, and guests received time to enjoy refreshments and to become acquainted. There was a feeling of positive expectation in the air; the members of the Conference longed to begin the work.

Opening business

The Conference was officially opened the next morning, September 1, by the Rev. J. Hagg of the church at Zwolle-Zuid. He welcomed all the delegates and proceeded to guide the proper constitution of the Conference. The credentials of the delegates of the member churches were checked and found to be in good order. The follow-

ing member-churches and delegates were present:

Korea:

Presbyterian Church in Korea (PCK-KOsin): Dr. Kum Sam Lee and Dr. Soon Gil Hur.

Australia:

Free Reformed Churches of Australia (FRCA): Rev. C. Bouwman, Rev. C. Kleijn.
 Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA): Rev. W.P. Gadsby, Rev. R.S. Ward.

Indonesia:

Gereja-Gereja Reformasi di Indonesia: Rev. D.H. Doko.

South Africa:

Vrije Gereformeerde Kerke in Suid-Afrika (VGKSA): Mr. F. Hofsink, Rev. E.L. van'tFoort.
 Free Church in Southern Africa (FCSA): Rev. David S. Fraser, Rev. B.M. Taho.

The Netherlands:

Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland (RCN-L): Rev. A. de Jager, Rev. H. van Veen (advisors: Prof. Dr. M. te Velde, Drs. J.C. Haak).

Scotland:

Free Church of Scotland (FCS): Prof. A.I. Macloed, Rev. C. Graham (ad-

visors: Rev. D. MacDonald, Rev. I.R. MacDondald, Prof. A.C. Boyd).

Ireland:

Reformed Presbyterian Church (RPCI): Rev. H. Cunningham, Prof. W.N.S. Wilson.

Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPCI): Dr. R.C. Beckett, Rev. M.G. Johnston.

North America:

Canadian Reformed Churches: Rev. Cl. Stam, Dr. J. Visscher (advisors: Dr. N.H. Gootjes, Dr. J. Faber). Rev. M. van Beveren, Mr. H.A. Berends and Mr. J. van Vliet were also present from Canada on behalf of the organizing "interim committee."

The four churches which were applying for membership were represented as follows:

North America:

Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC): Rev. J.J. Peterson, Dr. R.B. Gaffin Jr. (Rev. G.I. Williamson, advisor).

Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS): Rev. R. Grossman.

Free Reformed Churches in North America (FRCNA): Rev. C. Pronk, Rev. P. vanderMeyden.

India:

The Free Church of Central India (FCCI): Rev. W. John.

Upon the proposal of the Interim Committee (the moderamen of the 1989 Conference) the following moderamen was declared elected:

Chairman: Rev. A. de Jager (RCN-L)
 Vice-chairman; Dr. S.G. Hur (PCK-Kosin)

Corresponding secretary: Rev. M. van Beveren (CanRC)

Recording secretary: Rev. W. Gadsby (PCEA)

Treasurer: Mr. H.A. Berends (CanRC).

The chairman, Rev. A. de Jager (formerly also minister of the Canadian Reformed Church at Neerlandia, Alberta), spoke appropriate words of welcome to all delegates and offered encouragement for the work of the Conference.

The Conference decided to meet according to the following schedule: 9.00 - 12.00 (morning session); 14.30 - 17.30 (afternoon session); 19.30 - 21.00 (evening session). One can easily see that this is a very busy schedule, resulting in long days for the participants.

The evening sessions would feature the speakers who were invited to present papers to the Conference. Each paper would be discussed on the following day in the morning session. During the afternoon sessions the other business of the Conference would be transacted, for example: membership requests, reports, and proposals from the member churches. Also, time was set aside so that the various churches could meet to discuss inter-church relations. An important aspect of such a Conference is always the informal contact which takes place between official sessions and leads to greater understanding of and appreciation for one another.

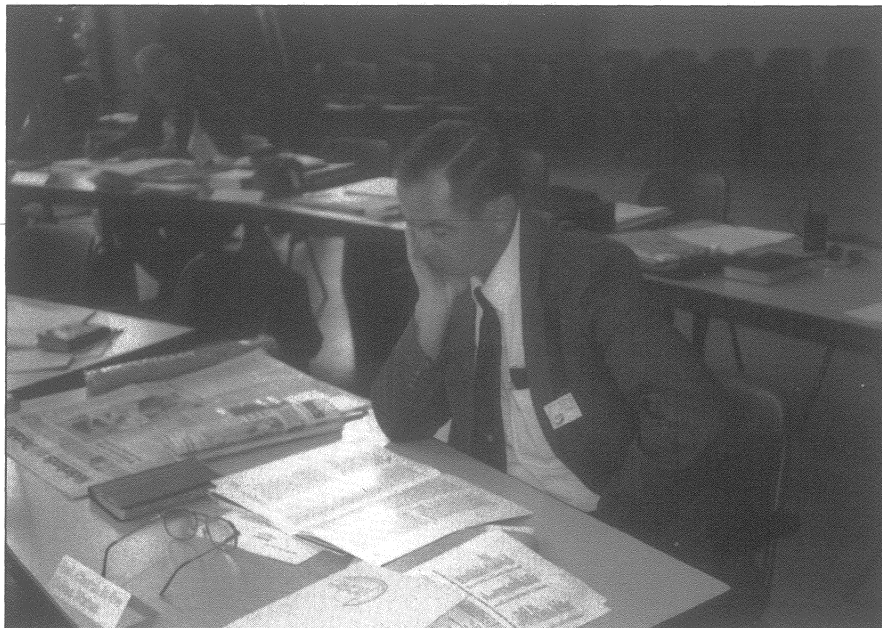
Membership

One of the first matters to be resolved was the request for membership which had been received from four churches: the Reformed Church in the United States (RCUS), the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), the Free Reformed Churches in North America (FRCNA), and the Free Church of Central India (FCCI).

Various committees were appointed to examine each request and to report to the Conference as soon as possible with recommendations. A request for membership is honoured when a church meets the following standards, as stipulated in the constitution (Art. IV, 1):

- a. faithful adherence to the confessional standards mentioned in the Basis (i.e. the Westminster Standards and the Three Forms of Unity)
- b. acceptance by a two-thirds majority vote of the member churches, every member church having one vote.

An examination of the subscription form and the form of government is also required.



Rev. R. Grossman (RCUS) studying a document . . .

In each case, the Conference could gladly, after discussion, admit the churches which applied for membership.

Longer discussion took place on the request of the RCUS. The point here was whether the RCUS did fully meet the requirements for membership because this church in light of its German background officially has only the Heidelberg Catechism as its confessional standard (and not the Three Forms of Unity). The Conference took note of the fact that the RCUS has never rejected the other two Forms, at one time even subscribed to all three, and is presently considering adopting again the Belgic Confession and the Canons of Dort. Since the RCUS is actively committed to the Reformed faith, the admission of

this church to the Conference posed no real problem.

With respect to the admission of the Free Reformed Churches in North America (FRCNA), the chairman, Rev. de Jager, expressed the hope that the participation of the FRCNA in the Conference would help to further contacts between Reformed Churches in Canada and the United States. After all, the purpose of the Conference is not only to express unity, but also to *promote* it.

Some of our readers might wonder how the FRCNA could be admitted to the Conference while not actively seeking or maintaining unity in Canada and the United States with the Canadian Reformed Churches. There appears to be some underlying discrepancy or tension here. In response, I suggest that the one (membership in the ICRC) has consequences for the other (unity at home), but that these two are not always simultaneous for reasons of historical differences and doctrinal distinctives. It is expected that meeting one another in the ICRC may prove beneficial and fruitful also for ongoing contact and mutual recognition on the home front. It takes time and effort to bridge a gap that has existed for almost a hundred years.

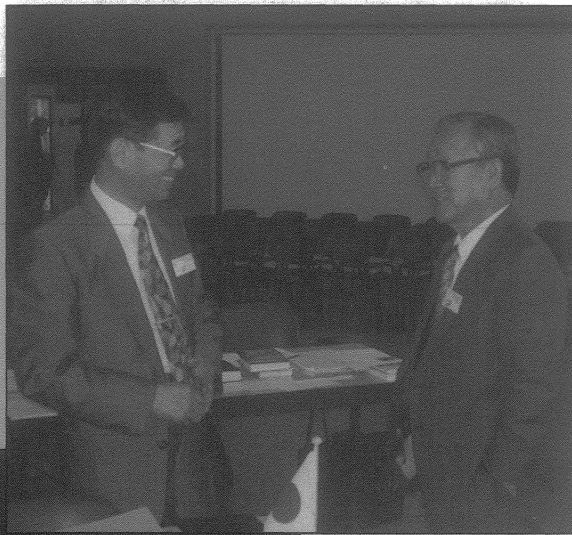
The Free Reformed Churches of Australia

It should be noted that at the beginning of the above-mentioned discussions on membership, the delegates of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia presented a prepared statement



Prof. W.N.S. Wilson, Ireland, speaking on "Prophecy Today"

Meeting of the minds: Dr. Suzuki (Japan) and Dr. Lee (Korea)



The corresponding secretary, Rev. M. van Beveren with Rev. P.K. Meijer, missionary in Brazil



to the Conference. From this statement, I quote the following:

"... we wish it to be clear to our member churches of the ICRC that our 1990 Synod considered concerns put forward regarding perceived inconsistencies with our membership in the ICRC. . . . One of the concerns . . . about our continued membership in the ICRC is the matter of whether there is really 'unity of faith' in the ICRC."

The point here is whether we can admit churches into the ICRC with whom we do not yet have a sister church relationship and so recognize one another's membership, ministry, and sacraments. The FRCA see here an ethical problem, "If we cannot express the unity on the local scene, can we maintain that there is unity on the Conference level?" Since the FRCA have not resolved this issue for themselves, the delegates from the FRCA felt compelled to abstain from voting on membership requests.

The Conference simply took note of this statement. The concerns of the FRCA came up from time to time during the discussions on these and related constitutional matters.

Personally, I can understand the Australian concerns, which have also come

up in our own discussions here in Canada. However, in our discussions, we have come farther in our understanding that churches of the two different Reformed and Presbyterian traditions do belong together and can also work together, as in the past also today, as long as their differences can be discussed in an open and brotherly manner.

The Canadian Reformed delegates, along with those of the PCK-Kosin, both sister churches of the FRCA, did upon request meet separately with the Australian brethren to discuss their concerns. The consensus among the delegates of the sister churches was quite clear: since the ICRC is a Conference which not only expresses the unity of faith but also seeks to promote this unity, and not some international synod, the member churches are not compromised when they receive churches into the Conference with whom they do not yet have a conclusive ecclesiastical relationship.

This is especially not the case when certain differences in doctrine and church polity have been clearly identified and defined ahead of time. It was felt that the expression, "the unity of faith," does not imply full agreement on each and every point of doctrine, but

means (in terms of cooperation in the ICRC) a fundamental agreement in the Reformed faith as the required basis for brotherly discussion.

Hopefully the Australian delegates and churches will benefit from this "consensus" of the sister churches and will wholeheartedly continue their valued participation in the ICRC.

Report on "Theological Affirmation"

At the 1989 Conference in Langley, B.C., a "Committee on Theological Confirmation" was appointed to take up a suggestion of the Presbyterian Church of Eastern Australia (PCEA) "regarding an agreed statement as to what constitutes a true church and the consequences of such a statement for intercommunion etc." (Minutes 1989, page 53).

Informed readers may recall that in 1989, the Canadian delegation abstained from voting on this proposal of the PCEA because the members of our delegation were divided on the issue. This abstention is recorded in the 1989 Minutes (page 56).

My fear at that time was that such an "agreed statement" about the church would become a super-confessional document (i.e. above and beyond the adopted standards), which could begin to lead a life of its own and cause more division than promote unity. What we confess concerning the church is already sufficiently summarized in our creeds and, in my view, no additional statement was required. Others felt, however, that this was an excellent opportunity through an agreed statement to "harmonize" the various traditions concerning the church.

Therefore, I was happy to read that this Committee on Theological Affirmation reported to the 1993 Conference that a separate statement about the church need not be drawn up because we have, indeed, in our respective standards a sufficient declaration on this point. Our Committee for Relations With Churches Abroad had already reported to Synod Lincoln 1992, that the report on Theological Affirmation "takes away any fears that there may have been about the ICRC attempting to come with a new statement about the church," and it now appears that this assessment is correct.

The Conference agreed with the conclusions of the Committee on Theological Affirmation. The general conclusion of this report is that there is a remarkable consensus between "Reformed"

and "Presbyterian" traditions on the doctrine concerning the church and what it means to be sister churches (i.e. opening of the pulpit, intercommunion etc.).

During the discussion of this report, it became apparent that although there is basic agreement on the doctrine concerning the church, there are definitely some distinctive views. The main criticism which was expressed on the committee's report is that it did not really deal with the differences between the Westminster Confession and the Belgic Confession, but concentrated instead on the remarkable similarity between the Belgic Confession and the Scots Confession. Thus, some basic questions were side-stepped. It would have been helpful if clarifying references had been made also to the Westminster Confession. On this point I did not find the report very helpful, but rather somewhat "smooth and glib," as I stated during the discussion.

There is in the two traditions without question a different *approach* to the matter of the church. In the Three Forms of Unity, there is more emphasis on the work of God in His covenant and the calling to be faithful to His norms. In the Westminster tradition, the starting-point is rather in God's work of election, and subsequently the idea of the invisible church comes to the fore. But neither side considered the emphasis of the other to be unscriptural. It was agreed that a proper balancing of these two emphases is required. In this respect



Prof. J. Kamphuis, speaking on "Church and Tolerance"

the discussions at the ICRC were beneficial in helping the member churches grow towards a greater common understanding of what the Bible teaches us about the church of Christ.

For those interested: the report of the Committee on Theological Affirmation will be included in the printed Proceedings of the 1993 ICRC. It was written by a Committee consisting of Dr. J. Faber (convener), Prof. F.S. Leahy (Ireland), Prof. A.C. Boyd (Scotland), Prof. H. M. Cartwright (Scotland), and Dr. N.H. Gootjes. Again, Canadian Reformed input was certainly not lacking.

Mission activities

One of the stated aims of the ICRC, as explained in its constitution, is "to encourage cooperation among the member churches in the fulfillment of the *missionary* and other mandates" (Art. III, 3). To facilitate this cooperation, the 1989 Conference in Langley had re-appointed a Mission Committee with the mandate to give an inventory of the mission activities of the member churches and to give recommendations regarding coordination of and cooperation in these efforts.

The Missions Committee (Dr. K. Deddens, convener) reported on its activities. Various recommendations were made by this committee. As a result the Missions Committee was again appointed with the following mandate:

1. to update information from the member churches regarding mission activities in general, and also about missionary training and methodology of mission in particular;
2. to ask the respective member churches to organize four different mission conferences, two years after each ICRC, one in the West (Curacao, Surinam, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela), one in Africa (South Africa, Ghana, Zaire), one in the East (Japan, Indonesia, Philippines, Taiwan, India, Papua New Guinea) and one in Europe (including Eastern Europe). The reports of these conferences are to be sent at least one and a half years before the next ICRC to the Missions Committee;
3. to ask the churches which are working among the Jews to contact one

Logo of the ICRC



The following explanation may be given for the logo of the ICRC.

The *circle*, a symbol of the world – seeing the international character of the ICRC.

Around the circle, the *church*, which started small – at the beginning of the ages – moving out into all the world, manifest in the ICRC – a continuing movement signified in the unfinished, open end.

The *cross*, a symbol of the church – at the starting point also as a symbol of Christ's redemptive work for all the world – spanning the entire world.

The *curved lines* also support the dynamic movement in the history of the church.

Prof. H.M. Ohmann, speaking on "Redemptive-Historical Preaching"



Members of the ICRC on a bike tour, front: Rev. David John, Free Church of Central India

another and to send their report to the Missions Committee at least one and a half years before the next ICRC;

4. to inform the member churches each and every half year about mission work, stating also their needs and strategies, in a newsletter;
5. to send the report to the Corresponding Secretary at least one year before the next ICRC.

As may be understood, there was considerable discussion on the proposals of the Missions Committee. There were some unanswered questions, as well. Will all this not mean organizing too many conferences with too much cost and not enough effectiveness? Who will edit and publish the "newsletter"? I personally felt that I, as Canadian delegate, did not have a mandate to endorse such far-reaching proposals and could therefore not give the above my unqualified support.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the work of mission must have and will

have an important place in the function of the ICRC. Cooperation in mission is a matter which requires our attention and support so that we can indeed help one another effectively in this world-wide venture. Our Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad will do wise to seek some direction in this matter from the next general synod.

Speakers and speeches

A very important aspect of the ICRC, also at Zwolle, was the presentation and discussion of various papers by qualified speakers. Here is where the member churches can really get down to the basics of ecclesiastical contact, namely, to edify one another in the truth of God's Word.

For this Conference there was a list of respectable speakers with topics arranged mostly around the themes of *preaching* and *mission*. Here is the list of speakers and topics:

Drs. C.J. Haak (the Netherlands): Mission and the Wrath of God. Prof.

W.N.S. Wilson (Ireland): Prophecy Today? Dr. N.H. Gootjes (Canada): Catechism Preaching; Rev. R. S. Ward (Australia): Recent Criticisms of the Westminster Confession of Faith. Drs. H.M. Ohmann (the Netherlands): Redemptive-Historical Preaching. Prof. J. Kamphuis (the Netherlands): Remarks on Church and Tolerance.

As stated earlier, the papers were presented during the evening sessions and discussed the next morning. Usually a very lively and enlightening discussion took place, not only during the meeting, but also during the breaks. I consider this to be one of the prime benefits of the Conference: to study common problems and issues which confront the member churches. Even if there is not always complete agreement on the topics, there still grows a better understanding of one another's positions. I was pleased to notice throughout the many debates the clear, whole-hearted commitment of all participants to the Word of God and the Reformed faith. It is refreshing and stimulating to work in such an atmosphere.

Since the papers will be published in the *Proceedings*, I will refrain from summarizing the contents in this report. But I do want to mention that each of these papers is filled with excellent material which ought to be considered as required reading in each Reformed family!

Introduction of observers

It has become more or less a custom in the ICRC that delegates from observer churches are officially welcomed and given the opportunity to introduce themselves. These observers do not have the right to vote, but may participate in the discussions. I did not notice that this privilege was abused, for the many observers conducted themselves properly as guests.

Still, as the Conference grows, I think that this is one area where perhaps stricter rules might be formulated. After all, it should not happen that observers begin to dominate the discussions and influence the decisions, or use the ICRC as a free forum for their own ideas. The "open" format may have to be tightened.

It may happen that those who attend one Conference as observers, are present at the next Conference as delegates of churches requesting membership. Therefore it is good to include in this report a list of those churches who sent observers to the ICRC 1993: Asso-



Some guests . . . Rev. and Mrs. D. de Jong with Dr. Hur (Korea)

ciate Reformed Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Christelijk Gereformeerde Kerk in Nederland, Dutch Reformed Church in South Africa, Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka, Ely Presbyterian Church (Reformed, Cardiff, Wales), Reformed Churches in South Africa, Gereja-Gereja Masehi Musyafir (Indonesia), Iglesia Cristiana de Fe Reformada (Venezuela) Igreja Prebyteriana do Brazil, Igreja Reformata em Portugal, Netherlands Reformed Churches, Reformed Church in Japan, Reformed Presbyterian Church of North America, Reformed Churches of New Zealand, Reformed Presbyterian Church (General Assembly – U.S.A.), Reformed Presbyterian Church of India, Reformed Presbyterian Church in Taiwan, and Iglesia Evangelica del Peru. I hope that I have not missed anyone.

Also various consistories of Independent Christian Reformed Churches had sent observers. The Conference was pleased to welcome Mr. Tom van den Berg of Telkwa, B.C., Rev. C. Tuininga of Edmonton, Alberta, Rev. J.S. Gangar of Wellandport, Ontario, and Rev. J. Tuininga of Lethbridge, Alberta. It was a pleasure to meet and speak with these brethren and the many other observers, from far and wide, in Zwolle. We pray that this fellowship may lead to further contact and greater recognition. I am sure that all observers came away with very positive impressions.

Looking ahead

The ICRC 1993, also made some arrangements for the future. It was decided to accept the invitation of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK-Kosin) to host the next Conference in Seoul, South Korea, the Lord willing, to be held around August 20, 1997. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church tentatively agreed to function as "alternative host."

The following speakers and topics for 1997 were finalized:

- a. Biblical Principles for the Relation between Church and State, by Dr. R.C. Beckett (EPCI)
- b. A Survey of Mission Opportunities, by elder M. Bube (OPC)
- c. The Ministry of the Word amongst Asian Religious People, by Rev. David John (FCCI)
- d. Dr. Richard Gaffin (OPC), on a yet to be determined topic.
- e. Speaking in Tongues, by Rev. E.A. de Boer (GKN-L).

It is generally the idea that the next Conference will devote special attention to mission matters and to the needs of churches in the so-called "Third World."

In view of some confusion about the exact method of and requirements for receiving new member churches (as e.g. in the case of the RCUS with only one confessional standard), it was agreed that the delegates from the PCEA, Rev. Gadsby and Rev. Ward, will function as a Committee to provide the member churches with a pro-

posal to reword Article IV of the Constitution and also Articles V.3 and VII. 1.e of the Regulations "in order to reformulate the requirements for ICRC membership." The member churches will receive this proposal well in advance so that it can be discussed internally before serving on the next ICRC.

I am rather ambivalent about this decision and I hope that this item will not lead to further constitutional wrangling. Fortunately, Messrs. Gadsby and Ward are capable and seasoned ICRC men, who understand where some of the sensitivities lie.

As usual, the moderamen of this ICRC will function as an "interim committee" to prepare the next Conference. It is noteworthy that Rev. M.van Beveren continues as Corresponding Secretary and br. H.A. Berends as treasurer.

With respect to the finances, it may be reported that the ICRC decided that "no member church would bear more than 49% of the assessment." As the number of member churches grows, the cost per church decreases and can be spread more equitably among the member churches.

The Conference took grateful note of the contribution made by Mr. Jason van Vliet of Hamilton, Canada, who served the moderamen "with his highly efficient behind-the-scenes secretarial work."

In conclusion

The 1993 ICRC may be termed a successful conference with a prevailing relaxed, brotherly atmosphere. In an interview with *Nederlands Dagblad*, the chairman of the Conference, Rev. A. de Jager gave the following impression, "At the previous Conference (Langley, 1989) the process of getting to know one another clearly played a major role. We had to grow towards one another and this brought along with it some confrontation and a questioning of one another. The attitude of this Conference was more: we have to start working things out and must really progress with each other."

Of course, there were still differences apparent. Rev. de Jager admitted that "we are still not finished discussing the basis," but added, "we clearly wanted to get away from the tension which this still caused in Langley."

I believe that Rev. de Jager is correct in his assessment. The ICRC is now past the stage of infancy and is entering a new phase where the emphasis comes to lie more on mutual help. The ICRC will still continue to discuss basic

points of disagreement, but the main direction will be towards further cooperation and support, especially for churches from the Third World.

The inevitable question will be asked, "What is now the concrete benefit of such a conference as the ICRC?" The immediate results of all these personal and ecclesiastical contacts can not be easily measured. It takes time to build a city, and small steps are then quite significant.

It became apparent that the smaller Reformed and Presbyterian churches from impoverished areas in the world were greatly encouraged and edified by the fellowship experienced in the Conference. Let me quote Rev. Mohan Chaco of the Reformed Presbyterian Church

of India, a delighted observer, who spoke moving words, "We need encouragement and direction, because we are a small group and geographically isolated. This Conference has been a great help to us." I believe that Rev. Chaco echoed the feeling of all delegates and observers.

Blessed are the peacemakers

Also through this Conference, the churches can fulfill their ecumenical task: to stand together in a wicked world and to share the gifts of Jesus Christ. Then we are mutually enriched.

Let me conclude this report with a quote from the speech by my former professor and mentor, J. Kamphuis, "Now that we see in our time so much

faith destroyed and secularization making swift progress, the ICRC can be a priceless means, a good instrument, a striking symbol of the communion of saints, which does not allow error, but within which there is communal life from Christ's peace – the peace which surpasses all understanding and which can keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. If one word of our Saviour can direct our community of churches, it is what Christ said to His disciples in the sermon on the mount: blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God."

The 1993 ICRC at Zwolle was, indeed, a gathering of true peacemakers.

Cl. Stam

Hamilton, September 30, 1993 **C**

Press Release of the International Conference of Reformed Churches, Zwolle, the Netherlands, September 1-9, 1993

This Conference held a preliminary meeting in 1982, with the Free Church of Scotland and the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (Liberated) taking leading roles. Subsequent regular meetings were held in Scotland in 1985, and in Canada in 1989.

The third meeting at Zwolle was hosted by the congregation of the Zwolle South Reformed Church, and delegates received most generous hospitality from local Reformed churches.

The Conference received four new members, bringing its total membership to 15 churches. The new members are: Orthodox Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Reformed Church in the United States, Free Reformed Churches of North America, and the Free Church of Central India. Observers representing more than 20 churches were also present. An excellent spirit of fellowship was characteristic of the entire meeting, which indeed reflected a pronounced international flavour.

The Mission Committee reported to the Conference on the missionary activities of the member churches and suggested areas for mutual cooperation. Member churches were urged to organize regional missionary conferences in various parts of the world.

The Theological Affirmation Committee report drew the attention of the Conference to the consensus on the doctrine of the church in the various Reformed confessions which form the constitutional basis of the Confer-

ence. It pointed out the consequences that this holds for admission to the pulpit and to the Lord's table.

The most prominent themes of the Conference had to do with mission and preaching. Papers were submitted and discussed affirming very clearly the teaching of the Bible on the centrality of Christ in mission, and on the righteous wrath of God. Papers on preaching covered the areas of catechetical preaching and redemptive-historical preaching. Three further papers addressed the subjects of the claim to the gift of prophecy in the church today, the extent of doctrinal tolerance permissible in the church, and recent criticisms of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

All of the papers submitted led to considerable and profitable discussion which, while facing differences honestly, served to promote greater mutual understanding between participating churches.

Note was taken of the problems experienced in different parts of the world, particularly the difficult situation in Southern Africa.

The Conference accepted the invitation of the Presbyterian Church in Korea (Kosin) to host the next meeting of the Conference, scheduled to be held in Seoul, Korea in August of 1997. The program for this meeting will attempt to take into account the diverse situations encountered by the member churches. **C**

Meeting of the delegates of the Presbyterian Church of Korea (Kosin) and the Canadian Reformed Churches

During the ICRC at Zwolle, the delegates from the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK-Kosin) and the Canadian Reformed Churches took time for a special meeting.

The reason for this meeting was to formalize the fraternal relationship between these two churches. Synod Lincoln 1992, decided to accept the invitation of the PCK-Kosin to enter into a full sister church relationship with the Canadian Reformed Churches. Synod also decided to mandate the Committee for Relations with Churches Abroad "to formalize this relationship in a manner satisfactory to both federations" (Acts, Art. 111. IV.B.2).

It seemed best to formalize this relationship at the ICRC, thus cutting costs and reducing the workload of the Committee. The meeting was arranged for September 2, 1993. For Canada were present: Rev. Cl. Stam, Dr. J. Visscher and Mr. H.A. Berends (along with the advisors Dr. J. Faber, Dr. N.H. Gootjes, and Rev. M. van Beveren). The Korean churches were represented by Dr. Soon Gil Hur and Dr. Kum Sang Lee.

Dr. Visscher opened the meeting with Scripture reading and prayer. He addressed the Korean deputies with words of thankfulness for the fraternal relationship which has come about. He presented to the Korean brethren a copy of the latest edition of the *Book of Praise* and a copy of the publication *Inheritance Preserved*, written by Rev. W.W.J. VanOene. In this way the Koreans can further acquaint themselves with the history and practice of our Canadian Reformed Churches.

Dr. S.G. Hur responded on behalf of the Korean churches. He expressed gratitude that after 20 years of contact a relationship has finally been established. He sees in this development the hand of God.

The Korean churches invited a delegate to attend their General Assembly



From left to right: Dr. N.H. Gootjes, Mr. H.A. Berends, Dr. S.G. Hur, Rev. Cl. Stam, Dr. K.S. Lee, Dr. J. Visscher, Dr. J. Faber

to be held later in 1993. Since this cannot be realized at this time, it was agreed that a Canadian delegation may be sent at a later date.

A brief discussion followed on the question how to make this new relationship as fruitful and possible, despite differences in language and culture. It was felt that meaningful contact can be pursued, for example, via the Theological Colleges of the two churches.

It was noted that the Korean churches have contact with two Presbyterian Korean churches in Toronto, who are affiliated with an American-Korean Presbyterian denomination made up of immigrants from Korea, many of whom are former Kosin members.

It was also agreed that the Kosin churches will send extra copies of an existing brochure about the history and

life of the Presbyterian Church in Korea. Some discussion took place about the church struggles in Korea among Presbyterians (e.g. the controversy with the Presbyterian Hap-Dong church).

Information is exchanged about the next General Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches, to be held, the Lord willing, in 1995, in Abbotsford, British Columbia.

The delegates of both churches will report to their major assemblies on this meeting.

Dr. S.G. Hur closed the meeting with thanksgiving to the Lord. The meeting then went outside to pose for a photograph which would be taken home by each delegation. **C**

For the Committee
Cl. Stam

Rev. W.W.J. VanOene: Fifty Years in the Ministry

On November 7, D.V., it will be fifty years ago that Rev. W.W.J. VanOene was ordained as Minister of God's Word in the Reformed Church at Oud-Loosdrecht, the Netherlands at the age of twenty-three. Rev. VanOene was the youngest minister at that moment. He had finished his studies in Kampen in the short time of four years. The times were difficult. There was simply no money or time to be wasted. Every cent and every minute was important in the VanOene family.

Moreover, when half a century ago colleague VanOene and his wife began their life together in the service of the Lord in one of His congregations, this happened in the middle of the Second World War. At the same time there was the struggle in the Reformed Churches against hierarchical decisions and incorrect doctrinal pronouncements of the general synods held in 1942, and 1943. This struggle would lead to the Liberation in the following year.

The older ones among us remember the hardship during that winter of 1943-1944, and even more during the next one. There was hunger in the Netherlands. People biked and walked more than hundred or two hundred kilometres in order to buy food in the eastern and northern parts of the country. Some people ate tulip bulbs when that was all they could lay their hands on. It was certainly not a time of abundance. One had to live very carefully. It was also a dangerous time. Many had to go into hiding because of their resistance against the occupying German army. Many were arrested and put in prisons and concentration camps or just shot. Among these were ministers of God's Word, faithful to the Lord and His people, as well as to the Dutch nation and its legal government in England. The VanOenes accepted this hard and dangerous situation while the family expanded. The congregation was guided and comforted with God's Word.



The guidance of God's Word was also given in the difficult ecclesiastical struggle against hierarchy in the Reformed Churches in those days and against incorrect doctrinal statements. Together with many other church members, Rev. VanOene saw what faithfulness to the confessional standards and to the adopted Reformed Church Order meant. In that struggle it was learned how easy it is for Reformed Churches to deviate in doctrine and practice from the confessed truth of God's Word and to make decisions in conflict with the adopted rules for the life of the churches. In our magazine we have noticed time and again how Rev. VanOene did not cease to point to any small beginning of an aberration from the principles of Reformed Church polity. The root of this watch dog position obviously must be sought in his training in Kampen by the professors S. Greijdanus and K. Schilder and in his experiences during the early years of his ministry.

In January 1948, Rev. VanOene became minister of the church at

Schiedam beside his older colleague Rev. C. Vonk, who is known for his books on the Heidelberg Catechism, the Belgic Confession, and on the books of Scripture. Also colleague Vonk was strong in his aversion against any form of what he saw as the beginning of hierarchy in the churches. However, the teamwork in Schiedam did not last for many years. On 23 November of 1952, Rev. VanOene was installed as servant of God's Word in the church at New Westminster in British Columbia. He served this church and its expansion toward the east in the Fraser Valley until the move to the church at Fergus, Ontario, in January 1970. At that time this church included the areas where we now find the congregations of Guelph and Elora.

Rev. VanOene has not only set a stamp on the Canadian Reformed Churches in the Fraser Valley and in the Fergus area, but on all of them. He was a delegate to almost all our synods, except the Synod of Smithville in 1980, and the last three which were held after

his retirement in April 1985, yes, already more than eight years ago. At these major assemblies Rev. VanOene was appreciated as a member for a number of reasons, not in the least for his ability in formulating proposals at the floor of these meetings. It helped to speed up the proceedings.

It should also not be forgotten that our colleague played an important role in the history of our Theological College. In the first place, he had a leading position at the Synod of Orangeville in convincing others that our churches had to establish their own Theological College for the training of their future ministers. Further, in later years, when Rev. H. Scholten could no longer do this, he served at the College as lecturer in church history and church polity, beside his busy task as minister of the congregation at Fergus. This extra task came to an end when Dr. K. Deddens was appointed by the Synod of Cloverdale in 1983, and began his work in 1984.

During all these years our colleague has been involved also in publishing activity. Not only did he serve the churches with his book on their history, *Inheritance Preserved*, of which a revised edition was published in 1991,

but also with a book on church polity in which our Church Order is explained in a way which is characteristic for our brother. And I would like to express the wish here that Rev. VanOene will serve us with preparing another book. A part of it has been published already under the heading "Patrimonium Profile" in several issues of *Clarion* of past years. It presents the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands from the Secession to the Liberation. There is a great need for such a book in the English language, not in the least here in North America.

The other aspect of colleague VanOene's publishing activity was his involvement first for many years in the *Canadian Reformed Magazine* and since 1973, in *Clarion*. Many late hours were given to writing articles and, during a long period, the editorial care for the magazine. All this was done out of care for the churches. We are thankful to God for the service of Rev. VanOene during these fifty years in which he received the support of his companion for life.

We include here sr. VanOene and the children. Fifty years in the ministry means also fifty years of marriage and

family life. This still being together as husband and wife and this serving the Lord with the whole family in the unity of faith is a great blessing, too.

Therefore, with both the fiftieth wedding anniversary and the jubilee in the ministry we congratulate colleague VanOene and his wife and family, as well as the churches in our thankfulness to the LORD for them and their service.

Although we think that Rev. VanOene has come to an age that he is fully justified to begin to take it a bit easier, this does not mean that he should do nothing anymore. Having grown-up in the situation in which every penny and every minute counts, it would be impossible for our brother to spend the rest of his life in idleness. We hope that we shall see that book (mentioned above) on the history of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands as well as some more articles in our magazine. May God continue to give to our brother and sister life and health together, in the midst of their children and grandchildren, and in the midst of the churches.

On behalf of all of us,

J. Geertsema 

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Congratulations!

Congratulations, Rev. and Mrs. VanOene!

Fifty years of service! – a remarkable milestone. It has been a great pleasure to have been so closely associated with the VanOenes. Not only from Premier's business point of view but also on a very personal level, have we experienced their unselfish dedication to the Reformed community!

A strong bond grew during the difficult years in the church of Winnipeg in the mid-60s because of the deposition of Rev. C. de Haan. Rev. VanOene successfully defended in court Winnipeg's case concerning the church property.

For almost 30 years he made Winnipeg an annual stopover point on his trips, to visit his children in the east or west, preaching and spending time with the congregation.

In 1971/1972, when Premier took over the Canadian Reformed Magazine, Rev. VanOene was asked to become its editor. Clarion, as it is now known, held an important place in his activities. Throughout the years he made sure there was sufficient copy. If a contributor failed, Rev. VanOene made up for it – even in the wee hours of the morning.

*Unselfishly and without prior conditions he has served our Reformed community with his writings. Well-known among them are his books *Inheritance Preserved* and *With Common Consent* which have benefited us all.*

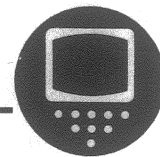
His sighs (and ours), expressing the wish that others would take up their pen and share their knowledge and offer time and energy for the community, were many. While sometimes discouraged, he never gave up.

Alongside him there was always Mrs. VanOene, ready and willing to offer hospitality. Whatever their hands found to do, also at our printing shop as labourers among the others, they did it as a team.

We at Premier, and personally, say to you both "Thank You." We enjoyed your friendship and the excellent cooperation as we worked together for so many years, and we still do.

May the Lord grant you many more years together as husband and wife in the midst of your immediate family and in the family of the Church.

G. Kuik
W. Gortemaker



Classis Ontario North, September 30 and October 1

After the singing of Psalm 96: 1, 2, the reading of Ruth 1, and opening prayer, Rev. G.H. Visscher welcomes the brothers to this gathering on behalf of the convening church at Burlington West. He reads a letter from the church at Lower Sackville which expresses regrets that they are unable to send any delegates this time. After the delegates from Burlington South report on the delegation from the other churches, classis is constituted, and the moderamen take their place with Rev. W. den Hollander as chairman, Rev. G.H. Visscher as vice-chairman, and Rev. G. Nederveen as clerk.

Rev. W. den Hollander expresses thankfulness that Brampton could receive a minister in the person of Rev. B.J. Berends and that he can be here in our midst for the first time; he expresses thanks for the fact that Burlington South is taking steps to see to it that their vacancy is filled and wishes them well in this; he mentions that the church at Elora looks forward in anticipation with respect to the ordination of candidate J. Slaa and that they are not alone in this; he mentions that Fergus has had Rev. and Mrs. VanOene in their midst lately with a view to their upcoming 50th anniversary in marriage and ministry; he mentions that the church at Guelph is yet vacant and wishes them the blessing of the Lord in the work during this vacancy; and lastly he remembers that the church at Ottawa also looks forward to the filling of their vacancy with the ordination of candidate J. Van Popta.

Thereafter the agenda is adopted. The new minister of the church at Brampton, Rev. B. J. Berends indicates that he is wholeheartedly willing to sign the subscription form and does so.

Examinations

Classis then deals with the request of br. John Louwerse, a fourth year student of the Theological College, for permission to speak an edifying word in the churches in accordance with article 21 of the Church Order. To that end, classis hears the sermon proposal of student J. Louwerse on Ruth 1:15 -

17; after deliberation in closed session, classis agrees to continue the examination and does so with a forty minute examination in doctrine and creeds. After further deliberation in closed session, classis decides to grant brother Louwerse's request. Brother Louwerse is informed of this decision by the chairman who also wishes him the blessing of the Lord, expressing the hope that this permission might serve well with a view to his training and also allow him to become known to the congregations. Br. Louwerse signs the subscription form for that purpose, and after singing and prayer of thanksgiving, classis adjourns for lunch.

As candidate J. Slaa has accepted the call to the church of Elora, classis next begins with his peremptory examination in accordance with article 5 (A.1.b) of the church order. For that purpose also the deputies of regional synod (art.48, C.O), the Revs. D. Agema and Cl. Stam, are welcomed into our midst. Classis first hears candidate Slaa's sermon-proposal on Zephaniah 1:12 and in closed session, after due deliberation, classis decides to continue the examination. The chairman then welcomes grades 7 and 8 of the John Calvin School who are present to witness part of the examination. Br. Slaa is examined on his ability to exegete the Old and New Testaments, his knowledge of the contents of Holy Scripture, of the doctrine of the church, of the history of the church, of ethics, of the polity of the church, and of the pastoral disciplines. In closed session, classis then decides that the results of the examination are satisfactory and that the way is open for him to be ordained as minister of the Word in the church of Elora. This is communicated to br. Slaa and his wife, and after singing and prayer, they are congratulated with a view to this important step in their lives and the life of the church at Elora. Classis then adjourns for supper.

Classis, with the deputies, then begins with the peremptory examination of candidate J. Van Popta. After ascertaining that the documents are in order, the sermon proposal on John 8:12 is heard. In its deliberations in closed session, classis concludes with much

regret that the examination could not be continued. Thereafter classis is adjourned.

The next morning, the chairman reopens the meeting and requests that we sing from Ps. 105:1,2, read from Romans 5: 1 - 11, and leading in prayer. A welcome is extended, changes in delegation are noted.

Classis next deals with the call of the church at Elora to candidate J. Slaa. After checking that the documents are in order, classis approbates the call in accordance with article 5 of the church order.

Reports

Some reports are dealt with. The church at Burlington West indicates that the books of the classical treasurer have been found to be in good order. The committee for financial aid to students for the ministry reports that the fund has been inactive for some time and that funds are still available; the church at Fergus reports that they have audited these books and found them to be in good order. The committee for needy churches reports that they have considered the requests of the church at Elora and Ottawa for financial support and they recommend that the church at Elora receive \$25,150 in support and the church at Ottawa \$34,500, which means that in 1994, the churches will be assessed \$31.60 per communicant member; this is adopted. The church at Orangeville reports that the books of the committee for needy churches were found to be in good order. A report on church visitation to the church at Orangeville is received with thankfulness.

In question period according to article 44 of the Church Order, it is determined that the ministry is continued in the churches, that the decisions of the assemblies are honoured and that there is nothing in which the consistories need the help of classis.

Proposals and correspondence

A proposal from the church at Burlington East to revise the mandate of the committee for needy churches and to review the classical regulations is dealt with next. Classis decides to appoint a committee to update and review the classical regulations (e.g., art. 5, 6C.1&2, 7.9).

The church at Burlington South, in accordance with art.4c of the Church Order, then seeks the approval of classis regarding their desire to extend a second call to Rev. C. Bosch of Kelm-scott, Australia.

This approval is granted.

A letter is received from br. J. Kottelenberg who asks not to be reappointed to the committee for Needy Churches. Classis agrees and expresses gratitude for his work on the committee.

A letter is received from the Presbytery of Prince Edward Island of the Free Church of Scotland indicating their regret at not being able to visit this classis and that they hope to be present at a future classis.

Appointments

Next classis is to be convened by the church at Chatsworth on the suggested date of December 10, 1993, at 9 a.m. The suggested officers are: chairman: Rev. P. G. Feenstra, vice -chairman: Rev. P. Aasman, and clerk: Rev. W. den Hollander.

The following appointments are made for examinations: Co-ordinators: Rev. P. G. Feenstra, Rev. W. den Hollander; Exegesis O.T.: Rev. P. Aasman; Exegesis N.T.: Rev. G. H. Visscher; Doc-

trine and Creeds: Rev. R. N. Gleason; Knowledge of Holy Scripture: Rev. P. G. Feenstra; Church History: Rev. B. J. Berends; Ethics: Rev. J. Huijgen; Church Polity: Rev. G. Nederveen; Diaconiology: Rev. W. den Hollander.

The following ministers are to conduct church visitation in the following places: Brampton : P. Aasman. W. den Hollander; Burlington East: P. Feenstra, R. N. Gleason; Burlington South: J. Huijgen, B. J. Berends; Burlington West: P. Aasman, B.J. Berends; Chatsworth: R.N. Gleason, G.H. Visscher; Elora: P. Feenstra, J. Huijgen; Fergus: G. Nederveen, G.H. Visscher; Grand Valley: B.J. Berends, W. den Hollander; Guelph: P. Aasman, R.N. Gleason; Lower Sackville: G. Nederveen, G.H. Visscher; Orangeville: P. Aasman, B.J. Berends; Ot-tawa: W. den Hollander, P. Feenstra; Toronto: J. Huijgen, G. Nederveen.

The following appointments are also made: Church for taking care of the archives: Burlington East; Church for inspection of the archives: Burlington South; Treasurer: J. J. Poort, 1131 Fisher Ave., Burlington L7P 2L2; Church to audit the books of the classical treasurer: Burlington West; Church for financial aid to students for the ministry: Guelph;

Church to audit the books of the fund for financial aid to students: Fergus; Committee for Needy Churches: G. Lodder, J. Van Bodegom, M. Brouwer; Church to audit the books of the Fund for Needy Churches: Orangeville; Committee to Review Classical Regulations: Rev. B.J. Berends, P. de Bruin, and Rev. G. Nederveen (convener); Delegates to Regional Synod of November 17, 1993: Revs. W. den Hollander, P. G. Feenstra, J. Huijgen, G.H. Visscher (alternates: P. Aasman, G. Nederveen, R.N. Gleason, B.J. Berends, in that order); and elders: H. Harsevoort, W. F. Horsman, R. Kruis-selbrink, G. Veenman (alternates: H. Faber, F. Kampen, J. Jonker, R. Nieuwen-huis, in that order).

Personal question period is made use of. The question is asked when the new examination of cand. J. Van Popta can take place. Classis gives its advice on this matter. Censure according to article 44 is not needed.

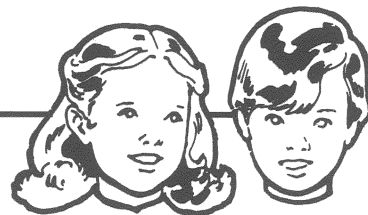
The Acts of classis are adopted and the press release is approved.

After asking the meeting to sing Psalm 121:3, 4, the Rev. W. den Hollander leads in prayer and closes classis.

For classis,
G.H. Visscher, vice-chairman e.t. 

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Dear Busy Beavers,

It wasn't right!
It was just not right.
No, it was wrong!
Wrong, wrong, wrong!
Martin Luther could think of oodles of reasons why it was wrong.
He started writing down some of those reasons.
He had a plan.
He would let other people know, too, just how wrong those *indulgences* were.
Buy forgiveness of sins?
Money will get rid of sins?
No! No! No!
Luther had to get others to know the wonderful truth.
Only the Saviour paid for our sins.
Money? Indulgences? Never!
And so Luther wrote his reasons, his 95 theses.
He nailed the paper to the church door at Wittenberg.

The date was October 31, 1517.
There! Now people could read for themselves how wrong those indulgences were.
And the people did read!
Luther's 95 theses were printed and spread through Germany, through Europe.
Everywhere people were talking!
Talking about how Luther taught that only Jesus' sacrifice saves from sin.
It was wonderful news to many people!
That's how the Lord turned things around for His church so long ago.
It was wonderful *REnewal*.
It was the start of the Great *REformation*.
The date was *October 31, 1517*.

I really enjoyed reading about Luther and the many dangers he faced so courageously.
Do you have a church history book you could read some of these stories from?

Quiz Time!

BIBLE QUIZ

Luther read and studied the Bible a lot. Can you fill in the blanks? Helps are given.

- Every word of God proves _____;
He is a _____ to those who take
_____ in Him. Prov. 30:5
- Let the word of _____ dwell in you
_____. Col. 3:16
- The grass _____, the flower fades; but the
word of our _____ will _____ for ever.
Is. 40:8
- Truly, truly, I say to you, he who _____ my
word and _____ Him who sent me, has
eternal _____. Jn. 5:24a
- Heaven and earth will _____,
but my _____ will _____ pass away.
Mk. 13:31
- Man shall not live by _____ alone, but
by every _____ that proceeds from the
mouth of _____. Mt. 4:4
- Simon Peter answered Him, "Lord, to whom shall we
_____? _____ have the words of eternal
life. Jn. 6:68



- For the word of God is _____ and _____
.... Heb. 4:12
- I write to you, young men, because you are strong,
and the _____ of God _____ in you.
1 Jn. 2:14
- But the word is _____ you; it is in your mouth
and in your _____, so that you can _____
it. Deut. 30:14
- (Jesus) said to them, "My mother and my
are those who hear the word of God and _____
it. Lk. 8:21

WHERE IN THE WORLD

Try to make the clue below into the names of several countries of the world.



- SNOR-S + WEIGH = _____
- CAN + A+ DUH = _____
- FIN + LAND = _____
- EYE + RAN = _____
- B + RAZ + ILL = _____

SLIMY CRITTERS

by Busy Beaver *Marian Wierenga*

Unscramble the letters to find out what the word says.



- DOSTA = _____
- SKSNEA = _____
- ANSLIS = _____
- SUSLG = _____
- SWOMR = _____

(See answers)

NAME SEARCH

by Busy Beaver *Ruby Knol*

Andrew	Fred	Karl	Peter	Walter
Brandon	Grant	Lorn	Quinton	Zack
Chad	Henry	Marvin	Robert	
David	Ivan	Nathan	Stan	
Earl	James	Oscar	Trevor	

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

CALLING ALL COMPUTER FANS!

The computer I sometimes use at work has a very easy-to-use program.

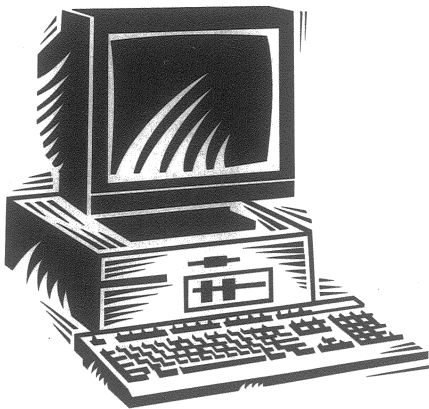
At home we have a computer with games.

I would love to hear from Busy Beavers about:

- your favourite computer games
- how you use your computer for homework
- Have you joined a computer club?
- *More* computer stories

Please let's hear from you!

Send your letters to: *Busy Beaver Computer Club*
c/o Premier Printing Ltd.
One Beghin Avenue
Winnipeg, MB, Canada R2J 3X5



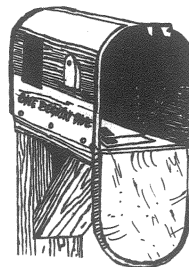
NOVEMBER BIRTHDAY WISHES

We all join in wishing God's blessing for all the Busy Beavers celebrating a November birthday. Here's hoping you have one excellent day with family and friends! Maybe even more than one day! Who knows!



NOVEMBER

Carin Meliefste	1	Jeremy Linde	18
Anna Kampen	2	Dan Vander Veen	19
Peter Vanderzwaag	8	Doug Vander Veen	19
Teri Oosterhoff	10	Jaclyn Hulst	20
Josh Rosa	10	Richard Oosterhoff	20
Theresa Bredenhof	11	Terry Van Andel	21
Melissa Bremer	12	Rachel Pruim	24
Cheryl Jelsma	14	James Aasman	28
Heidi DeHaan	15	Pauline Boeve	29
Ashlea Jagt	15	Joni Schulenberg	30



FROM THE MAILBOX

How did you enjoy your Labour Day picnic at Bronte Creek, *Danielle Ostermeier*? Sounds to me as if you had an excellent holiday! I enjoyed the beach this summer, too, *Danielle*. Bye for now.

Hello, *Nelena Bergsma*. Thank you for your letter and your poem. It was good to hear from you again. Thank you for sharing. Write again soon!

Busy Beavers, we need a pen pal for
Nelena Bergsma (age 9)
Box 752
Carman, MB R0G 0J0

Answers

Slimy Critters: 1. toads 2. snake 3. snails 4. slugs 5. worms
4. Iran 5. Brazil
Where in the World? 1. Norway 2. Canada 3. Finland

Time to say "good-bye," Busy Beavers.

Oh yes. Of course, you get a reward for sending in the answers to the Bible quiz!

If you have a Christmas story, puzzle, poem, picture, whatever, please share it with the Busy Beavers.

With love to you all,
Aunt Betty