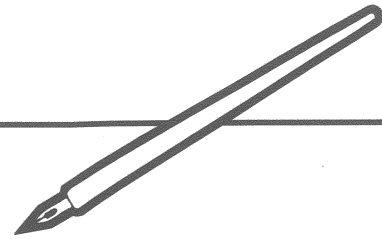




Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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The Importance of the Church Order

The Church Order beside God's Word?

Our Church Order contains a remarkable and well-known article, Article 31. This article is well-known because, after the Liberation in 1944, our churches were named after it as Reformed Churches maintaining Article 31. The article is also remarkable. For it places God's Word and the Church Order beside each other. Dealing with appeals against decisions of major assemblies, we as Reformed churches agreed that such decisions "shall be considered settled and binding." There is a restriction, though. The article continues, "unless it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order."

The question may be asked: are we allowed to place God's Word and the Church Order beside each other? Is it proper to say that we do not consider a decision of a major assembly "settled and binding" when it is proved to be in conflict with the Word of God or with the Church Order? The former is obvious. Whatever goes against the Scriptures must be rejected. God's Word is above all. This is what our God teaches us in His Word and what we confess as the truth for our church life (as well as for our personal life), cf. Art. 3-7 of the Belgic Confession. But are we allowed to give the same weight to the Church Order for our life as churches together in a federation? Does this not go against both the Word of God and our confession as just mentioned above?

One could be inclined to react with the conclusion that, indeed, it is wrong to give such a weighty position to the Church Order. Nevertheless, the Reformed churches in the Netherlands have agreed on this rule since the Synods of Middelburg in 1581 (Art. 23), of 's Gravenhage in 1586 (Art. 28), and Dordrecht (Art. 31). The literal text of this rule reads ". . . unless they are proved to be in conflict with the Word of God, or with they articles decided upon in this General Synod as long as they are not changed by an other General Synod." These last words speak for themselves. The Word of God cannot be changed. The Church Order can. The Word of God is infallible. The Church Order is not.

If it is now so that the Church Order can be changed because it is a set of rules agreed upon by the churches, can we then really maintain the rule that a decision of a major assembly is also to be considered "settled and binding" unless it is in conflict with the Church Order? Our Reformed fathers from the beginning have answered this question with a simple "yes."

For the explanation of this "yes" I take elements from a booklet *In this way we found each other* (Zo vonden wij elkaar), by Prof. J. Kamphuis. He wrote this booklet in 1971, at the commemoration of the Synod of Emden held in 1571, which was "The beginning of the Dutch Reformed church federation."

The Confession of the Truth first

The thing that bound the churches together in the first place was their confessional unity. They had the same confession, at that time the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism. In accordance with that confession they were one in humbly bowing for the Word of God. This oneness in the Reformed faith was expressed at they Synod of Emden in Art. 2 of the Church Order which the churches together adopted at that meeting. I quote from one of the editions of the *Ecclesiastical Handbook* (Kerkelijk Handboekje), published after the Secession in 1834 and around the Doleantie in 1886. These "Handbooks" contain the Church Orders as adopted and revised at the meeting of the Reformed churches at Wesel in 1568, and at the synods at Emden 1571, Dordrecht 1574, Dordrecht 1578, Middelburg 1581, 's Gravenhage 1586, and Dordrecht 1618/19. From these "Handbooks" we learn the many changes, the additions and omissions made in these Church Orders. There was certainly a development and change in details. However, the basic principles remained the same. Art. 2 of the Synod of Emden was one of these principles. It reads:

"In order to prove the unity in doctrine between the Dutch churches, it seemed good to the Brothers to subscribe to the confession of Faith of the Dutch Churches, and also to subscribe to the confession of the churches in France, in order herewith to testify to their link and unity with the churches in France. . . .

Prof. Kamphuis refers here to the letters of the apostle John who writes about the combination of abiding in the truth and abiding in love for each other. The churches in the Netherlands had adopted the Belgic Confession and the Heidelberg Catechism, and it was the love for each other based on the truth of God's Word that urged them to organize together in a federation of churches with a Church Order adopted by all with the purpose of together abiding by the Lord and His Word. Kamphuis places this over against the struggle in the Roman church in the Middle Ages between popes and councils. Does the pope or do the general councils have the highest authority? The authority in the Reformed churches is Christ and with it goes God's Word, its truth, as this is confessed (pp. 38 ff.).

Back to the Church Order

Remarkable is here that this article about the truth of God's Word as confessed by the churches is not the first but the second article. The first article reads

No church shall lord it over an other church, no minister of the Word, no elder nor deacon over an other, but each shall watch out for any suspicion and temptation of such a lording it over another.

This article clearly fights all forms of hierarchy in the churches. That this was the very first article shows how important this fight was for the churches. When setting up a federation with a Church Order that was given a binding character in order to work properly, the churches wanted to say with great emphasis that they did not establish a new hierarchy but, instead, were opposing and avoiding all hierarchy. No assembly or person is allowed to lord it over the churches. Christ only is to be the Ruler with the Word of God.

It is within this context that we have to see the adopted rule of Art 31. that decisions of major assemblies are to be kept for settled and binding also unless they are proved to be against the adopted Church Order. Wanting to abide in their Lord by abiding in and by His Word, and by opposing any form of hierarchy or lording it over a church or an officebearer (or any member), the churches have said and maintained that the Church Order they adopted together would serve this purpose in the best way possible.

Further evidence of this we have in the last article of the Church Order of Emden. In it the churches agreed on the following:

These articles which concern the legal and proper order of the churches, are established with common consent in such a way that, if the well-being of the churches requires it, they may and ought to be changed, increased and decreased. However, no particular church shall be free to do this; but all churches shall work to observe them until, in a later synodical meeting, such a decision is taken.

Important for us is here the last part that says that no particular church is free, on its own, to change or add to or take away from the articles of the mutually agreed upon and adopted Church Order. In this article we have honest mutual commitment based on mutual agreement. If a number of people have agreed on something together, they have mutually bound themselves to keep the agreement. If churches federate and mutually agree on certain rules for living together in love and care, they bind themselves to those agreements. This binding does not take away their freedom. On the contrary, the churches saw also this point as an important element in their fight against hierarchy in any form.

For, as indicated above, hierarchy or lording it over others does not only occur by synods but also by consistories or ministers and other officebearers. Against hierarchy in this latter form this last article sets up a fence, and thus against independtism. A minister or an elder or a few officebearers together can dominate a consistory and make decisions in conflict with the adopted Church Order. Independently they can go their own way. This will, in the end, break not only the federation but also the unity of faith and of humble submission to the Lord. What is agreed upon together as based on or in line with God's Word and the confession of the churches, and what is mutually edifying, that will also hold the churches together in the bond of love. Independently going against the agreements will, in this way, ruin also the local congregation. For not Word and Confession, but the particular ideas of one or two persons dominate the decisions and the course of action.

Kamphuis shows that it was love for the Head of the church as well as care for the churches under their Head which made the churches together decide as they did in 1571 and following years. Mutually and in freedom joining each other, they spoke in wisdom to help each other fighting a lording it over one another in both directions. We can be thankful that we still have the same wisdom in our present Church Order, cf. Articles 31, 74, and 76. **C**



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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: J. Geertsema

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

ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:

CLARION

41 Amberly Boulevard
Ancaster, ON, Canada L9G 3R9

ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE
MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):

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The Evaluation of Confessions

By D.G.J. Agema

In the September 10 issue of *Clarion* Rev. G. Ph. van Popta offers "A Few Thoughts about Confessions" to which I would like to react. Rev. G. Ph. van Popta begins with saying that he has "had several opportunities to discuss with fellow Canadian Reformed people the point of how we should evaluate our confessions." He summarizes these discussions in saying that they "centered on the question whether the Three Forms of Unity are the only faithful summaries of the Word of God or if there are other faithful summaries out there somewhere in the world."

This introduction to his "Thoughts" shows that Rev. van Popta is dealing with something that is under discussion in our midst and is important enough to be publicly addressed. I would agree with him. I also believe that we touch here upon an important matter which is currently under discussion in our midst. However, I look at it from a different angle.

I have no difficulty with his first question, how we should evaluate our confessions. That is indeed an important point. I have more difficulties with how he summarizes this discussion, namely whether the Three Forms of Unity are the only faithful summaries of God's Word or if there are other faithful summaries out there somewhere in the world. I am not doubting that Rev. van Popta came across that question, but I am questioning whether that is the issue at stake in our churches at this moment. I find that question very theoretical. It is not whether somewhere out in this world there are other Reformed confessions, but how do we deal with our own confessions and how do we evaluate others in our contact with various churches who have different confessions. Let me formulate it this way: can we maintain ecclesiastical fellowship with churches that do not adhere to the confessions we have

adopted? And in case we want to establish such a fellowship how do we evaluate the differences in confession?

The last paragraph of the article proves in my opinion that this is the real issue. For in his last paragraph Rev. van Popta deals with the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards. This is why we should not too quickly jump from the question how do we evaluate our confessions to the question are there anywhere in this world other Reformed confessions. We might run the danger of not addressing the issue as we should. Rev. van Popta deals with the question how to evaluate our confessions from the point of view that there are others as well. Though I can agree with much that he writes I yet maintain that something is lacking. I can agree that we should watch for incorrect evaluation of the confessions. I agree with him that we should not absolutize the confessions. I also agree with him that there are other confessions in this world in which Reformed churches have expressed and still express their faith. However, I miss that the starting point for this discussion is: our confessions are a summary of the Word of God.

True, this is mentioned, for Rev. van Popta asks the question "Are they summaries of the doctrine of God's Word or *the* summary of the doctrine of God's Word?" the point of this question is too, are there others? Whereas I would like to start from the fact that they *are* summaries of God's Word. In Lord's Day 7 we confess that the confessions are the summary of what God has promised us in His Word. And in the Form for Baptism we say that the doctrine of God's Word as summarized in the confessions is the true and complete doctrine of salvation. I do not imply that Rev. van Popta would not say that, I indicate where I believe we ought to start when we evaluate confessions. In the

confession the church does not advertise her own ideas, her *spécialité-de-la-maison*, but repeats the Word of God. When the church confesses her faith then she raises and holds high the Word of God. Carelessness with the confessions therefore often leads to carelessness with the Word of God.

The way we look at the confessions has implications for our evaluation of them and the evaluation of differences between confessions. Exactly because they are a summary of God's Word we may bind our members to them. We can live and work together within the congregation because we know what we confess and what we can bind each other to. If you let this binding to the confessions go and the church will become a hodge podge of all different ideas and practices. We will not know anymore what to expect from the other or how to understand each other.

What applies to the bond between members in the church also applies to the bond between churches. This bond is based on a common confession. Thus we know what we may expect from each other, and what we can bind each other to, as churches. But what happens when a bond is sought with a church, or a federation, that has different confessions? Do we offhand say, no way, impossible? I don't think so. Do we say, come in, no questions asked? I don't think so either. What ought to be done is to evaluate such differences in the light of God's Word. Ecclesiastical fellowship becomes very difficult, if not impossible, when we start from different principles. If an employer and an employee each have a different contract, the work will not get done. This is only an example. The point is that if there are differences these must be resolved. In the evaluation of confessions this means that if there are differences these must be resolved in the light of God's Word.

Rev. van Popta wrote his "Thoughts" with a certain situation in mind, I write these thoughts from the situation which I have in mind. The situation I have in mind is what Rev. van Popta mentions in his concluding paragraph, our relationship with churches that adhere to the Westminster Standards. General Synod Lincoln 1992 offered a sister-church relationship, now called ecclesiastical fellowship, to the Presbyterian Church in Korea and the Free Church of Scotland. Synod 1992 also maintained the temporary ecclesiastical fellowship with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

We all agree that there are differences between the Three Forms of Unity and the Westminster Standards. The question I have is: have these differences been evaluated in the light of Scripture? Let me quote the decision of Synod 1992 in this regard:

Synod decides to conclude from previous Synods' decisions that the divergencies evaluated in 1971 and 1986 have been sufficiently discussed to confirm that these are not impediments to ecclesiastical fellowship with the OPC, but may be

discussed within the framework of church unity.

(Acts, Art. 72 V.B.)

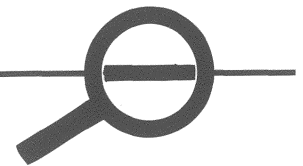
I have great difficulty with this decision. For two reasons: in the first place I believe that Synod 1992 reads more into the decisions of 1971 and 1986 than is justified. These Synods received reports about the divergencies, but these reports were not adopted as the official position of the Canadian Reformed Churches on this matter. In the second place, Synod 1992 says, these divergencies are no impediment anymore. That means it is perfectly alright to teach what the Westminster Standards teach about, church, church government or covenant, to mention three examples. In this sense Synod 1992 has gone far beyond any previous Synod. Not only have the differences not been properly evaluated, but the churches have now in effect said, there is nothing wrong with these differences. Any discussion about these differences is now in principle superfluous. I believe that the Westminster Standards contain elements that exceed our Three Forms of Unity, yes, that fall short of what Scripture teaches us.

The reason why I raise this, is the concern for the Canadian Reformed Churches and the consequences these decisions may have for them. To hold high the confession, is to hold high the doctrine of God's Word. If our confessional speaking becomes vague or confusing then the churches will suffer. Exactly because the confessions are summaries of the Word of God let us use them straightforward and in a clear manner. The situation in the Christian Reformed Church is a clear indication and a lesson of what happens when confessions are not properly evaluated anymore.

I fully agree with Rev. van Popta that we may not absolutize the confessions either. This can happen when differences between confessions are not properly evaluated, or when doctrinal differences are made into historical or cultural trademarks. How can we prevent both absolutizing and relativizing? The answer is by always going back to the Word of God. Not history, not antiquity, not customs, not councils are the norm, but the Word of God. **C**

PRESS REVIEW

By C. Van Dam



Ommen Decides in Favour of Women Voting

The synod of our Dutch sister churches meeting in Ommen, the Netherlands, reconvened after the summer recess and has since closed. An action that has received much attention was the decision that communicant sisters in the congregation no longer need to abstain from voting with the election of officebearers. Except for one abstention (who wanted to leave this matter in the freedom of the local church), the decision was taken unanimously. There was an earlier unanimous decision to declare null and void the 1978, decision of the Synod of Groningen-Zuid that women's voting right was unscriptural.

Here follow the grounds of this decision as reported in Nederlands Dagblad of September 10, 1993. Only the headings are mine. The rest is quoted (in my translation).

Basic data from Scripture

1. Scripture gives no direct answer to the question whether sisters in the congregation may vote. The following is apparent from "indirect biblical data:"

a. God Himself calls to the office in Christ (Acts 20: 28; 1 Cor. 12: 28; Eph. 4: 11);

b. With the calling to the office, God involves people: the congregation to notice gifts and point them out

(Acts 1: 21-26; 6: 3a, 5, 6a); the officebearers to take the first and final responsibility (Acts 6: 3b, 4, 6b; 14: 23 Titus 1: 5);

c. The election is therefore to be characterized as the means through which God calls to the office. In conjunction with that, prayer (Acts 13: 2, 3; 14: 23) and the biblical norms for officebearers (1 Tim. 3; Titus 1: 5-9) are of essential significance. In this way Christ rules with His Spirit and Word, also in the election.

d. Scripture does not give a general command that women be silent in the congregation.

1. Men and women share in the gifts of prophecy (Acts 2: 17, 18; 21:9);
2. 1 Cor. 11: 5 permits her to pray and prophesy as long as it happens in a manner that is in agreement with her position.
3. Scripture passages such as Acts 18: 26; Rom. 16: 1 ff., and Phil. 4: 3, 4 show an active involvement and mobilization of women in the service of the gospel.
4. 1 Cor. 14: 34-36 prohibits the woman to judge prophets during the worship service, because she would thereby exercise authority.
5. 1 Tim. 2: 11-15 prohibits the woman to exercise leadership and to speak authoritatively during the worship service. By doing this she leaves her own place and pushes the man from his place.

The church is ruled by Christ

2a. In the church Christ as Head rules His body, the congregation. He does this by His Word and Spirit (Eph. 2: 14-21; 4: 1-16; cf. Art. 30 Belgic Confession and L.D. 21 of the Heidelberg Catechism). In this ruling Christ uses officebearers. (Eph. 4: 11-16, Heb. 13: 17). Their rule has an "instrumental" character. Thus in ruling the church officebearers are responsible not to the church members, but to Christ. The fact that the church is no democracy, but is a Christocracy is apparent from the manner in which Christ calls to the office. He determines the norms (1 Tim. 3: Titus 1: 5-9) and the congregation is dependent on the guidance of the Spirit (Acts 1: 24; 6: 3, 13: 2-5; 20: 28). Thus with the election, the congregation does not rule, also not for a part, but she participates under the leadership of the consistory in the calling to the office.

b. In the Reformed churches the right to vote comes to the congregation under the leadership of the officebearers, because the Lord wants to live in the congregation by His Spirit (Acts 2: 1 Cor. 3: 16; 1 John 2: 20, 27). The election has the character of *calling* (see Art. 31 of the Belgic Confession and the Form for Ordination), and it does not have the character of exercising authority or power. The calling through the congregation is the *means* that the Lord uses to designate officebearers. In the voting there is not a free choice. It is bound by the norms of Christ, the guidance of the Spirit, and the responsibility of the consistory. In voting, the congregation therefore has

the authority neither over the consistory nor over the candidates.

c. During the election process, the consistory offers the congregation the opportunity to express itself on several occasions. The voting *may not be isolated* from this process as the "decisive" event that stands on its own. This voting is preceded by a binding decision of the consistory (the slate of candidates) and it is followed by the appointment, approbation, and ordination, which also have their own specific binding character. According to Art. 5 and 20 of the Church Order (= our Art. 3), the indispensable element is not the voting, but the approbation.

d. The voting takes place under the responsibility of *the consistory*. In accepting the result of the voting, the consistory acknowledges that Christ wants to live in the congregation by His Spirit (1 Cor. 3: 16).

Called through the congregation

3a. Because the lawful election of officebearers takes place in the way of calling through the congregation, *according to Art. 31, Belgic Confession*, it is important that the voice of the congregation be heard as well as possible.

b. The congregation is competent and able to cooperate in the calling to the office because Christ wants to live in His congregation with His Word (Rom. 10: 8-15; Col. 3: 16; Heb. 4: 12, 13; James 1: 18; 1 Peter 1: 22-25) and He

wants to equip her with the gifts of the Spirit (Acts 2, 1 Cor. 1: 4-9; 12: 4-11; 1 John 2: 20-27). Because the service of the offices is directed to the building up of the congregation, the voting (as a subordinate part of the election) can be characterized as a *cooperation in the building up of the congregation*.

c. According to Scripture, the *sisters* in the congregation receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit no less than the brothers (Acts 2: 17, 18; 10: 44, 45). The calling to work for the edification of the congregation also applies to the sisters (Eph. 4: 12-16; 1 Thess. 5: 11; 2 Tim. 3: 16, 17; 1 Peter 2: 5, 9, 10; 4: 10).

d. At stake in election and voting is not the individual voice, but the voice of the congregation. The sisters together with the brothers form the voice of the congregation.

The spirit of the times

4a. Arguments that are prompted by the spirit of the times may never be decisive in the church, but rather arguments from Holy Scripture in which the correct framework is given for the relationship of man and woman.

b. The influence of the spirit of the times does not of necessity have to be negative. In the course of time, our present form of electing has also been influenced by it.

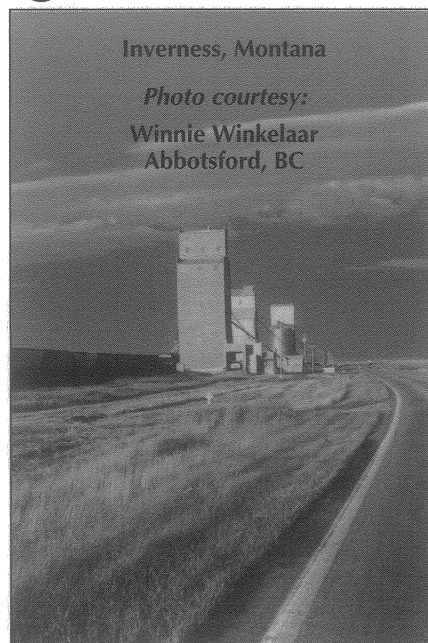
c. It is not proper for the church to give the voting right to the sisters of the congregation as a sacrifice to the spirit of the times. It is also not proper for the church to withhold from the sisters the voting right out of fear for the spirit of the times.

d. If the voting right must be withheld from the sisters on the basis of Scripture, this can lead to a necessary isolation for the church. If Scripture does not forbid the sisters the right to vote and it is nevertheless withheld, this can mean unnecessary estrangement with respect to the gospel, both within as well as outside the church.

e. Giving the sisters the right to vote is no expression of unscriptural individualism or of the democratization of the church and it should therefore not be judged as a giving in to a wrong desire for emancipation.

f. Because voting cannot be regarded as a form of ruling, giving the sisters the right to vote may not be seen as a first step for the sisters to the teaching and ruling office. C

OUR COVER



REMEMBER YOUR CREATOR

By G.Ph. van Popta

Bearing the Name of God

What is your last name? We all have a last name, a family name. In almost all cases we get our last names from our fathers. Before you were born, your parents talked about what your first and second names would be. Perhaps they had some trouble deciding. Finally they concluded that your name should be the name you now bear – Christopher or Susan, Emily or Henry. However, they did *not* discuss what your last name should be. They did not need to. What your last name would be was inevitable. You just took it over from your father. If your father's name is Mr. Vandersmith, then your last name is Vandersmith.

You have a responsibility to guard that name. You must stick up for your family name, for the name you got from your father. If someone starts hauling your father's name through the mud, you will say: "Hold on a moment; you can't say that about my dad!" Further, it is your job to live in such a way that you will not give people opportunity to insult your father's name. It would be an awful thing if people started to scoff at your family name because of your behaviour.

What holds true about the names we get from our earthly fathers also holds true, and so much more, concerning the Name we get from our heavenly Father. Not only do you bear the name of your earthly dad; you also bear the Name of your Father in heaven.

When you were baptized, you were baptized into the Name of God. God the Father promised that He would be *your* Father. He adopted you. You became His child. Your Catechism says in Lord's Day 13 that we ". . . are children of God by adoption, through grace, for Christ's sake."

When you were baptized, you were placed in the Name of God. The Name of God enfolds you, surrounds you and keeps you safe. As it says in Proverbs 18: 10, "The Name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and

is safe." We, by grace righteous in Christ, are safe in the Name of the LORD.

Not only were you baptized into the Name of God; His Name is also placed upon you every Sunday. Every Sunday you hear the familiar words of Numbers 6: 24-26:

The LORD bless you and keep you:
The LORD make His face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you:
The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace.

Originally, these were the words with which the Old Testament high priest was to bless the people of Israel. In this way they put the Name of God upon the people. Immediately after the LORD prescribed these words to Aaron the high priest, God said in Numbers 6: 27: "So shall they put my Name upon the people of Israel, and I will bless them."

The Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect and final High Priest, fulfilled this blessing as He ascended into heaven. He led His disciples to Bethany, lifted up His hands and blessed them. While He blessed them, He parted from them, and was carried up into heaven (Luke 24: 50-51).


Today your minister, as an ambassador for Jesus Christ, blesses you at the end of the worship service. When he blesses you, he places the Name of God upon you. You leave bearing the Name of God. You leave the official assembly of God's people wearing God's Name. It's on your forehead.

That has grave implications. If you have been baptized into the Name of God and if the Name of God is placed upon you every Sunday, then you must live in a special way. You must live as one who is conscious of this. In your catechism you say that the third commandment, *You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain*, means ". . . we must use the holy Name of God only with fear and reverence, so that we may rightly confess Him, call upon Him, and praise Him in

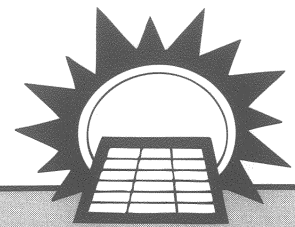
all our words and works" (Lord's Day 36). Further, you say that in the first petition of the Lord's prayer, *Hallowed be Thy Name*, you are asking God to direct your whole life, thoughts, words and actions, in such a way that the Name of God will not be blasphemed because of you but always honoured and praised (Lord's Day 47).

Sometimes people wear clothing – hats, T-shirts or sweaters – which are inconsistent with the truth that they also bear the Name of God and which do not match their confession. They wear clothes with crude words printed on them. Think about it. If you have the Name of God on your forehead, does it make sense to block that Name with a hat that has some coarse words printed on it? If the Holy Spirit has written the Word of God upon your heart, does it make sense to cover that with a sweater which has an unchristian slogan plastered across it? If you belong to Jesus Christ, body and soul, why walk around as a billboard for antichristian rock groups or foulmouthed cartoon characters? Does it make sense? I challenge all of you who sport T-shirts promoting your favourite beer or other alcoholic beverage to get a shirt printed which proclaims: "I'm a Christian" or, "Proud member of the Church of Jesus Christ." I dare you to wear *that* to work or school.

In Isaiah 44 the LORD promised that He would pour His Spirit upon the young members of God's people. These young people would be completely embarrassed about who they were. One would say: "I belong to the LORD." Another would write on his hand: "The LORD's." They would gladly identify themselves with belonging to Israel, i.e., the church of God.

Think about it. You bear the Name of God. It's printed, branded into your forehead. Don't block it. Don't obliterate it. Be proud of it. Boast that you belong to the LORD. 

RAY OF SUNSHINE



By Mrs. R. Ravensbergen

... because we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen; for the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

2 Corinthians 4: 18

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The words of this Bible chapter were written by the apostle Paul. He knew what he was talking about, because Paul suffered many afflictions. Yet, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he was able to accept his sufferings and hardships. He even encouraged the readers of his letters to distinguish between the temporary hardships of the earthly life, and the eternal happiness that is awaiting all those who trust in the Lord.

Paul warns us all: do not pay too much attention to the things you see. Some people are handsome, and strong, or smart, or athletic; some houses look very impressive, some jobs seem very important, but don't put your hope and trust in them. At the end nothing will be left of it. Nothing of all those external, visible things will help us to enter the kingdom of heaven.

What do we have to do then? Especially when we have to endure many hardships? Paul makes clear that there are two choices. He makes the distinction between temporary-external things, and eternal-internal things. External are the things we can see, like healthy bodies, expensive possessions, but also illnesses, and handicaps. Internal are the things we cannot see, the things that live in your heart, like faith, love, hope, and dependence from the Lord. Paul writes, those things that you can see are transient. This means, they do not last. You think that you have something, but it really is nothing. When the life here on earth ends, it is all gone. But the things that you cannot see are eternal. That means that even while your body may be wasting away from an illness or a disease, your spirit will be growing stronger every day, when you let yourself be guided by the Holy Spirit. When we pay attention to the eternal things, we can live our lives for Christ, who gave us new life. When Christ works in our hearts, we can carry our load of suffering. With that eternal goal in mind the suffering becomes bearable.

Yet the temptations are real. Sometimes the difficulties are so overpowering that we seem to be unable to carry them all. It may seem that everything goes wrong, and that the whole load comes on our

shoulders. Yet even then we can rely on the Holy Spirit. He will help us to pay our attention to the things unseen. They are like an inheritance. The unseen, eternal things are put away for us. Our suffering, our handicap, sever pain, grief, they are very real. Yet they become light when we look at the work of Jesus Christ. When we look at what He suffered for us, we can overcome our own difficulties, and find room for eternal things. Then we can even now experience some of the eternal glory, and live towards the completion of Christ's work of Salvation.

The Holy Spirit will help us to obtain that glory through the work of faith. In faith we will be able to look at the eternal things. In the living Word of God are those things unseen. When we drink in that Word, we can go on in the power of Christ, and withstand temptations. We will not strive for earthly possessions and fame. In Christ Jesus we will stay courageous when we have to face difficulties. He will lead us, even when it is through a vale of tears, to the Day of His return.

"For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison," (v. 17).

*Our outer nature wastes away;
Yet inwardly, from day to day,
We are in Thee renewed, O Lord.
Our suffering here is soon endured:
The harvest it for us prepares
By far outweighs our woes and cares.*

Hymn 56: 1

December is still our month without birthdays.

Until next month,

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



By W.W.J. VanOene



Did you already despair of seeing another newsmedley? I do realize that it is quite a while ago that I wrote one. We did take some time "off" this summer and while one is travelling there is not much of an opportunity to sit down, scan the bulletins, and commit one's thoughts to paper. Now, however, things have returned to "normal," and thus you see the familiar column re-appear.

Lately several classical examinations took place and some brothers were admitted into the ministry within the churches. Someone asked me a couple of questions about these examinations.

The first question was: "Why does someone have to submit to two examinations after having received his degree from our College?"

The second one was: "Why do deputies of regional synod have to be present at the second one, the peremptory examination?" (By the way, the name is not a "pre-emptory" but a *peremptory* examination. I read the former in a bulletin.)

As for the first question: When one has completed the courses at our seminary in a satisfactory manner, he will receive his degree; but this degree does not guarantee or even claim that this person is fit for the ministry. There would be nothing against it if some of our sisters studied at the seminary and completed the courses, graduating with a Master of Divinity degree. This would not open the way to the pulpit for them at all. It is an academic qualification.

Once a brother has received his diploma from the seminary, he may present himself to the churches and ask for permission to conduct services in the churches with a view to receiving a call. He therefore asks a classis of the district in which he lives to examine him and to give him this permission. This classis submits him to a preparatory examination. This examination does not decide about his being fit for the ministry in the strict sense of the word, but ascertains whether he is able to explain the Scriptures so that their meaning becomes clear to the congregations, whether he is able to convey this meaning in a sermon, and whether he knows and adheres to the doctrine of the Scriptures. If the examining classis is satisfied with the result of the investigation, the brother will receive permission to "exhort" or "speak an edifying word," as it is commonly called.

Once he has received and accepted a call, he has to be examined by a classis of the region in which the calling church is situated. This time the question is whether he can be admitted into the ministry. It is the last examination which one who aspires to the office of minister of the Gospel has to undergo. Once he is beyond this "hurdle" there is practically nothing that can stop him from becoming a minister. And: it is very difficult to remove one from this office. The churches must, therefore, be convinced that this brother is fit to be a minister and that not only the calling church but all the churches can receive and honour him as such. Therefore a wider representation of the federation is required: also regional-synodical deputies are

to attend the examination and their judgment must concur with that of the examining classis. That's why all the churches have the freedom to invite a minister of one of the churches to come and proclaim the Word and administer the sacraments in their midst as well.

This second (the peremptory) examination is far more extensive than the first one. It is of more importance and has consequences for the whole federation and even for foreign sister churches.

I might not have written about these things in a newsmedley if I had not found some remarks about this in the Chatham bulletin. One of the brothers who attended such an examination wrote the following:

"The sermon or edifying word, as it is called before they have successfully passed the examination, was the same as he delivered here in Chatham a few weeks ago. (For the preparatory examination the candidate is to prepare a sermon on a text given by appointed examiners; for the peremptory examination he may choose a text himself, and usually takes a sermon that he already delivered somewhere. VO) What sounds like a good sermon to us lay people (Ouch! VO) is very critically examined by the ministers at these examinations. I believe there were eight ministers involved. I came away from this meeting with a better understanding for the training and preparation for the ministry."

At a classis that I attended here as a visitor a while ago one of the ministers who had to judge the sermon started out with saying that in all likelihood each sermon of each minister could be "picked apart" if subjected to the scrutiny of so many colleagues, but there was the obligation to the churches to take things seriously, and to see whether the candidate did understand the text and had the ability to present the message correctly. If one presented a sermon that may be full of all sorts of true statements, but that wanders away from the text or does not take the context into account, or "travels" through the whole Scripture, this would prove that the brother does not understand what preaching is, and unless he gives proof of the opposite, he cannot be admitted.

We have given enough attention to this topic and it is high time that we proceed with other news.

Another interesting matter from Chatham's bulletin.

The consistory received word about the need to increase support for needy churches. It appears that the churches in Ontario carry quite a load in this respect. "The consistory decided to propose to Classis that since the membership of the church at Laurel has not increased since joining the federation, it become a house congregation under the supervision of Blue Bell, and that Rev. H. be declared eligible for call by the Canadian and American Reformed Churches."

I sympathize with the brothers when they try to find ways for easing an ever-increasing load, but I do not think that their suggestion is a legitimate solution. In the first place I deny that a classis would ever have the right to take such a decision; and in the second place, "house congregation"

may be a term that is understood by most of our people, it has no "official status" in our ecclesiastical terminology and, to my knowledge, it has never been determined officially what exactly is to be understood by it and what its implications are.

We move on to the Burlingtons. First to "South."

"The 'borderline' issue was the subject of a meeting which was attended by brother A. for our congregation. Consideration was given to a new policy which will be further discussed in December 1993, prior to which a report will be presented to the consistory."

When, Oh, when will the "borderline issue" be laid to rest? How many hours, perhaps even countless hours have been spent on this subject without tangible results? The various bulletins give evidence that discontent continues and that occasionally there are even some bad feelings between churches, let alone among the members affected. Do away with them. That was, is, and remains my advice.

Up to "East." "Today marks the end of an era since it is the last time the Dutch service will be held in Maranatha Homes. For several years council had the matter of the Dutch services under review. As you know, the churches of Burlington East and West 'pulled out' some time ago. The attendance rate dwindled as each year went by. Now the time has come to stop for good. It is indeed the end of an era. But it is also a sign of 'coming of age.' The need for the Dutch service among us has virtually disappeared."

During the question period at a consistory meeting in Burlington West the question was raised "What is being done to encourage individuals to become church organists? Money is available for lessons for those requiring it. Also the opportunity for an individual to have the use of such a magnificent instrument as a pipe organ should be a great incentive to a serious musician."

Apart from my serious objections to the word "individual" (this is a term, I am convinced, we should avoid as it is incorrect and too impersonal), I have great appreciation for the above-shown attention. I do not have concrete answers to the question raised, but I could make some suggestions.

In the first place: too often it is (silently) assumed among us that organists are volunteers that "shouldn't get paid." I realize that many things are done in the church of Christ which are never rewarded with the receipt of a certain amount of money. How many hours do the elders and the deacons put in, mosttimes even refusing to ask for remuneration for mileage! See what the committees of administration do (although you can see only the tip of the iceberg!) without ever receiving one penny for all their labours. I know that they all do it wholeheartedly and without grumbling. But I would plead for a remuneration for our organists, at least, if it appears that they study for their weekly contribution and make progress. I do not mean that they should get "paid" by the hour, but a certain amount should be budgeted for remuneration of the organist(s).

And secondly, more and more churches realize that also organists cannot make progress without study material. Thus provisions should be made that they can purchase books they need. It is fine when these books remain the property of the church, so that also the next "generation" of organists can make use of them.

To my joy I learned that another "Organists' Workshop" was planned for the last Saturday in September, "at which various facets of the riches of our Genevan Psalter will be explored. In response to your comments, added emphasis will

be placed on the practical aspects of the organist's task in the worship service." I took this from the Grand Valley bulletin.

I am particularly happy that the riches of "our Genevan Psalter" will be explored. It would be an incalculable loss if we should give up this Genevan Psalter in case we come to a union with other Reformed bodies. As I wrote before, I am not willing to exchange it for any other psalter or hymnal, and I am convinced that none of us should.

Making a big jump, we fly all the way to Calgary. Various properties were considered for purchase, and when one particular one was put before the congregation, the majority advised the consistory to proceed. One brother even informed the consistory later on that he wanted to change his "no" to a "yes." However, I have not read of any definite decision regarding purchase. "Complex factors" have still to be investigated, I read. In the meantime the consistory received word that the Trinity Church asked for a rent increase.

Speaking of property, the recently instituted church at Yarrow, B.C. not only will have its own minister so soon after institution, but also purchased property for a church building and parsonage.

Having a minister does not yet mean that "reading services" are out. A wise decision was made by the Yarrow consistory: "It is decided that the next elder on the list for reading should always be prepared to read in the event of an emergency." Perhaps this is a rule already in various congregations, but it is good when attention is paid to the necessity of being prepared.

From the same consistory we quote "New members to the congregation will be announced after their attestation has been dealt with at a meeting of the consistory." That is the proper procedure.

We read the same of Vernon: "The consistory decides that from now on attestations will not be announced until they are discussed at a consistory meeting."

A decision of the Port Kells consistory also deals with attestations. "Attestations have been requested by A., B., and C. As two announcements have been made to the congregation, and no lawful objections have been raised, it is decided to issue these attestations."

Here I have several questions. I realize that the present text of Art 62 C.O. is what we have to adhere to, and thus "announcements" have to be made. I still am convinced that the general synod that decided to insert the provision regarding announcements did not realize what it was doing. And the wrong impression that the need for "announcements" gives is evident also from Port Kells's decision.

What "lawful" objection could ever be brought in against giving an attestation? With your permission, it is sheer nonsense to speak of "lawful objections" in this case. When someone, moving to a sister church, asks for an attestation, no one in the whole church can object even to giving such a testimony. At best, or at worst if you like, someone could come with "damaging" information which the consistory could feel obligated to mention in such an attestation. But that is all and will happen extremely rarely.

And further: a consistory would not even be at liberty to tell the congregation whether a "good attestation" has been given or some less favourable things had to be mentioned in it about the brother or sister. All the congregation is allowed to know is that an attestation has been given; the contents of it should not be divulged to anyone.

This is all about this point for the moment. I wrote about it at another place and in all likelihood will come back to it under another heading.

Ever since the decision as Langley congregation to meet separately in two wards was taken, there has been uncertainty as to the possibility of continuing the services in Aldergrove. Now these difficulties appear to have been solved. "The Aldergrove Ward will now be worshipping regularly at the Betty Gilbert School in Aldergrove. It is a fairly new school and thus a very attractive facility. Unlike the Kinsmen's Hall which was becoming increasingly difficult to use because of lack of co-operation from the management, the Principal of the Gilbert School has proven to be a model of assistance. Needless to say, we are glad that the Aldergrove Ward has at last received a fixed address for its worship services."

On this happy note we leave Canada and pass on a few particulars from the Australian sister churches.

The Rockingham church which is a little over a year old, purchased property, but this property could not be used for their purpose of having a church building and a school building on it, as the City Council refused permission for that. Now they sold it and purchased another piece which, hopefully, will serve them for a long time to come. They also decided to start an elementary (or primary) school beginning the next school year. They at the same time called a minister from the Netherlands who, incidentally, also received a call from the church at Pretoria SA.

As for the schools, there seem to be the same problems with some members as there have been almost right from the start at practically every place where a school was set up: members who are either unable or evidently unwilling to meet their obligations. And this whereas the Australian brothers and sisters pay only about twenty percent of what the Canadian members pay for the tuition of their children. Unless, of course, the situation has changed drastically, but I haven't seen any indication of that.

From the Bedfordale consistory meeting report we quote.

"School board about the best method of providing assistance to those who say they cannot afford to be members of the school because of other day-to-day commitments. The Board writes that:

'In our churches they should then properly be directed towards the office-bearers who have been cloaked with the ministry of mercy. Yet as school board members we do not always feel comfortable with directing our members along this path, firstly because it goes somewhat beyond the

scope of our charter, and secondly because of uncertainty about the degree of support for this approach by the relevant consistory and particularly the brothers deacons.'

"It is decided to reply as follows:

- a. Consistory agrees that members should give their first fruits to the Lord by paying Church and school and if they then experience financial difficulties they should be directed to the ministry of mercy. Consistory would like to assure the Board of its full support for this approach. Since this is a Scriptural norm, the Board should not feel uncomfortable in directing members along this path.
 - b. Consistory encourages the Board to contact Consistory where this course of action is not producing fruits so that herein also we may be a hand and a foot to one another.
 - c. Since the Reformed education of the children of the congregation is based on the promises given at baptism, and members of the Church are not only individually but also collectively responsible for this education, Consistory should be informed when there is a lapse in support."
- There are several points here that warrant further discussion.

In the first place: Here matters of church and school are mixed in a manner that has to be disapproved of. If there are members who do not meet their obligations, a board should not approach the consistory but do what the brothers appear to know so well as their duty: direct the members to the office-bearers if they cannot live off what is left after they have contributed for the ministry of the Gospel and fulfilled their promise of paying so much for the education of their children. The deacons are *not* there to help the parents pay for the school, and a member goes wrong when telling the office-bearers: "I have to pay so much for this, so much for that, and now I cannot pay the school." That is starting from the wrong end.

Although we do help one another also with the education of the children, our schools are *business enterprises* and should be run on a business-basis.

A board goes wrong in my view, when approaching a consistory if there are members who do not meet their obligations; and a consistory goes wrong when encouraging a board to contact the consistory if such should be the case. Separate matters should be kept separate, otherwise we cause accidents and conflicts.

I was sort of happy to read that, according to the Bedfordale consistory, "the Reformed education of the children of the covenant *is based on* (emphasis mine, VO) the promises given at baptism." I can agree with that. What I would have rejected outright is a statement that Reformed

*The Board of Governors and the Senate of the Theological College
Invite you to an Open House for the occasion of the
30th Anniversary*

of

REVEREND J. GEERTSEMA
in the Ministry of the Word of God.

Date: December 18, 1993

Time: 2 - 4 p.m.

*Place: Cornerstone Canadian Reformed Church, Hamilton, Ontario
There will be a formal official opening at 2:00 p.m.*

education *is included* in the promises given at baptism, for this is definitely not so. I do not believe for one moment that our forefathers, when formulating the baptismal questions were thinking of Reformed education. Our schools, although they may have a course "Bible" or "Religion," and "Church History" are not institutions to instruct the children in the doctrine of the Scriptures. That is done in the families, in Church, and at Catechism classes, and this is what the parents promise.

What I also must reject completely is the statement that "members of the Church are not only individually but also collectively responsible for this education." How in the world could that utterance be proved from the Scriptures or from our Confessions? This statement goes in the line of what the Christian Reformed Church in North America did when it included in the baptismal form a question to the whole congregation whether they promised to take such a responsibility upon themselves and were willing to discharge it.

The upbringing of our children (my wife's and mine) was solely our own responsibility and no one else shared this obligation. And when we established the first school here in Canada, it was our own obligation and no one else's "on the basis of the promises made at baptism" to pay the tuition fee and to do so faithfully.

That I, or we also had the obligation to do something extra to help brothers and sisters who were unable to pay the full sum or that even now that we no longer have any children at school, we are members of the society and do our share, does not mean at all that either then or now the education of all the children was or still is a communal responsibility.

It is easy to use expensive words and heavy-sounding terms; it is something else to prove that they are correct and thus to be taken to heart by all.

Then I would rather go along with the brief reply that I read in the Byford consistory meeting report: "Our policy has been that if people cannot pay the required level of contribution, the deacons are involved. This will be conveyed to the school board." Even so, I think, the brothers started at the wrong end. It should be: "If members cannot live off what they have left after having met their obligations towards the Church and the school, the deacons become involved."

This makes the more clear, I think, that school boards do not have the right to approach consistories if there are delinquent members.

A last item from Bedforddale: It may be known that the Australian churches have been active regarding Papua New Guinea and that through their efforts and continuing care and attention a church was established in Port Moresby. Other places are under investigation. But can the work there still be called "mission work"?

"A report by Bedforddale's Mission Review Committee is tabled and discussed at length. The Committee has been active in seeking possible mission fields. Some discussions take place on possibilities in India. However, a number of concerns about this are raised. The Committee is also encouraged to investigate Sumba."

I know that there is contact between the Australian churches and Sumba. I know a brother who goes quite regularly to Indonesia and even learned the language. But I am afraid that choosing Sumba does not lead to an activity that would differ from that in Papua New Guinea. We'll see what the brothers come up with.

This time, I'm almost certain, our medley will have to be divided over two issues. This gives me a breathing space and an opportunity to prepare for the next one.

Thank you for your attention.

Au revoir. *Deo Volente*

C

PRESS RELEASES



Classis AB/MB, Oct. 12-14, 1993, convened by the church at Winnipeg, Oct. 12, in the "Immanuel" Church, Edmonton, AB.

The Rev. K. Jonker called the meeting to order on behalf of the church at Winnipeg. He had the assembly sing Ps. 145:1, 2, led in prayer, and read Psalm 145. After speaking a few words about Psalm 145 in connection with Thanksgiving Day, he welcomed the delegates to the meeting. Rev. Jonker laid before the assembly the question whether Deputies of Regional Synod *ad* article 48, Church Order (Deps. RS)

need to be present to give advice on the matter of the request of the Christ American Reformed Church of Denver, CO, (CARCD) to be admitted to the confederation of churches.

After the convening church was able to report that the credentials were in order, Classis was declared constituted. The executive officers proposed by the last Classis were appointed: the Rev. Messrs. P.K.A. de Boer (chairman); G.Ph. van Popta (vice-chairman); E.J. Tiggelaar (clerk).

The chairman thanked the church at Winnipeg for the work done in preparation of this Classis and "Im-

manuel" church for hosting it. He recalled that the church at Neerlandia had called the Rev. M. van Essen and candidate J. Vanwoudenberg, both of whom declined. He expressed the wish that the vacancies in Neerlandia and Edmonton "Immanuel" would soon be filled. He also remembered that the Rev. R.A. Schouten was called by the church at Rockingham, Australia, and expressed appreciation that Rev. Schouten could see his way clear to stay in Alberta.

After the agenda was adopted, the question whether the Deps. RS were to be invited to Classis was put into dis-

cussion. The following proposal was adopted: That Classis invite the Deputies of Regional Synod *ad* article 48 Church Order for advice *re* the request of CARCD to be admitted to the confederation of churches. Ground: article 85 A III, B & C of Acts of General Synod, 1986.

After having the assembly sing Ps. 87:1 and leading in prayer, the chairman adjourned the meeting.

Classis was reconvened at 9:00 a.m. *Wednesday, Oct. 13*. The chairman had us sing Ps. 48:1, read Hebrews 2, and led in prayer.

The *Report of the Committee for Aid to Students for the Ministry* was tabled. The committee's mandate was discussed.

After recessing until 4 p.m. for lunch and a mission meeting with two delegates from the church at Surrey, the following motion was adopted:

1. To thank the committee (for Aid to Students for the Ministry) for its work;
2. To maintain the present mandate (cf. art. 6, 1, a ii), of Classis October 1992;
3. To appoint a committee with the following mandate:
 - i (a) To serve the March 1994 Classis with a report *re* the application of art. 20 C.O. addressing the question whether the support of needy students is the responsibility of the local church or of the churches in common;
 - (b) to determine whether the committee may grant a request for funds without a classical decision or whether it must serve Classis with recommendations so that Classis makes the decision;
 - (c) to re-evaluate the mandate and the application forms, especially section C.
 - ii To send copies of the reports to the Committee for Aid to Students for the Ministry and to the churches six weeks prior to the March 1994 Classis.

The committee also submitted a *financial statement* for the 1992/1993 season which was received with thankfulness.

Reports of the visitations made to the churches at Calgary and Taber were submitted and discussed.

The *Committee for aid to Needy Churches* reported that it was unable to fulfill its mandate because of the lack of cooperation by many churches in supplying the requested statistical data. The following proposal was adopted:

1. To thank the committee for its work;
2. to admonish the churches to be diligent in cooperating with the committee;
3. to instruct the committee to request data for 1992 from those churches who have not yet supplied it and to request data for 1993 from all the churches;
4. to grant the request for aid of the church at Barrhead.

After recessing for supper, the meeting was reconvened at 6:45 p.m.

The churches at Carman and Calgary requested and received advice in *matters of discipline*.

The churches at Neerlandia and Edmonton "Immanuel" requested *pulpit supply* (Neerlandia – every third Sunday; "Immanuel" – one Sunday per month). This was granted. The Rev. J.D. Wielenga will arrange a schedule.

"Immanuel" requested *approval to extend a second call* to the Rev. R.A. Schouten of Calgary. Classis gave its approval. The chairman congratulated "Immanuel" and Rev. Schouten, the latter whom he also wished wisdom in reaching a decision.

Appointments:

Convening church for next Classis: Barrhead.

Place: "Providence" Church, Edmonton.

Date: December 7, 1993; alternate: March 8, 1994.

Proposed executive: The Rev. Messrs. R.A. Schouten (chairman); P.K.A. de Boer (vice-chairman); G.Ph. van Popta (clerk).

Committee for Study of the mandate for the Committee for Aid to Needy Students: The Rev. Messrs. R. Aasman and E.J. Tiggelaar, the elders H. Noot and C. Hamoen.

Delegation to the next regional synod.


The ministers delegated in March 1993 are re-affirmed.

Br. P. Doorten, who has retired since March 1993, was replaced by the first alternate, elder T. Termeer. Br. A. Poppe, who has also retired as elder since March 1993, is retired as an alternate. No new alternates are deemed necessary. Thus the delegation is:

Ministers: R. Aasman, K. Jonker, R. Schouten, G. Ph. van Popta; (alternates: E.J. Tiggelaar, J.D. Wielenga, P.K.A. de Boer).

Elders: C. Hoogerdijk, J. Kuik, T. Termeer, H. Vanden Hoven; (alternates: J. Bareman, P. Meliefste).

Question Period per article 44 C.O. was held.



C

HURCH NEWS

DECLINED to Smithers, BC and
ACCEPTED to Burlington South, ON

Rev. C. Bosch
of Kelmscott, WA Australia

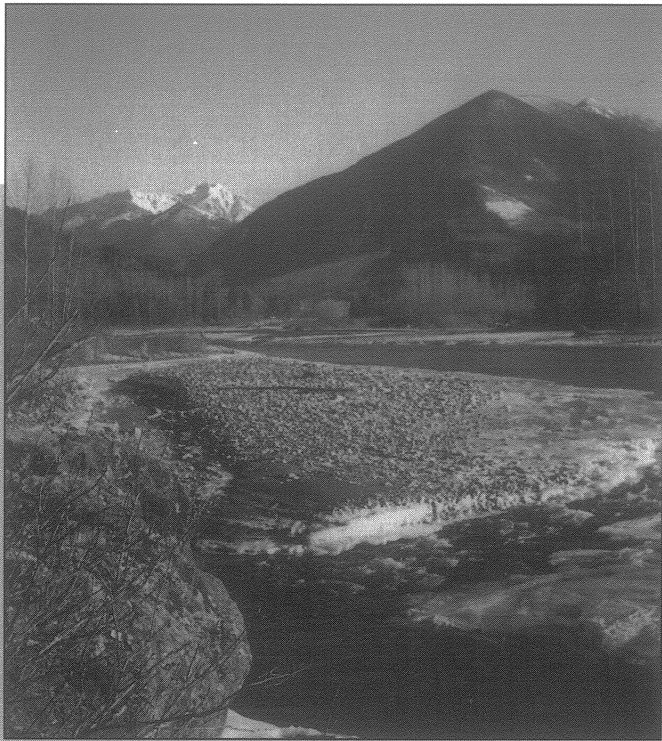
Personal Question Period was held. The churches at Barrhead and Calgary thanked the churches of the Classis for their support.

The *Report of the Committee re the request of CARCD* to be admitted to the confederation of churches was tabled. The chairman welcomed the Deps. RS, the Rev. Messrs. C. Van Spronsen and J. Visscher. The Majority Report (Aasman/Schouten) and the Minority report (Wielenga) were put into discussion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.

Classis was reconvened at 9:00 a.m., *Thursday, Oct. 14*. The chairman had the assembly sing Ps. 121: 1, 3, read Heb. 4:14 – 5:10 and led in prayer. Discussion on the reports *re* the request of CARCD was continued. After breaking for lunch, the Majority reporters presented revised observations, considerations and recommendations. These were discussed. The Majority report, in favour of admitting the CARCD, was adopted by Classis. The Deps. RS were given opportunity to give advice. They were unable to concur with the decision of Classis. After the Majority reporters were given opportunity to respond to the advice of the Deps. RS, a second vote was taken by Classis which upheld the decision. Judgment of the request of the CARCD is, therefore, in suspension. The matter will go to the broader assembly, Regional Synod West, for resolution.

The following motion was adopted: To send copies of the decision to Regional Synod West, CARCD, the Presbytery of the Dakotas of the OPC, and our Committee for contact with the OPC.

Also adopted: To ask the convening church (Houston, BC) for the next Regional Synod to move up the date of that Synod.



The Acts were adopted and the Press Release was approved.

The chairman expressed thanks that censure did not need to be exercised. He thanked the Deps. RS for their work, wished them well and a safe return to BC. He thanked the two sisters for their excellent care during the past several days. The delegates underlined the chairman's thanks with great enthusiasm. The chairman requested that Ps. 46:1, 5 be sung, led in prayer, and dissolved the assembly at 6 p.m.

By order of Classis AB/MB, October 12-14, 1993.

G. Ph. van Popta
Vice-chairman, e.t.

Classis Pacific, October 5, 1993, Langley, BC

Opening: On behalf of the convening church at Houston, Rev. W.B. Slomp calls the meeting to order. He asks the brothers to sing from Psalm 146: 2, 3. He reads from Romans 10 and leads in prayer. He welcomes the delegates, and extends a special welcome to the delegates of the church at Yarrow who are here for the first time as delegates of that newly instituted church. He also extends a special welcome to the deputies of Regional Synod, Rev. P.K.A. DeBoer, and Rev. J.D. Wielenga. He remembers that the church at Smithers has extended a call to Rev. C. Bosch and that the same

church is still vacant regarding the work of mission. He also remembers the vacancies of the church at Abbotsford, and the church at Langley with respect to a second minister.

Credentials: The delegates of the church at Cloverdale examine the credentials. All the churches are represented. Three churches have instructions.

Constitution: Classis is constituted. The officers suggested by the previous Classis are appointed and take their seats. Rev. E. Kampen, chairman, Rev. W.B. Slomp, vice-chairman; Rev. D. Moes, clerk.

Agenda: After some matters are added to the provisional agenda the agenda is adopted.

Examination: The church at Yarrow requested the peremptory examination of candidate C. VanderVelde. The necessary documents are found to be in good order. Cand. VanderVelde delivers his sermon on the text of 1 John 3: 11-24. In closed session it is decided to proceed with the rest of the examination. Rev. W.B. Slomp examines this brother on exegesis Old Testament, Rev. M.H. VanLuik, exegesis New Testament, Rev. W.M. Wielenga knowledge of Holy Scriptures, Rev. J. Visscher Doctrine and Creeds, Rev. D. Moes Church History, Rev. J. Moesker Ethics, Rev. E. Kampen Church Polity, and Rev. C. Van Spronsen Diaconiology. In closed session Classis with the advice of the deputies Regional Synod declares that

it has no objections to admitting this brother to the Ministry of the word in the Canadian Reformed Churches.

Approbation of call: The necessary documents are read and found to be in good order. The call to br. VanderVelde is approbated. The brother is notified on this decision and the chairman offers words of congratulations to this brother and to the church at Yarrow.

Signing of subscription form: At this time the chairman reads the subscription form and cand. VanderVelde signs the form. The chairman requests the singing of Psalm 134: 1, 3 and leads in thanksgiving prayer. An opportunity to congratulate br. VanderVelde is given.

Proposals or instructions: The church at Langley and Abbotsford request pulpit supply one Sunday per month. Classis grants this request. The church at Houston asks advice concerning the convening of Regional Synod. It is suggested to hold Regional Synod in the month of June, 1994.

Reports: The reports of the inspection of the Archives, of auditing the books of the treasurer, of the committee of needy students, and of the committee for needy churches, are read and taken note of. The amount of \$3.00 per communicant member will be collected to meet the expenses of one needy church. The church visit report to the church at Vernon is read and received.

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

Appointments: The convening church for the next Classis is the church at Langley. The date is set for December 7, 1993. An alternate date is set for April 5, 1994. The suggested officers are: Rev. W.B. Slomp, chairman, Rev. D. Moes, vice-chairman, Rev. M.H. VanLuik, clerk. Rev. E. Kampen is appointed to represent Classis at the ordination of candidate C. VanderVelde.

Question period is held.

Censure ad article 44 C.O.: The chairman thankfully takes note of the good cooperation among the brothers.

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

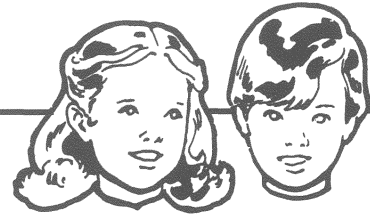
Closing: After singing Psalm 62: 5, 6, 7, the chairman leads in thanksgiving, and closes classis.

W.B. Slomp
Vice-chairman e.t.



OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE

By Aunt Betty



Hello Busy Beavers,

I thought you would enjoy this story from Busy Beaver Heidi DeHaan.

Dad and Me

One morning my Dad asked me if I wanted to go to the paint shop with him. I said, "Yes." So I got changed and went in the van and my Dad drove me to the paint shop. When we got there my Dad asked me if I wanted to cut paper with him. I said, "Yes."

"I'll cut the paper, and you make sure the paper is straight."

"O.K." I said.

After a while my Dad and me had a break and my Dad asked me if I wanted to go to the restaurant to get some Coke. I said, "Yes." Then we went home.

BIBLE WHO'S WHO OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT

from Busy Beaver Sheryl Vanandel

1. Who went to heaven in a chariot of fire? _____
2. Who thought Eli was calling him? _____
3. Who married Ruth, Naomi's daughter-in-law? _____
4. Who hid in a tree to see Jesus? _____
5. Who was given gifts from wise men? _____
6. Who was thrown into the sea when a storm came?

7. Whose head was cut off? _____
8. Who helped an Ethiopian and told him the meaning of the Scriptures? _____
9. Who was thrown into the lions' den? _____
10. Who made a covenant with God? _____
11. Who laughed at the angel Gabriel when he was told that he was going to have a son? _____

(See answers)

Quiz Time!

Here is a Reformation Day quiz for you. I'm embarrassed I forgot to share it with you last time. The message is still the same. And I hope you enjoy doing it.

REFORMATION DAY NUMBER CODE

from Busy Beaver Jennifer Hoogerdyk

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

3 18 15 23 14 19 1 14 4 20 8 18 15 14 5 19
 13 1 25 16 5 18 9 19 8 11 9 14 7 4 15 13 19
 18 9 19 5 1 14 4 23 1 14 5 2 21 20
 20 8 5 3 8 21 18 3 8 15 6 10 5 19 21 19
 3 15 14 19 20 1 14 20 23 9 12 12
 18 5 13 1 9 14

Kids Can Cook!

Busy Beaver Carrie Schuurman has a great idea you may want to try yourself!

Be sure to get a parent's permission for using the stove, Busy Beavers.

Toad in a Hole

Take 6 buns (or however many you need) and cut them in half.

Take out part of the insides (use for bread crumbs) so it leaves a hole.

Fry up scrambled eggs with onions, peppers, mushrooms, salt, pepper and garlic powder.

Fill the holes with the fried stuff. Grate some cheddar cheese on top.

Broil them until they are golden and bubbly.

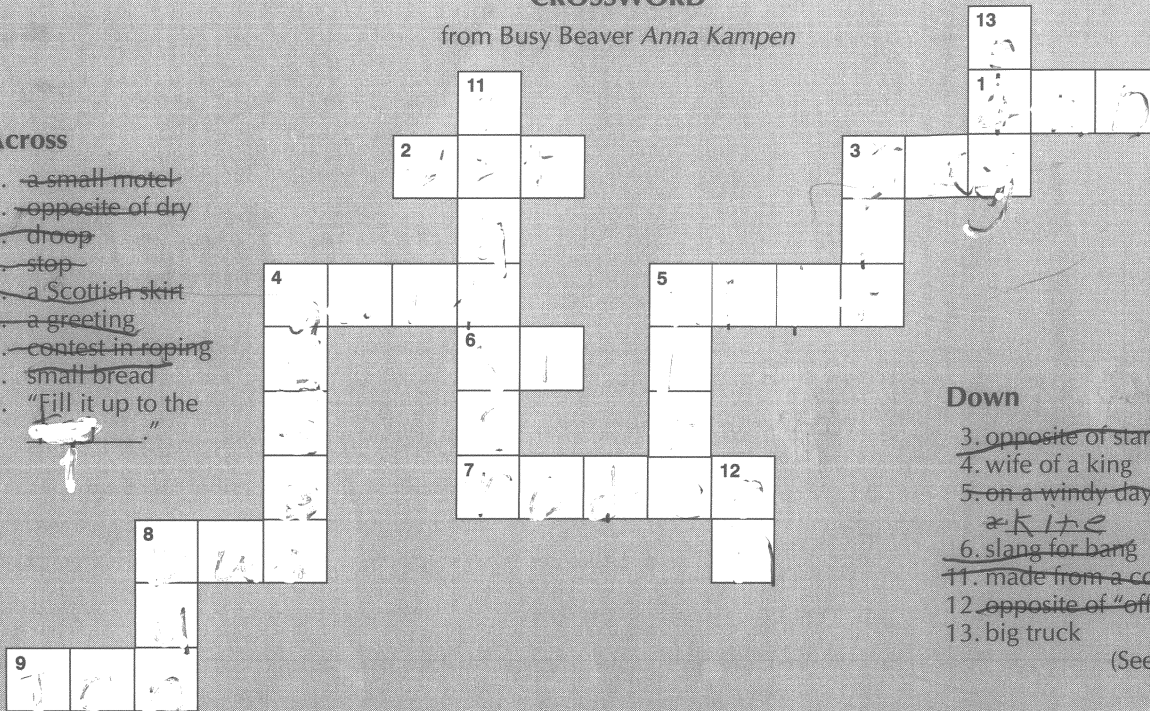
Enjoy!

CROSSWORD

from Busy Beaver Anna Kampen

Across

1. a small motel
2. opposite of dry
3. droop
4. stop
5. a Scottish skirt
6. a greeting
7. contest in roping
8. small bread
9. "Fill it up to the _____"



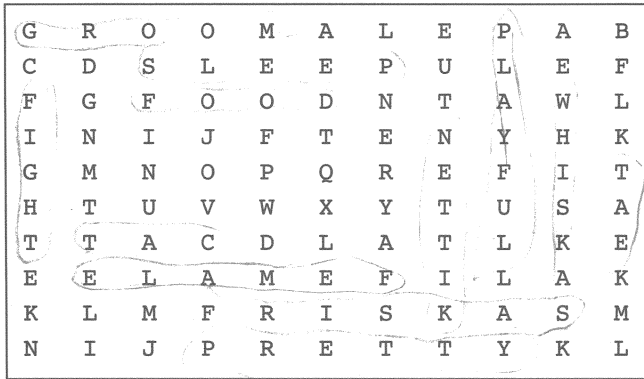
Down

3. opposite of stand
4. wife of a king
5. on a windy day we fly a kite
6. slang for bang
11. made from a cow's skin
12. opposite of "off"
13. big truck

(See answers)

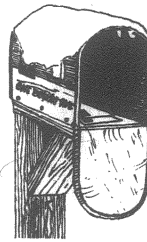
THE CAT WORDSEARCH

from Busy Beaver Karen Terpstra



Look for:

- Kitten ✓
- Cat ✓
- Friskas ✓
- Whiskas ✓
- Food ✓
- Groom ✓
- Male ✓
- Female ✓
- Playful ✓
- Fight ✓
- Sleep ✓
- Eat ✓
- Pretty ✓



FROM THE MAILBOX

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Deborah Van Beek*. We are happy to have you join us! Thank you for a pretty letter, Deborah. I hope you will write again soon.

Hello, *Katherine Wiersema*. Thank you for sharing the puzzle. I have put your name on the birthday list. I hope you had a very

happy day celebrating last month, Katherine!



Answers:

queen 5. kite 6. hi 7. rodeo 8. bun 9. top Down: 3. sit 4. *Crossword* - Across: 1. inn 2. wet 3. sag 4. quit Daniel 10. Abram 11. Zachariah
Bible Who's Who: 1. Elijah 2. Samuel 3. Boaz 4. Zacharias 5. Jesus 6. Jonah 7. John the Baptist 8. Phillip 9.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers.

I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Love,
Aunt Betty

